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Department of Social Work

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Child Poverty in Sweden

(with a brief note on situation of children in Nepal)

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to get an in-depth knowledge about the implications of child poverty on overall child development. This study aims to co-relate between child development and social challenges of the poor children in Sweden with a brief mention about the same around the world and in Nepal - where I came from. This paper also establishes that holistic development of a child is influenced by the child's school and home environment, child behaviour, social network and economic status.

Main questions that this study explored are:

- What is the cause of child poverty in Sweden?
- What are the main social challenges in the lives of poor children?
- What are the effects of poverty on children's physical, mental, educational, skill, personal and social-emotional development?
- How can the effects of child poverty in Sweden be improved from a social worker perspective?

The study is based on interview from seven respondents (six social workers and one school nurse) from different municipalities in Gothenburg and a report from Save the Children, as well other child poverty related reports. The study employs qualitative methods and interviews for the collection of empirical data.

This report concludes that both a child's biology and his environment have profound impact in his/her change and growth. Besides, children's development is affected by psychosocial and biological factors and also by genetic inheritance. However, poverty and its attendant problems further deteriorates the situation. It was also apparent that children from foreign parents and foreign-single parents are more vulnerable to child poverty. The situation is even worse for children without legal documents who are devoid of even the basic rights (food, shelter, clothes, etc.) The situation of children in poverty in a welfare-oriented country like Sweden (where the poverty rate is very low compared to other developed countries), as presented in this document, can be used as a metric for approximating the situation of children in poverty in less-developed countries, to some degree.

The study also recommended some potential improvements to improve child poverty, such as amendments in child welfare funds, create employment opportunities for unemployed parents, provide rights to identity for undocumented children, revision of integration policy and revision of state welfare sums. Though, the findings are not generalizable, I feel that a wider study ought to be conducted at a more advanced and higher level, covering social workers from diverse geographic regions of Sweden in order to formulate a generalized framework to address child poverty in Sweden.

Keywords: **child poverty, child development, challenges.**

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Child poverty is one of the most disturbing problem in Sweden and it has serious implications on children's future development. Children, as a group, are particularly exposed to poverty (European commission 2008; Atkinson et al. 2005). Children and their families are very often a central issue in contemporary political and policy debate in most western welfare states. This special interest in children's well-being can be explained in many ways: It is argued that the well-being of children is not only an indication of a society's moral worth, children are also a human capital, the most important resource for a society's future (Bradshaw 1997; Ringen 1997). Almost every action that welfare states take has an impact on families and family life.

The most significant environments in the lives of children are their home and school, both of which have a lasting and major impact on their intellectual and psychological functioning; poverty is a significant topic of concern globally because child poverty is linked to many undesirable outcomes, such as physical, mental, moral and spiritual. So poverty is one of the greatest obstacles to the survival and development of children (UNICEF).

Poverty affects every part of a child's everyday life, in some cases, having to refrain from social activities such as school excursions and sports days because they do not have the bus fare or money for the necessary equipment.

Poverty has also been found associated with the proliferation of health problems such as dental caries, higher levels of lead in the blood, sensory impairment and stunting (Özkan, Purutçuoğlu and Hablemitoğlu, 2010).

According to Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, every child has the right to an adequate standard of living; adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development (Convention on the Rights of the Child). Children are not to be discriminated against because of their parents' financial situation. In school and other places, poor and foreign young adults are feeling discriminated by their friends who are children coming from better off families. High proportion of immigrants from low and middle income countries have been unsuccessful in finding high paid and full time jobs. Without a high paid job, immigrant children are at poverty risk in Sweden. Many of them feel excluded whilst their Swedish born schoolmates of the same age have quite different opportunities.

Child poverty creates distance and exclusion in their own society and in their own culture and their own group inside their school activities. Child poverty and social exclusion have damaging effects on the future life opportunities of children, and on their future capacity. Additionally, they face greater difficulties integrating within the labor market and finding their reputation and their place in society. Many research studies of poverty throughout the twentieth century illustrate an ongoing struggle to extricate the concept of poverty from political ideology and to

widen scientific perspectives from narrow concern with the physical and mental and emotional of human beings to include their complex social needs. Part of that struggle has been to find measures by which to compare conditions in different countries and, especially, conditions in rich and poor countries so that priorities might be more securely established (Özkan, Purutçuoğlu and Hablemitoğlu, 2010).

