



Graduate School of Development Studies

**Captive of Conscience: Teen Heads of Households in the Context
of HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia**

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List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Disease
CRC	Child Rights Convention
CSA	Central Statistics Authority
HH	Household head
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
HAPCSO	Hiwot HIV/AIDS Prevention Care and Support Organization
HoH	Head(s) of House Hold
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
ILO	International Labour Organization
UN	United nations
UNAIDS	The Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS

Glossary

Injera: the Ethiopian staple bread its thin crepe like flat bread

Adera: a passed responsibility for an individual or a group from a person

Abstract

HIV/AIDS has caused a significant damage in the socio economic patterns of societies throughout the world with no consideration of race, ethnicity, sex, age and other attributes. Because of this researchers in the past have given a strong emphasis to study the nature and consequence of the disease and ways of treating it and addressing the social challenges that are caused by the epidemic. As part of these efforts studies in the near past have examined and attempted to deal with the effects of HIV/AIDS on children and young people.

As a result of high death rates that are caused by HIV/AIDS the number of orphans has increased and lead to the creation of households headed by children and young persons. Despite the growing interest on issues that concerns young people the majority of focus in this area of heading a household has been limited to child headed households. But this paper uniquely addresses the issue of teenage heads of households that are found between the ages of 15-19 in Ethiopia, who took over the responsibility of heading a household because of the death of their parents to AIDS. This group of category come to my mind as a subject of study due to an observations that strikes a thought in my mind during the service at an organization called Hiwot HIV/AIDS Prevention Care and Support Organization for three years which compelled me to do something on it as not much has been done regarding this category of population even in the face of an increase in number and the intensity of the problem. This neglect in the area of research has contributed for the resulting neglect in policies and strategies that are aiming at addressing the problem.

Through the life history of four teen household heads it will see deeply into the household life style and the challenges it has gone through from the incidence of HIV/AIDS to the parents to their death and and their current way of life. It also sees in to a changing care giving and household administering roles that are emerging as a result of the formation of these new types of households and its gender and generational aspect and deals with the challenges they face in keeping the family together and the coping mechanisms they adapted as young carers who are assigned with this responsibility at an

early age. On top of the above mentioned it will explore the support system that the community and the extended family offers for these teens and their household and the challenges faced as a result of a rupturing societal tie that is mainly aggravated by AIDS.

Keywords

HIV, AIDS, Youth, Teen, Child, Household (Head), Care giving

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Two aspects of development in Africa have captured the international spotlight but have yet to be adequately integrated: the recognition of the growing importance of youth in economic and social development and the damaging effects of HIV/AIDS on not only the economy, but also on the capacity of households to care for their children and prepare them for their future life and roles as citizens of a nation.

'Youth' forms a greater portion of the African population that have a fertility rate which 'seems always to have been high' (Bledsoe and Cohen 1993 as quoted in Durham, 2000:114). This growth in population coupled with decreases in infant and child mortality, 'mean that the distribution of the population is heavily skewed towards younger people' (Ibid). Ethiopia's population, similar to many countries in sub Saharan Africa, faces the reality of a youth bulge, which indicates the growing and large number of young population. Of the estimated 79,000,000 million, 42.75% are under the age of 15 years and the young population from 15-29 constitutes nearly 22.7 per cent of the country's total population while the main focus of this research that lies between the ages of 15-19 tallied close to 8,178,673(4,146,348 Male and 4,032,325 Female) and constituting 10.3% of the total population (CSA, 2007: 4). This statistics indicates the need for greater emphasis on policies and strategies that addresses the needs of the young population groups as they represent more than half of the total population. Currently there is a big threat to this generation in Ethiopia as it is highly threatened by HIV/AIDS both as direct victims from infections and a later sickness as well as facing the consequence from the illness and eventual death of parents which leads to the creation of new form of orphans that are specifically addressed as AIDS orphans.

The Orphan phenomenon is not a new issue for Ethiopia but HIV/AIDS has played a catalyst role for its dramatic increase over the past decades. In the year 2003 the estimated number of AIDS related deaths was 150,000 per year and there were a total estimated number of 4,554,000 orphans-defined as children under 18 years of age who have lost one or both parents- out of which 539,000 are orphaned by AIDS (AIDS in Ethiopia 5th Report Fact sheet, 2004:3). In 2005 these figures increased significantly and reached an estimated number of 4, 885,337 children that are orphaned by various causes among which 744,100, which is 15% of total orphans, account for children orphaned by

AIDS (AIDS in Ethiopia, 2006: 25), indicating rising number of AIDS orphans in the country creating a concern for the state, service providers and the community at large.

A sour reality in this phenomenon of orphan hood apart from losing parents is that young people may be separated from their families and as “orphans, some are sent to foster homes, orphanages or church-run facilities, while others taken to the streets. Many, however, are left as HoHs, with the difficult responsibility of supporting themselves and their siblings” (WYR, 2003, 356). These households run by young orphans are mainly established either due to lack of close relatives or relatives that are willing to take over the parental role and sometimes due to the preference of the children to do it by their own. Empirical evidence indicates that even when the extended family takes the responsibility the burdens of caring for orphans or family members ailing from AIDS falls disproportionately on grandparents many of whom suffer from poverty and poor health themselves (UNAIDS, 2007:94). As a result of this phenomenon Ethiopia become a home for more than 77, 000 unaccompanied child-headed households; the second highest figure in sub-Saharan Africa (Tsegaye, 2008:5).

Given these realities, this paper explores how young people, particularly of teenagers aged between 15-19, who become HoHs due to loss of their parents to AIDS in Ethiopia are coping with the challenges that they face while carrying out the dual role of caring for themselves, living their ‘youth’ and preparing for their own future, ‘being’ and ‘becoming’, while simultaneously taking primary responsibility for their siblings and running a household.

Apparently these children and young people start the role of running a household not only after the death of their parents but “when parents are debilitated by poor health” (UNAIDS, 2007:92) that resulted from AIDS and they will take over the full responsibility after the death of their parents. After taking over the responsibility “poverty and social dislocation, as well as stigma and discrimination” that are caused and aggravated by HIV/AIDS, may increase the “woes” faced by children and younger people who become HH and their siblings, which in turn increase their vulnerability to the vicious circle of HIV (UNAIDS, 2007:91) and other adverse social ills like crime and violence.

1.2 Problem Statement

In the growing policy and more general development literature that deals with the effects of HIV/AIDS on households, a majority of interventions have been focused on children or adults. Yet, despite growing interest globally and in Africa specifically on youth and their well being, youth as a category has been overlooked in policies on how to understand the adverse effects of HIV/AIDS on teen HH and provide structure for care and support systems.

Caring for others by children and young people is not a new thing as they “have always been involved with caring for others, whether elderly, ill or disabled parents, siblings or other family, household or community members.” (Robson and Ansell, 2000:174) but this phenomenon have not been a research focus because in many societies of the developing world, caring by children is considered “as part of socialization, something expected of children, a normal part of growing up” (Ibid.) but as the rise in number of them getting in to this task due to AIDS with some or no support from government or the existing social network the topic come to light and become an area of interest for a research. As there are only very few government services that help orphans in Ethiopia the primary coping strategy for communities has therefore been the extended family but due to “the astounding rise in the number of orphans due to the HIV epidemic” (Abebe and Aase, 2007:2058)and higher level of poverty this capacity and willingness has been challenged and clears a path for an alternative means of care and establishment of a household under the name of ‘child headed’ households which prepares a ground for the existence of teen and youth headed households. Despite all these challenges “the traditional support system of child care in many African societies has proved its resilience even to major social changes” (Abebe and Aase, 2007:2060) but the magnitude of the problem is even challenging this resilience.

This research focuses on the age category that is found in the range of 15 to 19 and falls at a cross point between ‘child’ and ‘youth’, a growing category of teen HH that are left in a vacuum as they are located in a blurred line when it comes to identifying them to one specific age group.

Due to this lack of focus on this category there has never been a clear indication on the number of households headed by this age group but it is evident that their number is rising as the child heads of households grow up and join the rest who become heads while they were in the specified age category. As a case in Rwands indicates that CHH

have originated due to the conflict almost 11 years ago but the households are still being considered as child headed by many despite the heads are already 11 years older than the age when they become a head (MacLellan, 2005, 6), which initiates a question on the focus of the intervention and the categorization of the heads in to groups.

These teen HH are faced with diverse challenges that emanates from different causes. One can be attributed to parents' failure to prepare their children during their times of "terminal illness" for their future life by creating alternative arrangement of living, which will leave the children in a "household with limited, or no, resources" (Ayieko, 1997:1) as well as no one to takeover the 'parental' role. When young people assume parental responsibilities in these kinds of situations where no proper plat forms are laid it may disrupt their own growth and development as they have to fend more to work on things from the ground as their parents did not lay the ground to start. As a result teens that become primary caregivers for their siblings are likely to face a set of emotional, health, social and economic problems and they have to cope not only with the loss of their parents but also from dealing with their siblings in the household to finding work to sustain the household they are heading. In line with this point Robson and Ansel (2007:175) argued that caring for other household members "may impose particular and at times challenging demands on young people and as such", these demands may interfere in their education that may contribute for a better future in terms of profession and skill acquisition and also may serve as a factor for destruction in their being 'youth' and achievement of their future aspirations. Therefore in this research, by addressing the neglected area of teen headed households, I attempted to fill a gap by illustrating the prevailing facts and try to bring to light this neglected group and their way of life. I believe that it will be of an added value for interventions and planning of support programmes at a national and regional level in Ethiopia as well as opens the door and ignites interest for future researches.

