

Socio-Economic Analysis of Child Homelessness in South Africa: Implication for Policy Making

Authors : Chigozie Azunna, Lucius Botes

Abstract : Child homelessness is one of the critical challenges in South Africa in recent times. While children constitute a very significant demography of South Africa, child homeless broods a socio-economic crisis of varying magnitude. In order for the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved, especially with respect to equality and non-discrimination, child homeless needs to be effectively curbed. This will, in turn, contribute positively to the economic derivative of South Africa's dynamic demography. Methodically, this research employed content analysis involving a comprehensive review of existing literature on child homelessness in South Africa. The study found a convergence of national policy and international agenda on curbing child homelessness in South Africa in spite of the following is a representation of the statistics of child homelessness in South Africa: in the metros, homelessness was (74,1%), while in non-metro is at 25.9%. The figure shows that the City of Tshwane has the highest number of homeless persons (18,1%), followed by the City of Johannesburg (15,6%) while the Nelson Mandela Bay metropolitan has the lowest percentage of homeless persons (2,7%). The study concluded that despite the existence of national policy options, child homeless has remained persistent. Worse still, there is a lack of accurate data, while the Covid pandemic, poverty, economic challenges, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and implementation gaps in government policies have contributed to the widening challenge. The implication is severe, affecting children's physical and emotional health, education, and future opportunities. The study recommends strengthening actionable policies in addressing child homelessness by bridging the urban-rural gap as well as providing an intra-community network that ensures that child homelessness is effectively addressed, including addressing those manifold challenges like access to education and susceptibility to diseases and vulnerability of the homeless child.

Keywords : South Africa, child, homeless, SDGs, covid, urban, rural

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