

# **EXPLORING CHILD HEADED HOUSEHOLDS, THEIR CHALLENGES AND SURVIVAL MECHANISMS IN RURAL AREAS. A CASE STUDY OF CHIWESHE RURAL COMMUNITY, ZIMBABWE.**

An Abstract of the Thesis By  
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This qualitative study sought to explore the survival mechanisms and challenges experienced by children and orphans in child headed families. The purpose of this study was to get a clear insight into the day to day survival experiences and give voice to child headed households. Purposive sampling was used to select participants. Through content analysis, the results showed that; poverty, hunger, health and educational challenges, lack of protection and parental guidance were the major challenges experienced by child headed households. It emerged that to survive the children showed resilience and resorted to begging, picking from bins, grown own food, worked, dropped out of school, compromised their rights and depended on neighbours and community. This study then concluded that; poverty and hunger were the main barriers to children's rights and wellbeing, present economic struggles in the country were making it difficult for sustainable means of survival and support interventions.

**Keywords: Orphans, Child headed households, survival mechanisms, Resilience**