1.3 Research Objectives and Research Questions

1.3.1 Research Objectives

- To identify the economic, social and developmental challenges faced by teenagers who are heads of a household.
- To explore the coping mechanism that is adopted by teen HH in order to address the challenges associated with performing parental

role.

- To assess the relation of authority that exists between HH and their younger siblings.
- To explore how care giving and the household dynamics are gendered.
- To assess the support mechanism that exists for teen headed households.

1.3.2 Research Questions

- How do young people between ages of 15-19 cope with assuming family responsibility due to loss of their parents to AIDS?

1.3.3.1 Research Sub-Questions

- What social, economic and developmental challenges do teenagers face while taking the role of parents at an early age both before and after the death of parents?
- Do these young persons assume full adult roles as HH, or do they try to fulfil their needs, desires, and aspirations associated with youth?
- What is the nature and level of conflict and cooperation that exists between the HH and the younger siblings?
- Does care giving and the household dynamics gendered?
- What support mechanisms and other networks exist in order to assist these young HH and their ‘family’?

1.4 Methodology of the Research

1.4.1 Primary Data

This research is conducted through a field work that took five weeks in the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa and it uses life history research method.

Life History-The life story exclusively focuses on four teen HH that are the main targets of the research and attempts to get a clear understanding about life choices and the day to day decisions they have made in order to sustain their household and themselves. The reason why I choose life history as a method goes back to my work with children affected by AIDS in Addis Ababa and my participation in Oral History collection from

persons living with HIV/AIDS and their children as well as orphaned ones. During my exposure to those story collections I realized that this method can help in understanding the issue at hand in a very detailed way and can also help see clearly in to the pain and happiness, the challenges and the smooth roads, the conflicts and cooperation and many more as I spend more time and probe deeply in to their life.

The added value of this method is that it have the effect of ‘humanizing’ the research subject, (McKeown et al.2006 as quoted in Kakuru and Paradaza,2007:288) taking out ‘other kinds of information that do not get in to the public record’(Yow,1994:11) and “show how social environments and the wider social/cultural resources help people make sense and meaning of their lives” (Etherington:2006:234) therefore contributes for understanding of the “relationship, the complex interaction, between life and context, self and place” and also helps in “comprehending the complexities of a person’s day-to-day decision making and the ultimate consequences that play out in that life so that insights in to the broader, collective experience may be achieved”(Cole & Knowles:2001:11). It also gives the narrator “the opportunity to talk about their own life in their own words to the researcher, and may benefit from the empathy and the unique audience which the life story interaction provides” (Kakuru and Paradaza, 2007:288). Additionally, life stories help to put individuals’ experiences “within a context of a wider web of meanings” (Leydesdorff, 1999 as quoted in Kakuru and Paradaza,2007:289), thereby revealing the links between individual or group problems and their context.

Finally, like Miller Mair (1989:2) as quoted in Etherington(2006:235) I believe that “intimate knowledge is likely to teach us more than distant knowledge, personal knowledge is more likely to change us than impersonal knowledge”.

Research Participants: The selection for these households was purposive and the samples in the research were male and female with the age range of 15-19 that are enrolled in school as well as those dropped out of it in order to provide their household a means of survival. In terms of economic status the research mainly focuses on those who are at the lower income level and accommodates those who are benefiting well from supports from NGOs and other community support networks as well as those who get limited support and those with none. Other attributes like religion, age, household size have also influenced my choice of these research participants. These identified research participants are accessed through HAPCSO that is involved in provision of care and

support for families affected and infected by HIV/AIDS and also where I worked for three years as a coordinator for OVC Project which contributes a great deal in terms of smooth access to respondents and easier gathering of information.

The participants of this research are two girls (one is fifteen years old and another one is 18 years old) and two boys (both nineteen years old) that are heading households. I pick these households among the many because they are diverse in many ways and I believe the narrations I may get will give rich information in terms of the life experiences and choices made by the different heads. The total participants of the research are not planned to show a definite societal reality and way of life as in this research there are no “causal explanations or generalizations that are made” (Etherington, 2006:234) to a bigger population. All the participants are persons by their own rights rather than representatives of all teens that are heading a household in the country and it is my belief that this problem of small number of research participants “is balanced by the depth of exploration” and flexibility that the method allows. (Ibid.)

1.4.2 Secondary Data

This research uses a variety of secondary data from printed and unprinted materials that are available in this area of concern. Different reports from UN and other development organization’s publications that focus on children, youth and HIV/AIDS. Different Policy documents, strategy papers and guidelines that have been developed by the Ethiopian government regarding children, youth and HIV/AIDS are used in order to see in to the government’s stake in the whole scene of HIV/AIDS and its effects in order to address the issue at hand. Literatures and Theoretical documents on AIDS, Youth and Children other similar case stories from other sources and other countries are also used to feed up the research and strengthen the results.

1.5 Limitations of the Research

Shortage of adequate literature and of relevant official statistics, both globally and locally, that describes the magnitude of the problem and indicates past and present trends of teens as HH is evident and this affects the research process. In order to avoid this shortage in secondary materials I used documents that are developed mainly to address the issue of only child headed households as there is a wide similarity in the causes and the process of being an orphan and heading a household at younger age that both categories have gone through.

The total time assigned to conduct the field work was limited as the method selected needs a deeper understanding of issues and ideally takes longer than five weeks to acquire the desired information from the respondents. Since I have a prior knowledge of the research area and the research targets it contributes much by building a firm ground to facilitate the field work and acquire a greater result with the assigned time frame. Time constraint was apparent not only from my side but also from the side of the respondents that were requested to spend a big share of their time with me during the data collection process which at times clashes with their personal and household responsibilities and priorities.

There are also limitations that emanates from the very nature of the main research method that is used in this paper, i.e, life story method. As the life stories that are collected during research period are influenced by the “history and context in which they occur and are told” (Kakuru and Paradza, 2007:11) and also the information gathered mainly lies in the selectivity of narrators (Yow, 1994:17). In addition the stories collected if not collected with greater care it may result in a picture that is, as Yow (Yow, 1994:16) stated it, “narrow, idiosyncratic or ethnocentric’. Also at the analysis stage I took all the possible care to avoid any subjectivity and involvement with the stories and attempted to get a balanced narration of the stories as it is always recommended that all researchers need to pay attention to “their biases, both implicit and explicit, and to take them in to account during the data processing” (Kurkuru and Paradaza, 2007:296) and interpretation.

I also acknowledge the existence of power dynamics in the relationship between me and the research participants as “researchers are more powerful than their informants” (Kurkuru and Paradaza, 2007:294) and most importantly “children and young people often report feeling powerless and excluded” (Ansell, 2005:5) in many research projects. But as I was once part of the organization that they consider as carer there was no much of a challenge to get closer and conduct the life story interview in a relatively free spirit from both sides.

1.6 Organization of the Paper

This paper has five chapters; the first chapter deals with introducing the paper, stating the problem, objectives of the study, the research methodology used and the limitations of the research. Chapter two deals with defining the major concepts that are emphasized

in the research and attempts to present their connection through analytical frame work. Chapter three and four deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data that are acquired from field work in Ethiopia. Chapter three mainly focuses on past trends in the households including the life of parents as well as that of the rest of the household members with main focus on the current head of the household before the death of the parents. Chapter Four focuses on the current condition of the teenagers and on how they are coping up with the situation they are in and goes deeply to investigate the meaning of 'being' for these teen heads and where it fits in their responsibility as younger parents. It also looks in to their future aspirations and the challenges they are facing while pursuing these dreams, challenges in the process of 'becoming'. Finally, chapter five gives conclusions that are drawn from the analysis and the general content of the paper.

CONCEPTUAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Concepts

Six concepts (Youth, Child, Teenage, Orphan, Care giving, HH) are mainly used in this paper in a way that the three concepts child, youth and orphan will be linked by the age category teenage and all these four concepts will be tied together to investigate and analyze the diverse challenges that are faced by the teenage HH between the age of 15 to 19 that become HH and are giving care for their siblings due to loss of their parents for AIDS and their coping mechanisms as well as community responses cooperation. Finally in this chapter I will present the framework that I use to analyze this paper.

Youth: There is no uniform definition for the category 'youth', both in everyday usage and government policy. "This great variety signifies both the fluidity of age categories and the degree to which they are contested globally" (Tyyska, 2005:3) and indicates that the definition and demarcation of youth varies from society to society and even within societies as "people of a wide range of ages are often treated as youth, and people of a wide range of ages claim the space of youth, at specific times and in specific places" (Durham, 2000:113).

Despite this lack of agreed demarcation there is an overall consensus that youth represents a grey period of transition from 'childhood' to 'adulthood' (Govndasamy et al, 2003:3) and it is considered by many as both a "social position which is internally and externally shaped and constructed, as well as part of a larger societal and generational process, a state of becoming." (Catherine et al, 2006, 11). Youth has been defined repeatedly as a relational concept "because it exists and has meaning largely in relation to the concept of adulthood...if youth is a state of 'becoming', adulthood is the arrival (Wyn and White, 1997:11). Durham pointed out that among the solutions proposed to define the category youth is to define the group with reference to "biosocial stages of a universal life course: infancy, childhood, adolescence, youth, and adulthood". But he challenges this idea by asserting that there are societies that do not look in to "youth" in its biosocial stages and a good example for this is that in many societies "girls may become youth well before the onset of puberty or much later in their 20s, and young males may continue to be youth long into their 30s or 40s" (Durham, 2000:115). In this way "when global perspective is taken, the socially constructed nature of 'youth' becomes more apparent. For a large proportion of the world's young people, the idea of 'youth' as

universal stage of development was and remains an inappropriate concept.” (Wyn and White, 1997:10)

“Although the experience of youth varies widely, and may not exist at all for some, the concept of youth is important in enabling us to understand some of the complexities of social change and the intersections between institutions and personal biography”(Ibid.) In light of this the UN defined youth as those between 15 and 25 years of age during its international year of youth, in 1985 which clearly comes in to an overlap with the definition of child, which is anyone under the age of eighteen (Tyyska, 2005:3)that the very same organization adopted. Categorizing youth based on age has been criticized highly because of its ‘western bias’ and because of this an increasing number of researchers made an attempt to avoid ‘homogenizing’ youth by defining as specific age categories. As an alternative there is also a preference to define youth as a ‘social status’, “characterised by a period or life in which a person is either partly or fully dependent on others, usually adults and members of one’s family, for material support while some prefer to approach youth in relational terms, with reference to the ‘social processes whereby age is socially constructed, institutionalized and controlled in historically and culturally specific ways’ (Tyyska, 2005: 4).