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Sweden

Sweden experienced a major economic crisis in the early/mid 1990s which resumed with the global economic crisis from 2007 to 2011. Economic growth was negative for some years and real GDP fell significantly. So, the Swedish welfare went through a difficult trial from the beginning of 1990 to 1997, and maybe challenged due to current insatiable inflated economy. At the same time a wave of immigrant refugees from countries in political conflict (war torn) are arriving in Sweden, that was a factor which contributed to a worsened economic situation for Sweden. It was especially the families who were already in a bad economical situation who were affected and the newly arrived immigrants and refugees. From 1995 and onwards the income increase for families with children improved with 15 to 16 percent and also 5 percent income increased of single parents. Between 1991 and 1997, child poverty in Sweden increased successively to peak at 22 per cent in 1997. In the last two years of the 1990s, the negative trend reversed and the finances of families with children started to improve. The level of poverty among families with children was, however, notably higher than in the early 1990s (Save the Children Sweden, 2002).

Save the children Sweden presented child poverty of Sweden in March 2002, on the vulnerable financial situation of children in the 1990. According to the report many Swedish citizens were perplexed from the report because they had never associated Sweden with child poverty. In 1991, over 345,000 children lived in poor families and people were wondered about the description of this affected children's every day life (Save the Children Sweden, 2002).

And 1997 to 2000 the proportion of children in poor families has fallen over 15 percent. However, there were still 296 000 children live in 2000, and 14 000 more than in 1991 (Salonen, 2000). Undocumented children in Sweden living under the poverty line, who could not afford even the most basic needs (food, clothing, etc.) increased by 0.6 percent from 2007-2008 resulting in 220,000 children living in poverty in 2008 (*Child poverty increases in Sweden : report*, 2011). "While most families have benefited from a hefty increase in wealth, the condition of the poorest has remained unchanged" (Elisabeth Dahlin, secretary general of Save the Children Sweden).

There were a few distinct groups, based on whether the children were living in single-parent families, Swedish-born parents or foreign (either single or both), that were seen among children living in poverty. It was observed that the increase in child poverty from 2007-2008 was 29.5 percent in families with a foreign background in contrast with the other groups. (*Child poverty increases in Sweden : report*, 2011)