Just like anywhere else in the world there is also no uniformity in the definition of youth in Ethiopia as it varies “depending on the existing economic, social, cultural and political setup and life style” in different parts of the country (National Youth Policy, 2004:3). The Ethiopian Youth Policy by taking in to consideration the different perceptions and the existing conditions and reality in the country defines “those members of the society in the age range 15-29 years as youth.” (Ibid.)

Usually this category is labelled with a common feature globally and as Foucault (1979) suggests that in a majority of cases youth as a concrete category of social analysis are increasingly considered as a “socially problematic category”, and studies on it focuses on “deviance or of problems needing programmatic intervention” (Durham, 2000:116) leaving aside the productive and positively contributory side of this concrete category, like their role that will be dealt with in this paper.

Child: The concept of child has a great contribution to the general findings of this research because the bigger parts of the targets which are cared for by the teen HoH fall under this category and also the research targets are found in the grey area that is

considered both as 'child' and 'youth' while some of them took over the responsibility some years back while in the age category that identifies 'child'. It is evident that the concept of a 'child' varies from one society to another at different times (Ansell, 2005:8) as a result the demarcation line between 'childhood', 'youth' and 'adulthood' is vague to put universally since almost all societies have their own conception of what a 'child' and other categories means and the attributes and expectations attached to each. Because of these reasons "there is no universal definition of 'child', let alone agreement about what it means to be a child" (Ansell, 2005:1). This confirms that the definition of child similar to the definition of youth is also a socially constructed one as its meaning varies from one society to another at different times in history.

It is also an age based category and this demarcation is mainly used by different development bodies like the UN, ILO as well as large number of countries in the world. Even though there exists diverse definitions and classifications of the ages that are being used by different groups and societies in different countries around the world and among these the most widely used definition is the one which is adopted by the UN for the formulation of the CRC and is used as an official standard definition throughout the world which defines the term "child" as "every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier"(UNCRC, Article 1). While using this definition it doesn't mean that it will apply for all communities in the world in the same way but as it is accepted by many nations in the world it will have a significant implication on policies and intervention strategies that focuses on children.

As mentioned earlier the widely used age based categorization of youth and the resulting definitions of it both by the UN and the Ethiopian youth policy indicate that there is an overlap of ages between the definition of youth and child while "the only thing that binds 0-17 years old together , and divides them from those aged 18 or over, is their lack of full legal standing, and even this is not a clear-cut division: some legal rights acquired at other ages in most societies... furthermore, defining all young people under 18 as 'children' risks infantilizing those towards the upper limit, and does not adequately address their needs." (Ansell,2005:4)

Teenage: "Much research and policy making narrows its scope by treating children and youth as a separate categories, and focusing on either one or the other" (Ansell, 2005:4).

In this research the emphasis will be on the group where that the age category youth and child overlap and also falls under the category of teenage, which is a category given for persons from the age 13-19. Ansell pointed out that “the ‘teenager’ was invented in the west in the 19 50s, a time of relative affluence, as a new variety of consumer with disposable income and few responsibilities” (Ansell, 2005:14) which now becomes a global concept and used to identify a specific group of children and young people. In most cases teenage serves as a thin dividing line between childhood and youth and this point is strongly argued by Boyden (2000 as quoted in Ansell 2005:14) and to assert this point Ansell herself argued that “teenagers sometimes claim the label child to win sympathy, where as those who wish to denigrate them may call tem youth.” As a result this category gives a big dynamism for the research since it caters for additional age categories that over lap with it, childhood and youth based on the analysis made on them in the previous pages. This research therefore deals with young persons, more specifically older teenagers that fall between the ages of 15-19.

Child (0-17)																				
										Adolescent(10-19)										
												Teenager(13-19)			Young Adult(20-24)					
												Youth (15-24)								

Figure 1, Terms in use by UN agencies (adopted from Ansell, 2005:4)

Orphan: A division has been made by different development bodies to identify different kinds of orphan hood status. The following terms are usually used by many development agents and nation states mainly for statistical purposes in estimating orphan sub populations, make policy documents and develop intervention strategies for care and support.

Maternal orphans are children under age 18 whose mothers, and perhaps fathers, have died (includes double orphans).

Paternal orphans are children under age 18 whose fathers, and perhaps mothers, have died (includes double orphans).

Double orphans are children under 18 whose mothers and fathers have died. Total orphans are children under age 18 whose mothers or fathers (or both) have died.(Children on the Brink,2004:6)

“The use of these mutually exclusive categories allows us to identify more easily the impact of the death of one parent and to separate this impact from the impact of the loss of both parents.”(Case et.al., 2004:488) In this research the target populations will be mainly orphans that are identified as double orphans in the above explanations. There are large indications that children who lost both their parents are more vulnerable to challenges in their life. This categorization does not mean that all orphans are faced with the same kind of problems and all are going through the same kind of experiences therefore does not rule out the existence of families that are favored and provided with many support and that are also better off even when compared to children that are living with their families.

There also exists a characterization of orphans based on the cause for them being orphan Abebe and Aase (2007:2059) described as “‘famine orphans,’ ‘war orphans,’ ‘malaria orphans,’ and ‘social orphans,’ however in the past twenty years HIV/AIDS is recognized worldwide as additional threat to children and their families and “joined the rest of the causes to impose additional burdens on society’s youngest and most vulnerable members, children” (Children on the brink, 2004:4)

Care giving: As the main essence of this paper revolves around care giving task that is taken over by teen HH; the concept of care giving plays a major role in the analysis of this paper. The task of care giving is a complicated issue as it differs in practice and the bodies held responsible to perform this duty vary from one community to another as a result children world wide are reared through different kinds of care giving practice and experience. In many societies “children’s relationships are primarily with parents and secondarily with siblings” and in some “siblings play a primary role after infancy” while in many other settings “the extended family or the neighbourhood or even professional caregivers or agencies hold responsibility for children.” (Rogoff, 2003:118) Rogoff also pointed out that “specialization of roles with children has to do with who else is available within the family or neighbourhood, as well as with cultural expectations regarding the appropriate role.”(Ibid.) As a result in many ‘developing’ countries siblings and the extended family as well as the larger community takes responsibility while in ‘developed’

western countries institutions can also be part of the caring system. But the significant trend is that “in many communities in which the mothers involve others in the nurturance and support of young children, siblings have central role, providing care and instruction. (Rogoff, 2003:122) and among siblings girls are more responsible as “child rearing is more often done by women and girls than by men and boys” (Wisner, 1997 as quoted in Rogoff, 2003, 183) based on the socially constructed gendered role division. A good example that illustrates this is that in the absence of girls in a Polynesian family one son is selected “and raised as a girl in order to undertake ‘daughter’s roles’ such as care of siblings and housework (Momson: 2004:2) and satisfy the social expectations.

This is because “in different household systems, men and women have different responsibilities in terms of work in domestic or other activities, obligations to provide food and other resources, and cash income to meet family needs (Pearson, 1992:302) and it is through performing these activities that they perform their role as ‘carers’. “Gender roles until recently have been closely tied to the biological roles of women as mothers and men as fathers, with associated opportunities and constraints” (Rogoff,2003:180) In this case women are highly associated with and are more responsible to handling household tasks in addition to performing the ‘reproductive’ role while men plays the ‘productive’ role by serving as the bread winners and heads of a household; a conception that is widely contested as there is also a wider existence of households “in which women are the primary providers for their families”(Buvinić and Rao Guptha:1997:260) In one way or another “the widespread gender differences of children around the world relate to the adult gender roles of their community” (Rogoff,2003:180) and due to these expectations “individuals learn what is expected, see what is expected, act and react as in expected ways, and thus simultaneously construct and maintain the gender order”(Lorber,1995:15) which lead children to follow the path that is adopted by the community unless conditions force them to adopt to a different way of caring for household and a children.

Household (head): The diverse ways of living arrangements in different parts of the world complicates the delineation of household type and what it ideally is composed of as “different countries use different and therefore often non- comparable definitions of both the terms ‘household’ and ‘HoH” (Buvinić and Rao Guptha: 1997:2) Most definitions that are provided for a household are geared towards performing a survey and

identify a household to serve its purpose and based on this Jenkinson pointed out that ideally a household “comprises either one person living alone or a group of people, who may or may not be related, living (or staying temporarily) at the same address, with common housekeeping, who either share at least one meal a day or share common living accommodation” (Jenkinson, 1998:4) while Gage et. al. defines it as “a person or a group of persons living together and sharing a common source of food.” But also challenged their own conception by questioning its comprehensiveness and raised their own concern if the concept of a household is defined as “those who share the same shelter, it will be difficult to incorporate those who may not always sleep in that dwelling, who live for short or prolonged periods, perhaps to find work, or to attend secondary school (Gage et.a al,1996:7) leaving the attempt to give a household a concrete definition which in a way also contributes for the confusion of defining the concept of a head of a household.

The idea of coming up with the clear definition of HoH also gets problematic as it is bounded in the concept of household it self and the whole debate between who is heading a household in relation to who really maintains it by providing the incomes and making the important decisions. In addition to the complexities that may arise from the points mentioned the “term ‘HoH’ is not neutral as it is loaded with additional meanings that reflect a traditional emphasis on households as undifferentiated units with a patriarchal system of governance and no internal conflicts in the allocation of resources” (Buvinić and Rao Guptha:1997:2). In light of all these ambiguities definitions that are given and anticipated highly focused on male and adult instead of female and a child or other young persons. This conception is observed in the definitions given for a head of a household by Gage et. al which stated that “if a household contained only husband, wife and children under 16 the husband is always the HoH. Where a couple is living together/cohabiting the male partner is treated as the HoH...If there were two persons with an equal claim to be HoH, the older, and the male rather than the female, were to be treated as HoH.” After going through this general description of head of a household one can observe the conception that is patriarchal and lean towards adults by leaving the existence of female headed households and the lately emerging child and youth headed households which are becoming more visible in the current world where we are living in.

2.2 Analytical Framework

The analytical framework of this paper is based on the aforementioned and discussed concepts; and next I will give a description on how each concept has been applied to the overall paper and how each concept is related to one another.

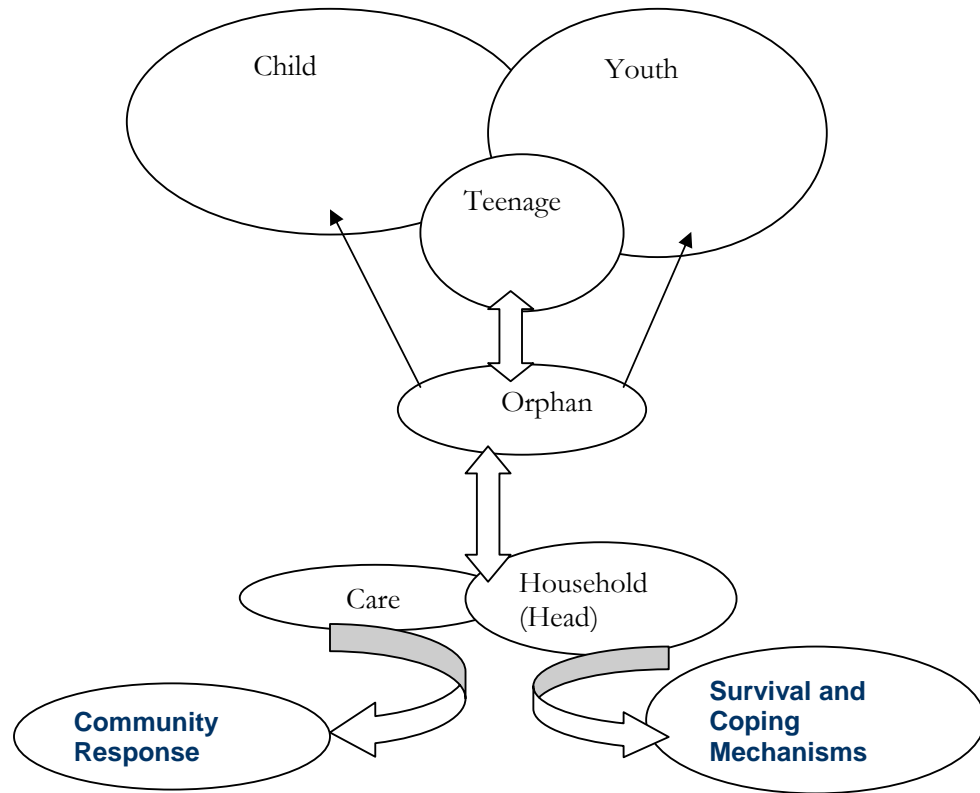


Figure 2. Analytical Framework of the study

The concept of Teenage is one that is used as a main focus in this paper while the other two concepts Child and Youth that share a borderline in the age based categorization of the groups that is used in this paper are also dealt with in many parts as they are significant either through the childhood that the teenagers have passed through or the youth that awaits them and also at the same time they are living. Their siblings who are under the care of the teenagers are also found in these age categories making the use of these concepts a necessary. The concept orphan is also central for all the points discussed in this paper as all are under focus because they eventually fall in this category due to the death of parents and it also creates a link between the above concepts and the other two concepts that this paper uses, Care giving and Household and its heads in this case the teens.

3. THE TEEN'S LIVES: AS IT EVOLVESTO HEADINH A HOUSEHOLD

This chapter deals with analyzing the history of the family and its current head, who in this case are the teen HoHs, and see in to the life course and processes that took place in the lives of these teens and how their family evolves from being once headed by an adult parent to a household that is headed by a teen as a result of AIDS. It also shows how the households, particularly the heads have begin to adapt to the new task with limited or no resources and 'ability' to perform care giving role.

3.2 Children's and Their Parent's Background

The way the children brought up and the type of family they are raised in shapes up their behaviour and performance in different aspects of life including carrying out the responsibility to head a household in their early ages. Even though the parents end up in Addis Ababa, the biggest and the capital of Ethiopia, as their life takes them to the seeming opportunities that the city promises to offer, all were born and raised outside of the city but made their way through different times and for many different reasons. But what make them the same is that they were all struggling to make a living in this big city where the social network and support system is loose as compared to their original places where they are circled around by their relatives and kin's men and women.

All the participants has experienced a very different path in their life course as they all are different ethnic, religious and geographical backgrounds which reflects on the way they are brought up and socialized in to the world and it would be difficult to imagine that they would become a focus of a common topic at this period of their life, i.e, being HoHs as they loose their parents for AIDS. In light of this in the coming paragraphs I will give a brief description to introduce the background of the research participants and show this diversity as well as the ample communalities shared.

Biniam: When Biniam was born his parents and his older sister were settled in Harar, a city that is found in the eastern part of Ethiopia and the one place where his family stayed for longer period before finally settling to Addis Ababa. Biniam's father was working in the Military as a driver and his mother was a housewife and never worked in her life to generate an income. They used to have a permanent income that can sustain the household and covers their basic necessities. But all changed after the death of both the parents in nine months interval when Biniam was 15 years old and a grade 9 student.

Biniam has two brothers (13 and 17 years old) and a 24 year old sister, who is now enrolled in the military. The family is highly religious and are followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox church which give a foundation for the current lives of the children and their way of living. Currently he held a diploma in Accounting from a College and started working at HAPCSO and earning an income that Contributes for his household. Even though Biniam have older sister he is the one, who was and still is, responsible for his household as his sister is away right after the death of their parents because she joins the military, but still with power over the household decision making even in her distance.

Miteku: Just like Biniam Miteku was born out side of Addis Ababa, in Eastern Gojam, Elias woreda, the same place where his parents were born and brought up. Right after his birth his parents move to a city that is found close by due to a conflict that the father had with some people in the area. But Miteku remained behind with his grandfather until he become five years old and finally moved to join his parents as they established a livelihood in the new town and become capable of caring for him. His parents have managed to build a good business as a whole seller of cereals in the capital city and as a result his father was away to facilitate his business to Addis Ababa while his mother stay back running the business at home and caring for the children.

He did not faced much of a challenge in his education and his childhood in general as his parents were economically sound and were able to provide him with his needs; a reality that changes dramatically with the sickness and death of his parents. His parents died in a short interval with his mother being the first and after a year his father followed and Miteku become a head of a household. He has 2 sisters (14 and 16 years old) and two brothers (8 and 17 years old) who were all born in the rural town where Miteku was raised in. Currently he is working as a daily labourer in construction sites in Addis Ababa and sometimes uses the skill he acquired as a General mechanic to do works that are related to Metal work in order to generate an income for his household. He is attending school in the night shift and he is now in grade 10, which he continued after 4 years of interval hoping that education can bring along other opportunities in his future life that can better sustain his income and well being.

Haimanot: Haimanot was born in the outskirts of the Addis Ababa that is informally known as Zenebework, where the majority of the residents are migrants from the rural

parts of the country, more specifically from Gojam, a place where her mother came from and a birth place for Miteku and his siblings as mentioned above. Her father left them when she was only four years old and married to another woman and as a result she was raised in a female headed household. Her mother was the one who took all the responsibility in raising Haimanot and her sister, Aynalem, by working hard in the lowest of social stratum and earning very little which was only enough to cover daily meal which at times was not available. She passed away when Haimanot was 11 years old and a grade 4 student leaving her with greater responsibility at that age this young age.

Haimanot's is a reserved person and she kept to herself which is a result of her upbringing and the life hardships that she experiences during childhood which she believes contributes for who she is at this time "a better person" as she described it. She has two sisters (22 and 15) and only met once with the older one in her life time as she is from a previous marriage of her mother's side in Gojam and she describe her relationship as follows; "there is not much we share apart from a mother, nothing at all". She attributed her good life to God who helped her and her family all the way and is still keeping them high in his thoughts and fulfil their needs. She and her sister Aynalem are followers of Pentecostal church which is not of their mother's, Ethiopian Orthodox.

Currently she is working in her own hair dressing salon that she opened by taking a small loan from organization after she gets a training on the profession from HAPCSO. This way she is earning an income and sustains her household and she still have hope to make a big business out of it, which is not only limited to her house in a very smaller scale. She is also attending her education in the evening shift at grade eleven but she never thought of doing any other thing with education nor had any expectation in terms of return from it and all she want is to finish high school and concentrate more on her business.