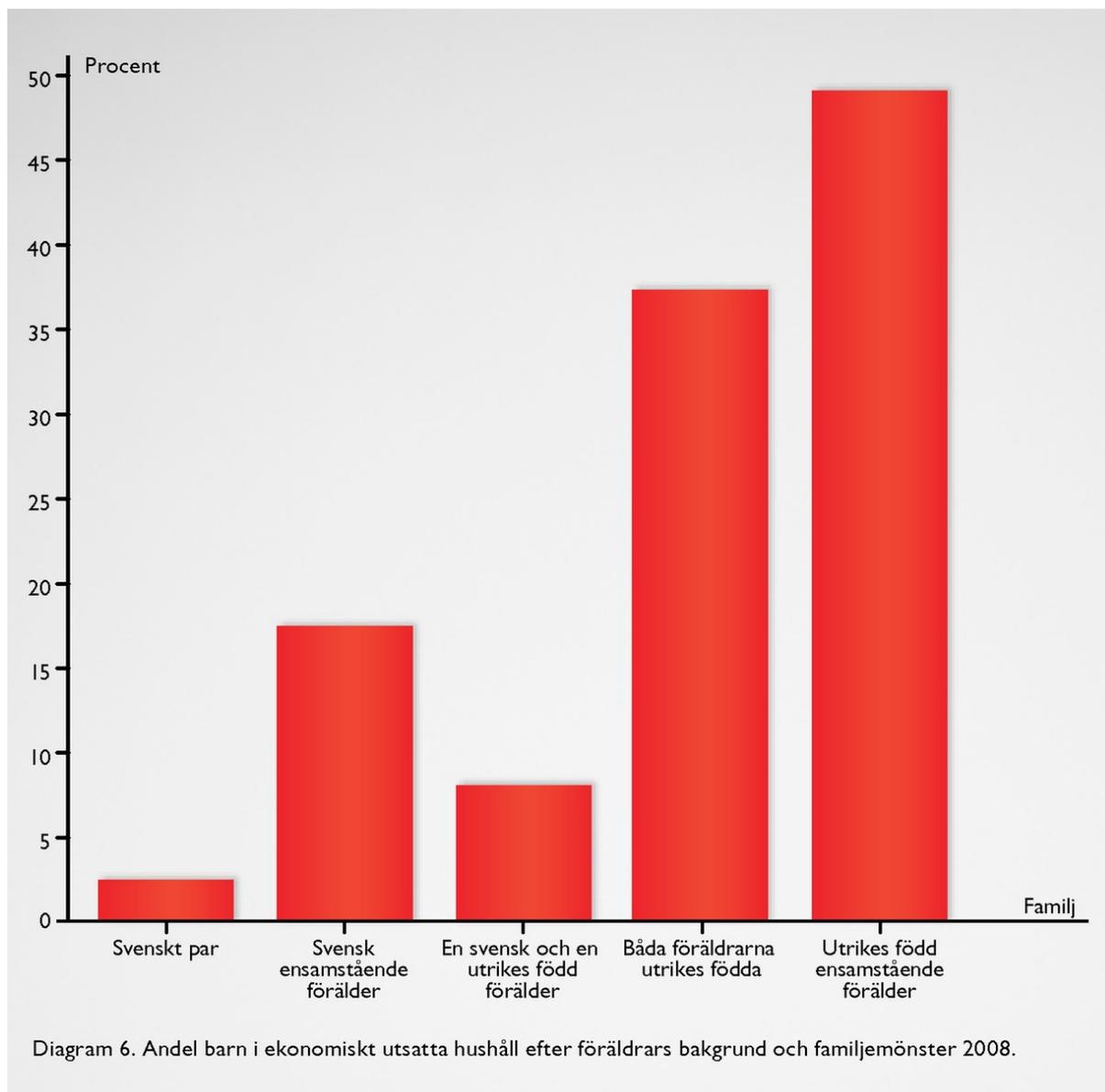