Sofia: Sofia, the youngest of all the participants at the age of 15, was born very close to the very centre of Addis Ababa, a place that is considered as the economic centre of the city and an extension for the biggest open market in the country; therefore it is an ideal site for people like Sofia's parents who came to the city to work by using their existing family network in the business world and to stay in as it is filled with ample opportunities for work and a better life, a dream which never came true for Sofia's parents who worked all their life at the lower level of the line that earns only little.

She grew up with her aunt until the age of eight but there were times that she goes back to live with her mother for shorter durations in between. She has only one brother who is 13 years old. She do not have many memories of her father as he was never there for the family and never lived with them permanently as his work as a daily labourer keeps him away from where her mother lives. Her mother was also working as a daily labourer and earns money by fetching water for the neighbours and transporting it with a donkey to their doors until she touches bed due to her sickness and her eventual death two years ago.

Sofia is a quite and one with not many friends to play or associate with and who likes to spend most of her time in door. At this moment she is attending school at grade 6 which is a bit behind for a 15 year old but many reasons are associated for that and will be dealt in the pages to come. She is a Muslim in religion and she strongly believes that her religion has helped her in a lot of ways to be the person she is now.

3.3 Childhood in the Presence of Parent(s): Security Insured?

The comforting and provision role of parents is undeniable in the wider Ethiopian society just like it is the case throughout the world. All the children witnessed that, despite their economic status and ability to provide for the household, their parents attempted their best to provide all the possible protection and care that a child could get or needed at their level of living standard. By the time the children were born in to the families, the parents, even if they don't have the resource they had the means and the ability to find a way of acquiring some sort of an income that can help them to provide for the family, ability and means that is very diverse both in its nature and return.

It is evident from the stories that life was never on the smoothest of its tracks for all but moves with variation, for some with constant income through employment or trade activities and others with much uncertainty about whether additional money will come that will cover the costs for the day and the ones to come.

3.4 House Hold Tasks: Preparing for the Unforeseeable

The Ethiopian life style in the household have its own similarity in terms of who does household tasks and who does those outside as part of preparation for future life with or with out the presence of parents. This reflection can be seen in the lives of these households in the way the teens were brought up from their early childhood till the time their parents passed away. Household responsibility mainly assigned on the basis of

gender and age while its extent mainly varies depending on the economic level of the family. In most parts of the country it is believed that girls should learn basic household tasks and be left with sole responsibility to it while boys are given with much responsibility in activities outside the house that requires physical strength and if there is nothing to be done they will be set free to play with friends; a privilege the girls are not lucky enough to enjoy.

In the coming pages by looking in to this division of labour that each household functions with during the presence of the parents I will show how it has been defined in and how it clears a way or serves as impediment for the current responsibility that is taken over by the teens.

Haimanot and Sofia were highly filled with responsibilities in the house starting from their childhood with the extent being more for Haimanot who lived with her mother that labours hard to provide the household with an income while Sofia had a chance to live with her aunt that was economically strong, a reason to ease Sofia's participation in household tasks at her early ages. Haimanot thought that she was never a child rather she has always been an adult who think seriously about everything around her as well as the future. And explained her day to day activities as follows;

"I used to collect firewood for the preparation of the injera that is to be sold in the market and when my mother was away or doing some other thing I will help by selling them."

This happens not because Haimanot is a girl rather it is because her mother was very poor and as a single mother who struggles to earn an income and keep the family intact she was never at home to do the household tasks and Aynalem, her younger sister, was very young to assist in these tasks at that time.

Sofia, despite her mother's low economic status, after returning to live with her at the age of eight, was not highly involved in household activities because another aunt of hers was living with them and used to provide the support deemed necessary. But Sofia says that "I used to help my mother with many household activities but not in the preparation of food which is the difficult one and the one that needs talent but I learned it through time" and shows a big smile on her face and proceeds "my mother used to get very happy when I do these things in the house". And she finally she commented on her brother; "Abdul never helped in any kind of work in the house, he was always there playing."

Biniam was also involved in many activities within the household by his own preference, unlike the girls whose participation was a must for different reasons, because his support in the household was not that necessary and important as the mother and his older sister were the ones who perform the house tasks and an addition to this is that his mother has more time in the house as she was not expected to work outside to contribute for the income. He describes what he used to do at home as follows; “I used to help in household activities everyday after school and I used to do almost everything apart from baking Injera and making food, which of course at later stages during my childhood started to do”. There was a difficulty that he used to face as his father was never happy with this because of the existing social norm that restricts men (boys) from performing household duties and considers it as a taboo. Therefore, Biniam was forced to, as he stated it, “hide or pretend to be doing other things when my father comes to the house.”

The combination of being boys and being from a better off family does contribute for Biniam and Miteku for not taking on household responsibilities for much of their childhood.

“As the household living condition in terms of economic status was very well there was nothing that I remembered or knew of that requires my participation ,therefore all my focus was very much on my education and playing in the neighbourhood after school”(Miteku)

A reality that literally came into conflict with the girls who face a bigger difficulty to concentrate in their education due to the work burden as well as the concern about their household that runs through their mind even when attending class. As a result of this their education suffers either through low performance or the little attention that is given to it as the household duties takes significant amount of time and energy.

From the above analysis it become evident that it was the girls that were more responsible for household tasks, affirming the existing conception of gender based division of labour which through time and through the plight of HIV/AIDS has changed and breaches this conception and paths a way for a new form of division of labour that involves boys even to the extent of taking over full house hold task.

3.4 The Scene of HIV/AIDS

AIDS had played a big role to put the family in a condition they are today and makes them pass through a number of challenges that came along with it and at the same time contribute for their capacity to cope with tough situations in life and develop a view of their own towards the world and the expectations they may have from it. AIDS in all the target households took place at different times in the lives of the participants and its effects as well as the support networks that were available both for all the ailing parents and the children varies significantly but there are also much communalities as well.

3.4.1 The Children in the Middle of This Crisis

Despite their previous involvement or non involvement, it is during this stage in their life that all the participants step by step started to take over the household responsibilities they all are having today. The children, as the first in line to witness their parents sickness, were not only involved in the care for the family and replacing the role of the parent(s) both in the house and outside but also facing the challenge of mental torture as they see their parents ailing while they were under their care.

When Haimanot recalls the time of her mother's sickness she was filled with sorrow and describes the situation as follows; "It was very emotional for me to see my mother weak and most of the time in bed" after a deep breath she added "she was so strong to become bedridden". Sofia shares this experience as she has gone through a lot in terms of psychological tension when she imagined her mother sleeping by herself in the house while she attends school or even when she went out to deliver the water for the neighbours (a job that the mother used to do before she gets sick) and she stated "I had a lot that stresses me up" and it is true as she was the only one caring for her mother apart from minimal support from neighbours and almost none from relatives.

The children grew through the challenges as they were all younger during the sickness of their parents which at the end results in their death. Through the time of their parent's sickness they all have started to take over responsibility slowly and develop resilience attempt to cope with the inconveniences that came in to their lives as time advances and the situation of their parents gets critical.

3.4.2 Care Provided for the Parents and Their Eventual Death

The importance of looking in to the experience that these households pass through during the terminal stages and the support mechanisms available is that it shows how the current heads feel supported and how their transition to full responsibility been build.

Up on the parent's sickness and during their final stages in showing the AIDS symptoms; all the families were faced with a bigger challenge in terms of getting the proper care and treatment as well as love and support from their loved ones and people around. These support systems have played a bigger role in the care and support of the ailing parent(s) while circumstances that were completely the opposite, neglect, were apparent.

In the country as a whole the family network is the one that gives immediate response when a relative is in need of help and care for that household in need but these responsibilities are being breached due to a number of reasons. The negative label attached to HIV/AIDS has been a major reason for this rupture in social tie which results in the stigmatization and discrimination of the individual and the whole family while the lack of resources and time appear to be additional reasons. Even though there is a significant change in extent of stigmatization and exclusion over the past years in the country due to the over all interventions that took place, it still is rampant in many parts of the country. While both the wider community and close relatives tend to fall to this trap and discriminate against the person and the family the later is more prone to stigmatize because of the shame and guilt they will associate to themselves as their family member has acquired AIDS. This is the case that has happened with Miteku when his aunt who lives with them after they moved to Addis Ababa left after she learned that the father is sick from AIDS, a reality that is shared by Sofia and many others that are affected by the AIDS pandemic. In the other side there were also cases that the relatives were highly involved in the care system, like Biniam's relatives and the many more that benefits from their beloved relatives and community members.

The neighbours and the wider community has turn out to be the bigger support system even more than the close relatives' as the whole idea of helping one another is highly emphasized and mainly as there exists no guilt feeling and deep personal attachment they are always there to help. Haimanot's state can be a good indicator for this;

“ it was neighbours who used to take care of my mother and us, as we were very young and no other close relative was available around”
(Haimanot)

Neglects that were experienced from the side of relatives has left a big scar in the memories of the children and those scars are still in their memories and those who face it more are not in good terms with their relatives until now because according to Miteku “a relative that was not there when we need them better stay away forever” a thought equally shared by Sofia but expressed her feeling with some positive tone “if a person doesn’t want you that is their right so we let them do what they want and we also ignore them”. What is witnessed from the lives of the children that do not get the best of support from their relatives is that their extended family has failed them in the time of their need for support because of the reasons that are mentioned in addition to the distance they may have as most of the families are migrants to the city. Even though this is the case families in one way or another will make it to visit an ailing family member no matter the distance, but here a different reality appears and Miteku describes it as follows; “if they really wanted to come and help during that time they could have at least borrow money, that is what others do and I think it is because they hear from our aunt that the sickness of my father was HIV/AIDS.”