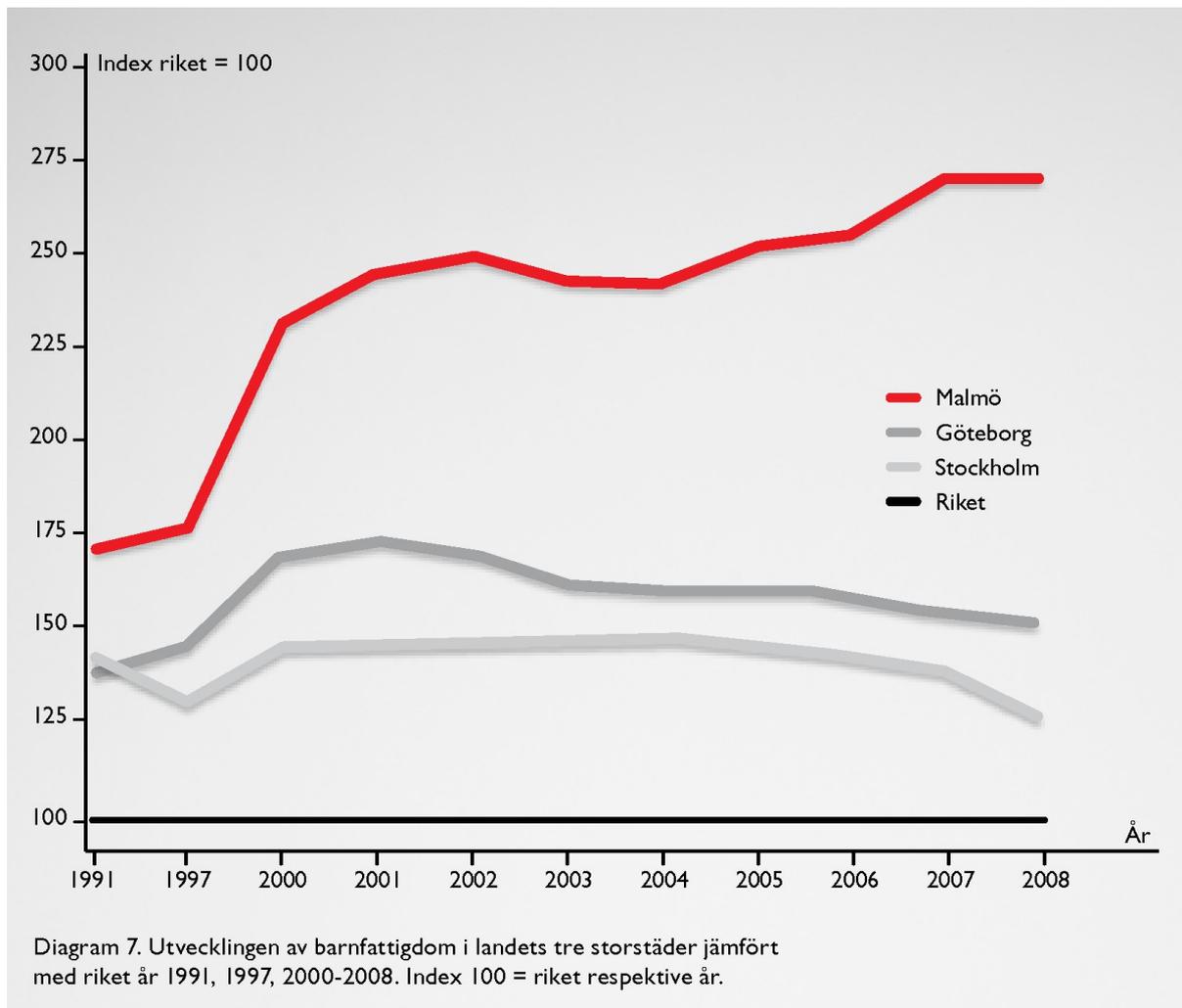