There was also a contradictory remark about relatives from Biniam, whose family benefited more from the support of relatives, who says “if our relatives were not there to help us at that moment I do not now what would have happened to our family, may be the younger ones end up in orphanages and to the worst case scenario on the streets”. A statement that reflects the common conception on the role of the extended family as opposed to the rupturing support system that was experienced by the remaining three households.

Eventually as all the parents deteriorated due to the disease and passed away in their time the children goes through deep sorrow and despair. This scenario was a turning point in their lives and particularly for the heads of the household as it is from this time on that they took over the full responsibility and began to care for themselves as well as their siblings at this early age of theirs. This part of their life is important as it helps to see into the transition from the presence of a parent that cares for the family to becoming a child or teen headed household depending on the age at which the heads

were during the death of the parents and helps more to relate to the upcoming chapter that deals with the current lives of the teens, their siblings.

4. THE CHALLENGE OF BEING A TEENAGE AND HOUSEHOLD HEAD

This chapter discusses the responsibilities these teens have as heads of a household and see in to the coping mechanisms they have adopted and how they are matching this huge task with their personal needs, aspirations and other priorities they may have as young persons.

There are large numbers of unaccounted teen HoHs and households that are run by these very young persons all over the country. All have their own reason to take over the responsibility and become ‘parents’ for their brothers and sisters and in many instances for grandparents as well in their younger age. They face challenges in balancing between their life priorities as teenagers and that of their siblings as well as the overall household needs. Sofia describes the good reason why she took over this responsibility which is also shared by the others;

“all our relatives were not willing to support and provide care for us therefore in this situation if I don’t do it my self no body else will ...but it would have been great if we had a relative who could care for us but as there is non I am happy to do it with all the difficulties.”

4.1 Personal and Household Coping Mechanisms

The challenges that these teen heads have to cope with are diverse in nature and include the mourning and grief they have gone through with their parent’s illness and death, dealing with the household tasks of sustaining it. For all this they need to keep their mental strength intact face the many things that make a ‘cocktail’ to make their lives challenging.

4.1.1 Providing the HH: Making Choices

For many orphan households, particularly of those that care for one another at a younger age, finding a way that sustains the survival of their house is a difficult task which gives mental unrest for those who are responsible to make it happen.

In a country where youth unemployment rate is as high as 12% and even among the employed ones the majority are under employed(Denu et. al,2007:1) and where there is no proper social security system finding a way to economically sustain a household and keeping it together as a unit has been very tough for these teens. This issue is one that frustrates the heads and sometimes turns in to inappropriate behaviours due to the stress

they may have faced and their failure to adapt to the situation. A community representative that I interviewed has mentioned that “there are many who run away from the house because the responsibility is too much for them to handle, especially the boys” a tendency that I sensed in the boys during my interview, a tendency of giving up on their duty but struggling to hang on to it.

As HoHs they are expected to get the necessary resource, monetary or material, to the house and for this cause they all have to make decisions in their lives that take them away from their education in order to earn money or look for philanthropists to provide them with their basic necessities.

Haimanot and Miteku dropped out of school to search for income which become out of success for the later as he is still struggling to sustain the family with the little money he is earning by working as a daily labourer. Haimanot managed to establish her own hair dressing salon in her own house and start to generate an income, which according to her response is “good enough” for her and her sister. Haimanot after going through a skills training in hair dressing that is sponsored by HAPCSO struggles to make use of the skill but unable to find a permanent job with it and was forced to provide a free in other salons. But two years later she receives a business start up capital and initiates her own business in her own house with very few and simple materials. In contrast it was never easy for Miteku to access resources to start his own business or get a permanent job as he fails to convert the skills he managed to acquire, two years after the death of his father, in to a means of income. This shows that even with the availability of support the heads still struggles to sustain their family as their challenge is not limited only to opportunities to acquire skill but also transforming it to an income, an addition for their worry even after giving up their education for a good cause.

Biniam as he gets much support from an NGO and relatives managed to continue his education all the way to college and never worked at the expense of it, even in this spare time. He can be considered as a lucky and also a ‘privileged orphan’ as his transfer from a school to work has been a smooth and even better than many that are under the care of both parents.

While Sofia the youngest among the participants in this research is not even inclined to go and seek for job or attend any kind of skill training like the others as she is strongly against the idea of giving up a dream, enjoying the fruits that education may bring along, for the sake of a challenge that she can pass in few years with the support that she

receives from HAPCSO and the Mosque that she is a member of, where her mother was also a member. She receives only educational support and wheat flour as support and managed to keep her household of two with the addition that is made by; according to her “the almighty Allah who is capable of everything”.

4.1.2 Religion as a Source of Relief

One of the findings in this research is that Religion plays great role as a coping mechanism. All the heads are highly religious and share all their concerns with their creator because it gives them a great relief from the psychological distress they are facing every single day. In the wider Ethiopian society religion have a big place and a bigger share of the population, if not all, worship one or another type of creator with the majority of the population being Christian followed by a significant minority of Muslim.

“Religion is a base for my life and it is God that I talk to in all the times of sorrow and happiness and he is the one I rely on the most... it is not my strength that kept me strong but it is God's.”(Haimanot)

The religious involvement is not only about the connection with a creator but also the comforting association with other fellow believers who are there to support in any way possible and share problems as well as seek solution for them. Haimanot’s response affirms this idea; “the people at our church knows our life and they provide us with support most of the time” and also Biniam responded as follows ;“I share my problems and concerns with my Christian fellows and among other things the whole idea of associating with them gives me comfort”. The religious support system goes beyond the satisfaction of spiritual need and offering mental relief incorporates fulfilling the material needs of the households, a support highly praised by Sofia who said “Allah is there to keep us safe all the way and provides us with the things we need through his blessed people” and she continued to describe what they get from their religious community “we go to school for free, no house rent, and once in a while different kinds of support but most of all we got spiritual satisfaction”.

4.2 Division of Labour in the House

In order to understand how the teen HoHs are burdened or spared from tasks and to see into the kind of responsibilities that each member has it is important to have a deep look at the division of labour in the households. It also helps to investigate the implications of the nature of the division of labour for the heads in giving them space to peruse their

own dream side by side with their siblings and the household in general for its peaceful coexistence.

Most of these households have some sort of a division of labour even though it is not balanced and there always exists heavier burden on the head. Haimanot's state is a good indication for this; "Even though it is me who carryout the majority of the household responsibilities my younger sister also helps me with many things". From this we can understand that Haimanot is blessed because it is not the case for most that are doing most of the things by their own either because their siblings are very young or lack the interest. Sofia and Simenh's situation describes a situation where both took sole responsibility in doing the tasks in the house which creates a big burden on them. Sofia describes the situation in her house as follows; "I do all the tasks by myself cleaning, preparing food and others and what my brother does sometimes is bring water from the pipe, that is all the he help he offers because he is always out there playing with his friends, but I am ok with that". Biniam adds on to explain the reason that helped him a lot in doing all these by his own by saying; "now I thanked my mother for teaching me these things when she was alive because without these talents I wouldn't be able to do the things that I am doing now". This goes also for Sofia who starts to take over household tasks during her mother's illness and Haimanot starting from her childhood. All these take us to a shared idea that the gradual learning and acquisition of skills before their parent's death has helped them to run the household.

Age is one big factor in the level of the division of labour that exists in the household. There is also a priority that is given by the heads for the younger ones in many aspects of life which is an ideal behaviour of 'parenthood' that gives the priority for the ones under care and as a result the heads sacrifice their needs and time in order to do the majority of tasks by leaving only some or none for their siblings. Among the reasons for this is that there is a fear from the side of the heads that their siblings may get angry or dissatisfied with what they do therefore they prefer to do things by their own and use it as means to ease this tension and allow their siblings to focus on their education rather than on household duties. Haimanot become a typical example for this case when she say "Aynalem(her younger sister) do not assist me in many household tasks as well as in my hair dressing business... I prefer she focuses on her studies." Biniam also worries about whether he is making his brothers happy or not and question himself if he is doing things right and if not right he said that "they will get mad".

What is evident from the findings is that the younger the siblings the less responsibility they are taking and the least they sense the burden that is on the head. Also from the side of the heads there is a sense of care and protection for their younger ones but as they add up to their age in all the households the level of participation increases and the division of labour diversified. As the age of the younger ones increase there were cases of full take over of some tasks so that the heads can focus on the income generating task and also to make sure that the younger ones learn for their own sake. Biniam's statement makes a good point; "Before they don't help me much because they were very young but from time to time they begin to do things and I start to pass some of my responsibilities to them and now Biruk (younger brother) starts to prepare food. Hopefully through time they will be capable of taking care of themselves".

In Miteku's Family gender plays a role in the division of labour as his younger sister who is 17 is responsible for tasks in the household from the beginning affirming the socially constructed gender division of labour as women in the house and men outside. An opposite for this socially accepted division of labour is found in Biniam's house who took all responsibility both in the house and outside despite the existence of an older sister, who is more relevant for the roles both in terms of her age and gender based on the socially accepted norm. But as his sister is living afar and with less contact he took over the responsibility for his brothers with of course seasonal financial support and benefiting more from her unfading authority over the household.

From the above finding we can observe the dynamics between age and gender and the role these factors play in assigning roles for each household member. We observe men performing household task that goes all the way to cooking and goes against the socially accepted role and opening a new division of labour while from the girls side it is coming of truth that they are heading and maintaining a household either through supervision or provision which goes against the societal conception that entitles men to perform this task. With regard to the age it is obvious for all as they are running a house which in 'normal' times is a duty of adults. These shows that this phenomenon created a new form of care giving that mixes the socially accepted roles of boys and girls as well as adults and young people.

4.3 Relationship with Siblings and the Question of Legitimacy

These families never lived in absolute peace nor conflict rather like any 'normal' family there exist both scenarios in their household. However, there is a big difference from an ideal family setting as these households are run by young persons whose authority as the head is questioned and at times not even respected, challenging the legitimacy of the head.

Miteku is the one who faces this challenge the most due to the conflicts he runs into with his brothers and sisters but keeps on attempting to carry on with his task. He describes his reason to hang on to his responsibilities despite these quarrels as follows; "I have 'Adera' from my father to take a good care of them until they can be able to help themselves above all a late person's orders are always to be respected more than anything and I will do that at any cost". This situation is common for all even though the degree of complaints varies all have a responsibility that is given from their parents when they are about to die and as a result they make a promise, a promise that needs to be kept at any expense. This phenomenon of 'Adera' is a country-wide phenomenon and keeps the many more children that are living with relatives, neighbours, friends and others in safe condition and with 'proper' care and support from their guardians because it is believed that if any one broke the promise of 'Adera' there will be conflict with self and eventually with God.

Reasons that cause conflicts in these households vary from simple to complicated ones that are critical for the future of the children as well as the existence of the household as a unit. Education and household resource distribution are the major causes for these conflicts while time spent at home and outside the house as well as personal discipline takes a sideline cause while other minor day-to-day incidents also exist.

The issue with education is always about the attention that is given by the younger ones for their study and whether they are attending their classes properly or not. As the young ones are attracted by playing with their friends and spend their days outside the house they fail to give the necessary attention for their education which most of the time results in unsatisfactory results. Haimanot says; "When I don't like the way she spends her day with less focus on her education I get angry and shout at her". These incidents are not always taken well by the younger ones and obvious responses are described by Miteku; "when we get in to conflict they sometimes tell me that I am not their father and what they do is none of my business" which shows that there is a question over the

legitimacy of authority of the heads. Haimanot responds added to confirm this finding “I always try to handle her systematically otherwise she will get angry and also will not hear what I say because I don’t have a maximum power over her actions like our mother would have.”

The other reason that puts them in to conflict is the need of the younger ones for material things for themselves. All the heads complained that the their siblings never understand how scarce the resources are even to run the house hold let alone buying shoes, clothes and other additional goods. “Abdul does not care, actually do not even know about the resources we have in the house and how scarce they are, so he asks me to buy him things and when I say we can not he complains and sometimes even cries and say bad things, things that hurt my feelings” (Sofia). The case is different for Haimanot where they share what they have as they are physically almost equal and one’s cloth and shoes fits to the other and as a result they don’t face this kind of conflict much. Biniam added “most of the time they complain but my decisions are firm and will not change because if I show flexibility they will take it for granted and will ask for it every time” and he added “thank God we never argue or get in to conflict over the type of food to be served”.

The impressive thing that is common among all heads is that they don’t get angry for long after the dispute that took place over the various things because they always give the benefit of the doubt for their younger ones. Among the reasons they give to justify the cause for the conflict are an increase in the age of their siblings and the changes in behaviour that comes along with it and most importantly the fact that they miss their parents. Miteku’s response for this challenge is as follows;

“My brothers and sisters are not meant to be bad and I don’t want to quarrel with them; they have their own needs and also their age is increasing which comes along with different changes in behaviour and diverse needs that do not match the resources we have”. (Miteku)

The authority of the heads is not as legitimate as the ones that are headed by parents or other older people but it still is existent and functions to the level that keeps the household intact. As the heads are younger in their ages and share the same title in the household, either brother or sister, that denotes no superior authority apart from the age that plays a role as older siblings receive some respect. Apart from the conflict there is also great sense of cooperation mainly resulted from their life condition and their

understanding to stand together as a family as they realized that it is only one another that can be there for each other.

4.4 Missing Opportunities of the Age?

The teenaged HH both as age categories and socially constructed groups are found in a age zone that is considered as ‘being and becoming’ where they are living their life at the moment and also transiting to another phase of life; ‘adulthood’. Therefore in the coming pages we will see how the current life condition of these teen heads is playing role in defining their process of transition-‘becoming’.

4.4.1 Education

The educational pattern of these HH is in one way or another affected by their responsibilities and they all have either dropped out or failed to get the expected results due to the little attention they gave to it both at school and home; because they have a lot to worry about regarding the house and their siblings and performing the actual tasks at home. This left them with less time to study and in extreme cases forced them to drop out in order to make sure that their family have a sustained income through hampering the prospect they may have by proceeding with their education.

Haimanot is a typical example for a good student that gave up regular education to attend skills training in hair dressing. She was good in her educational performance and she even get a very good grade of 99.7 percent for the grade eight National exam but she didn’t want to continue her education in the regular program instead she adopted her own way and decided to quit school. This is how she justifies her decision;

“We were living from the little support we get from HAPCSO and I always believe that this support will stop at some point and also I want to get rid of the aid dependency...in addition I was not able to give the important emphasis for my education and I have a belief that says ‘if you study you have to study seriously’ but as I was not doing that I decided to go to night school and work during the day”.

The same goes for Miteku but with different situation as he quit school when his parents were alive and unable to keep on working on their business due to their sickness. He dropped out and joined the business that his parents used to run which according to

him “was very exciting at the moment because I began to earn money at an early age and I used to say ‘what is education for’ but now I regret about all that has happened”.

Too much responsibility has become cause for poor educational performance of the heads despite their previous achievement, good or bad. This creates regret and anger as they think what they could have achieved if all the predicaments were avoided at the moment. “Now when I reflect on my educational performance which became too bad after the death of my parents I feel angry because I was so good at it before” (Biniam) and added “especially when I see my friends who go to University I feel very bad because I was suppose to be there with them as well”.

The way education and household responsibility influence one another is not only one way, there are also cases where educational level become a challenge to look for other opportunities to provide additional income for the house. Sofia’s response strengthens this point;

“I sometimes blame my family because it is them who wanted me to join the Islamic school and revised me to first grade by making me go three years back. If that was not the case by now I would at least be in grade nine and could have started working as reaching grade 9 will make my mind work a bit better but now I am only in grade six so if I quit school and start working what kind of person would I be in the future?”.(Sofia)

4.4.2 Love Affairs

“This is the age that I need a boyfriend , a person that I can share my daily concerns with and love but the conditions does not make it easy for me to have one” (Haimanot).

For persons that are found in this age group the desire to have romantic relationship with the opposite sex is evident as they go through a number of changes physically, psychologically and socially with addition to it from peer pressure and societal expectations. But the reality is different for these HoHs that are not fortunate enough to experience such association that is deemed important, mandatory and done by most of their age mate with a ‘free spirit’. The main reason for this is the responsibility they have in the house but the way it impedes them is differs based on their individual household condition, personal behaviour and most importantly their gender.

Even though there are common reasons that are shared both by boys and girls the basic reasons differ dramatically. The boys have mentioned about the financial implications of having a girlfriend as their main reason for them not to have or not to experience the 'real' essence of the relationship they would love to have. This concern is common among the young persons in Addis Ababa where the men are assigned to be the ones responsible to provide the material needs for the woman while engaged in a relationship and beyond. This societal reality reflects on the young generation and its trend gets stronger especially in towns like Addis Ababa and other bigger cities where financing such costs are very high. This creates a barrier for the boys to be involved in love relationships, even if they do most of the time they incur extra cost which is not in their plan. For the teen HH the reality seems harsh as they do not have extra resource to invest on their relationship apart from their time and themselves, which is also not that ample.

Biniam expresses his fear as follows; "even if I want to have a girl that doesn't cost me that much I still have to pay for the simple tea and coffee as well as some snacks that we may take when we go out" which his resources can not cover and knows that everything he spends to hang out with his 'girlfriend' is at the expense of what he can do for his brothers.

Miteku also have the same challenge but with different story attached. He seems proud to have a girlfriend but he doubts he can call her one. "I have a girlfriend" and when he say this he looks confident but as he keeps on describing the situation his face and the tone of his voice was not as strong as it was seconds ago but continued and said; "it never seems to work out well for us so far because what my girlfriend wants might be very much different from what I can offer...we care for one another but I think more about my house rather than trying to dedicate myself to her, because of this we sometimes meet once in a month." Both the boys do not say that the girls need financial and material benefits but their concern is that socially it is the guys who should take care of the 'bills' that are incurred and it makes it difficult for them spare even the little amount which diverts the resource from their household.

The girls have a different story to it and both believe that the conditions are not conducive for them to have one yet; but they have different reasons as their age, religion and personal outlook to the world varies. To begin with the girls as the boys are not free to get in to this kind of relationship as they are highly under the strings of social control

and as a result they turns out to be self conscious, restrict and resistant to be engage in relationship. As quoted at the beginning of this section Haimanot expressed her desires and a reason that become a barrier from having a relationship she would like to experience. Haimanot also added that her worry is not only for herself but also for Aynalem, her younger sister, who according to her needs all the support on how to deal with this issues as it is also highly related to HIV/AIDS and she stated that ; “I saw a lot of children even younger than her (Aynalem) involved in such engagements which is dangerous for their life and I don’t want my sister to be in that danger, we had enough with our mother” and she adds on “I am not saying that it is not bad but for her age it is not appropriate yet but I provide her with all the information needed and cautions that she should take”. Sofia, as fifteen years old girl does not think about it at all but her attempt to restrain herself from it has never been easy with the main reason for this being the fact that she is living by her own with her younger brother and as a result people approaches her from time to time to take advantage of this situation. She mentioned that “it is not only guys who approached me to get into this relationship but also my neighbours and other people I know from the area recommend me to get into this relationship and even get married at this age of mine”. Their main purpose behind this push being to have someone that can support her so that she can get out of all these worries and concerns about running a household at this age of her. But her concern goes beyond and she puts it as follows; “I learned about HIV/AIDS and I also witnessed a first hand experience from my mother how it can hurt people and being involved in a relationship at this age is going half way to it therefore I don’t want to do it now, may be after I finish school”

Big aspect of life that is complicated and difficult to handle got more complicated by the way of life these teens are in to. Their responsibility in addition to their age, gender and their high level of concern about HIV/AIDS has restrained them from being involved in such relationships.