Diagram 1: Save the Children Sweden, 2008.

Among children in single parent families, the incidence of poverty is more than three times as high (24.7 percent) than those in families with two parents (8.1 percent). Almost every other child (49 percent) living in single parent families with an immigrant background is reported to live in economic poverty, in comparison to only 2.3 percent of children to Swedish born parents (Diagram 1).

In Sweden, income inequality has gradually grown over the past decades. The highest rate of inequality (counted as a Gini-coefficient) since 1975 was recorded in 2007 and shows especially a gradual distinction between working and non-working families (Statistics Sweden, 2009). Based on fixed prices, the richest tenth increased their disposable incomes by 88 percent between 1991 and 2007 while the poorest tenth ended up with only a 14 percent increase (Statistics Sweden, 2009: 13). Child poverty in Sweden (counted as 60 percent of annual median income) has gradually increased from 8.2 percent to 15.2 percent in the same period (Statistics Sweden, 2009: 29). Child poverty is especially high among lone-parent households and immigrant families.



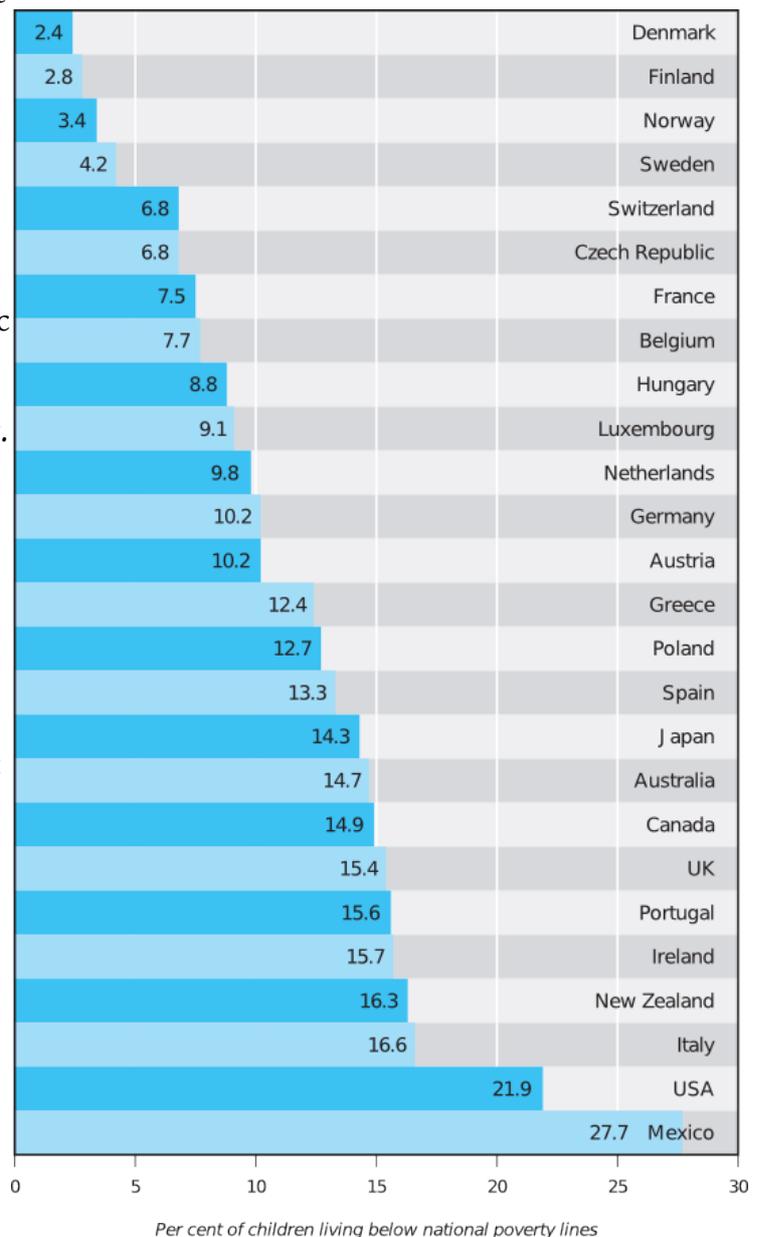
The difference of poverty among various municipalities in Sweden are also appalling (Diagram above). Children living in poverty was generally higher in major cities in Sweden in comparison to wealthy suburbs. (*Child poverty increases in Sweden : report, 2011*).

1.2.2 Rest of the World

Reduction of poverty among the aged has been one of the great success stories of the post war welfare state, in many countries the last two decades have seen a re- emergence of child poverty. Though the labor market deterioration and family structure changes that have driven these changes have been felt in most countries, there are wide variations in child poverty rates between different countries at similar levels of development. Child poverty rates in the world's wealthiest nations vary from less than 3 percent to more than 25 percent. For instance, 47 million children from the nations belonging to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development live below their national poverty lines (UNICEF, 2000) and in the United States 28.6 million children (39%), and 12.7 million children (17%) live in low income families and poor families (Douglas-Hall & Chau 2007).

Denmark and Finland are the countries where child poverty is lower, with levels below 3%. Maximum is levels in the U.S. and Mexico, where about 20 to 25% of children described as poor. Sweden in this scale has the fourth lowest incidence of child poverty. Child poverty rates also tend to be higher than average in the other English-speaking countries, but much lower than average in the Nordic countries (Rainwater and Smeeding, 1995).

In the former socialist countries, dramatic falls in incomes associated with the transition to capitalist economies have led to dramatic increases in child poverty. Poverty is always connected with social exclusion. The possibility of social exclusion and its associated social fragmentation is thus a major reason for concern about poverty (though not the only reason). For children, the impact of poverty on their social integration is often via their parents. Parents with access to levels of material resources that are low for their society may be excluded from the mainstream of social activities, and this may, in turn, exclude their children. Reduced consumption opportunities may also exclude children directly as they become older and seek to form social contacts outside the home. Roker and Coleman (1998) illustrate this in their research based on conversations with poor youth in the UK. The youth themselves feel the impact of poverty through reduced recreation and sport, school excursions, textbooks and computers and other extra activities.