4.4.3 Looks and Goods Necessary for It

Looks matter for everyone in his/her own way and it also matters for those who look at the person from the outside. This issue is a highly emphasized one by the young generation in all times and everywhere because the way one looks is also a representation of one self in the society and also serves as means of satisfaction for oneself.

These teens attempt their best to match to the environment they are living in with what they have in their closet, with in the limit of their resource. There is always a shortage of money to put aside for these things because there was never enough money left at the end of every month as the amount of money they will get either through working or the support from organizations is very little in amount. Even with extra resource most of the time they give priority for their siblings, with the heads giving up their desire for the satisfaction of their siblings in order to fulfil their responsibilities of being 'teen parents'.

“The clothes I have are mostly the ones I got when my mother died and I only add only one to it”. (Sofia) It has been two years since Sofia’s mother passed away and she added only one cloth to what she had back then. And she added “when I get extra money I always buy things for my brother instead of buying for myself as our mother used to do, buying stuffs for us without even having a spare for her self.” Miteku, who never bought a new cloth after the death of his father two years back, said “that is not my priority... I love to wear good things and look good but I can not do that at the moment”

They all care for the way they look and always look forward for the time to buy the things they like, dress what they love and put on a shoe for which their heart goes to and all others without worrying about what damages their expenditure for these materials may cause on their household budget. But till that time arrives they have their own way of dealing with this challenge that includes sharing clothes with same sex siblings and friends of the same age, keeping the ones available in good shape and buying one thing at a time when they got it for a very cheep price, mostly second hand ones. “I care more for my looks and looking good gives me pleasure... and the good part is that my cloths fit well to Aynalem and the vise versa” while Miteku describes his way as follows “I make sure that I am clean and always keep the closes and shoes I have in good condition so that I can look better for longer time only with some clothes.”

4.4.4 Recreation (Leisure)

“To tell you the truth I never spend money outside the house without sharing it with my sisters and brothers”. (Miteku)

Recreation has a different meaning for every individual depending on their personality, age, gender and environment they are brought up and living in as they define one should do as part of recreation.

For these teen HoHs recreation or ways of spending their leisure time have a different meaning attached to it and way restrained as compared to their friends who are relatively free to enjoy their leisure time by doing what they like to do in their capacity. Recreation does not have a big place in their lives and it was never a priority because of the same reasons which become a cause for restraining other needs and priorities as well.

They all have their own ways of spending their leisure time but all try to distance themselves from those which require money and much time away from home which indirectly impedes their ability to associate with their friends and share their company a truth that is witnessed in Miteku's statement; "I don't associate with my friends in the things they do for fun, therefore they don't even consider me as a real friend and it hurts because they do not know why I am this much reserved from enjoying myself".

As teens have a lot to worry about and have a mind that most of the time is stressed up the small things they do makes them happy easily. Haimanot's point is a good one to support this point; "for me relaxation is just hanging out with my friends and a tea at a café in our neighbour hood will make me happy...I love simple things, nothing more." To the contrary Biniam said "what recreation for me is sitting alone in a quite place and listening to myself".

Time apart from household tasks and school are the ones that are considered as time for leisure for Sofia who says; "during these times I listen to the radio at home and read books...that is mostly it". But all would love to do the things that their friends and age mates do but as they are living in a different situation they have to restrain themselves in some cases through methods such as ones that Biniam uses; "When my friends go to places I always say that I got things to do and will depart from them but the reality is that I can not afford to join them in what they are doing even if I love to." In addition to the cost implications these teen never seem to have enough time for recreation because being a head of a household bears a responsibility of carrying out a range of tasks that consumes most of their time, a point described by Biniam as follows "I always used to get tired and when I get home after the whole day at school and when I realized that I have to prepare food I always feel bad because I know I will not have time for myself, a time for recreation".

5. CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters explored the life experiences, challenges, fears, hopes and dreams as well as coping mechanisms adopted by four teen HH in Ethiopia particularly in Addis Ababa who took this responsibility as they lost their parents for AIDS. Sharing the life stories of these teens gives a good illustration on the challenges that are faced by an age group that was not a focus of attention both in terms of research and intervention and help in future actions both in the long or short run.

The teens do not take over the responsibility only right after the death of their parents rather they grow through it and gradually begin to take over as their parent's sickness to AIDS get to the pick. As a result they have faced with diverse economic, social, psychological and developmental challenges which mainly are attributed to the responsibilities they bear on their back and with addition the fact that they are AIDS orphans that blocks them from receiving the desired social support and care from the community and their extended family members.

During the sickness of their parents they either provided care or witnessed in close proximity the suffering they have gone through and to extreme cases of taking over full household responsibility. It is also revealed that among all the challenges faced by the teens in this aspect of their life the toughest one is keeping the family intact as a unit by providing an income and a failure of which apparently is cause for many of the other challenges. All the heads as they are younger in their ages faced a massive challenge in getting a resource coming to the house and sustaining it to make sure that their 'family's' needs are addressed. While trying to keep the family together and satisfy their needs they tend to forgo their personal interests and dreams they set for themselves as an individual person, a teenager, who have their own diverse needs and are found in the age that is in transition to another relational stage of 'adulthood'.

The teens took full responsibility and acted out like 'real' parents because they are the only ones who can perform the task as there is no one around, a main reason for the establishment of these households. The roles that are taken by the teens are immense and most of the time found to be against the socially constructed and agreed upon roles in terms of gender and age which assigns certain roles to be carried out by certain age and sex groups.

It become apparent from the paper that no consistency is found in the support available for these households and there appears to be a fracture from the side of the

society to respond to this problem as it is also facing more social and economic challenges as a result of the high level of poverty in addition to supporting a big number of orphans that results from a dramatic increase in the number of deaths to AIDS. There are no clear cut conclusions made on the contribution of the extended family as there are also members who provide the necessary care and support. But the significant level of neglect from the side of the extended family members ignites a question on the ability and willingness of the extended family to care for its orphans as it once had been. Even the support from NGOs and faith based organizations is not sustainable and one that satisfies the needs of the teens and their households as it do not attempt to address the needs of these age groups as a separate groups instead they are just considered as orphans whose needs are just to be met through provision. But more should be attempted to look in to the problems and needs of these teenage heads and their household in general and address them as an entity by their own right rather than adding them up with other categories that share little and may be none at all.

To conclude; the stories collected reflects on the real lives of orphans who at the same time are heads of a household ,which are exemplary in its illustration and bringing out the issue to light as it needs more attention and focuses in intervention. The stories were not all positive; but real issues that exists in their lives that are also lived by thousand of others comes out, a life filled with struggles that are real and serious, which they have struggled to come out from and still struggling but when it gets more serious and beyond control as a result of the little attention given it may break the teens, the back bones of the households, and may lead to a break down of a household that may again lead to the vicious circle of poverty, HIV/AIDS and more social ills.

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Annex: Interview Guide for Life Story Collection

The following questions were asked in virtually every interview but not necessarily in the same sequence:

Stage 1: Family Background and Early Childhood

- Personal information: place of birth, date of birth and other things that you remember about you early childhood times
- Family life: Family size, family place of birth, relationship with extended family, employment and education of parents, personal behavior, their hopes for the children
- Household composition and relationship with siblings, extended family friends, teachers

Stage 2: Early School Years

- When was the first time you go to school? Which school did you go to?
- How was your school life in elementary school?
- Was there a school fee in the school you went to? If there is who pays it for you?
- Who provides you with the school materials that you need for the school?
- Were your sisters and brothers going to the same school?
- Was the school full day or half day?
- How was your life at school looks like? Tell me about your friends (Both boys and girls), your relationship with teachers and others around the school?
- How did you spend the rest of the day after school? What proportion of time do you allocate for the different activities?

Stage 4: The Role as a Head of a Household

- Why did you take over the responsibility for the household?
- How are you managing the responsibility of helping your siblings?
- Are you working to support your siblings?

- Is there a change in the nature of the relationship you have between your younger siblings by comparing before and after the death of your parents.
- To what extent do you're your younger siblings assist you in providing livelihood for the household and managing it?
- What is new in your life after the death of your parents in your life and the house in general?
- What was the major challenge that you faced in heading a household?
- How is your social life when you compare it to your peers and your needs?
 - Do you have a girlfriend (boyfriend)?
 - What do you do for leisure?
 - What makes you happy and what gives you pleasure doing?
 - How about your appearance? (Clothing, ornaments and other things that can make you look good)

Support Schemes

Support=Psychological (counselling), Provision of information, Material, Financial, Educational, Medical

Family and kinship Support System

- Did you get any kind of support from out side of the household?
 - If so what kind of support are you getting?
- For yourself, for the household, for your siblings

Institutional (Formal)

- Do you receive any kind of support from organizations in the area?
- Do these supports fit your needs as teen?
- What do you think is left and why?

**Other questions were asked as a follow-up or probing questions seeking clarification, additional detail, or asking about some part of an answer that needed expansion.*