Per cent of children living below national poverty lines
 Diagram: 3 Child Poverty in Rich Countries 2005. UNICEF 2005

There are three countries where the general tendency for child poverty to fall by about one-third does not apply. In Russia there is little difference in the poverty rate, while in both the UK and Ireland the drop in poverty is greater. This is because the median income of children compared to others is relatively high in Russia and relatively low in the UK and Ireland. It is this overall disadvantage which leads to the high poverty rate of children in the UK according to the conventional overall median definition. If, on the other hand, we are concerned with those children who have living standards much lower than those of the average child (ie the child median poverty concept) then child poverty in the UK is of a similar magnitude to that in Australia and Canada (Bruce Bradbury and Markus Jäntti). Many other research focused that Nordic countries have lowest rates of child poverty than others rich countries, Southern

European and English speaking countries have much larger proportion of their children in poor household.

Heitmeyer and Legge (2009), explains that a child born in the twenty-first century has a four in ten risk of living in extreme poverty, in both developed and developing nations. And in the Western countries, only Belgium and Scandinavia have child poverty rates below 5 percent (Heitmeyer and Legge, 2009). Despite the fact that child poverty in USA, Canada, Norway and United Kingdom fell since 1980s, it remained unchanged in Sweden, The Netherlands and Belgium. Poverty not only undermines the importance of education or impedes the traditional route of upward social mobility, but also, it contributes to delinquency.

1.2.3 Child poverty in Nepal

Nepal is a formerly sovereign country cushioned between the plains bordering India and Himalayas bordering China. It is home to a plethora of flora and fauna and encapsulates the highest mountains in the world, including the Mount Everest. Nepal captures a wide range of geographic features in its 147,181 km² including the mountainous region, the hilly region and the plains known as the *Terai*. Nepal is home to approx. 30 million people which puts it as the 41st most populous region of the world. The average life expectancy at birth is 65.46 years (64.3 years for males and 66.67 years for females.)

Kathmandu being the capital and the most developed city of Nepal, it has a GDP of \$ 35.813 billion earning \$ 1,270 per capita. There has been a significant improvement in health services and education for children in Nepal in the past decade. It is reported that in 1996, 20% of infants were deprived of any form of immunization against diseases such as Acute Respirator Infection (ARI) or diarrhea, this number was decreased to 2.8% by 2006. Mass immunization has also enabled the decrease in the Under Five Mortality Rate (U5MR) by 50% and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) by 33% between 1996 to 2006. (Child Poverty and Disparities in Nepal 2010)

According to 'Child Poverty and Disparities in Nepal 2010', more than 12.6 million children are living under the poverty line in Nepal, almost one-third of all Nepalese live below the poverty line earning less than US\$1 a day.

Almost 50 percent children suffer from malnutrition and they are stunted (low height for their age). “Stunted children, compared with non-stunted children, were less likely to be enrolled in school (Tanzania), more likely to enroll late (e.g. Nepal, and Ghana and Tanzania), to attain lower achievement levels or grades for their age (Nepal, China, Jamaica, India, Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brazil, Turkey, Guatemala [only in boys]), and have poorer cognitive ability or achievement scores (Kenya, Guatemala, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Peru, India, and Vietnam, and Chile)” (Grantham-McGregor et al. 2007). Forty one percent rural children are underweight (low weight for age). Malnutrition is a serious obstacle to the survival, growth and development of children. 10 percent of children do not attend school and 69 percent are deprived of at least one of the seven basic human needs (UNICEF NEPAL, 2010).

Two in every five children experience severe deprivation of at least two basic human needs and

by this measure, can be considered to be living in absolute poverty (Child Poverty and Disparities in Nepal 2010). Deprivation of children has been measured using the seven indicators as listed below:

1. Food,
2. Shelter,
3. Safe drinking water,
4. Health,
5. Sanitation,
6. Education and
7. Cloths.

Children who has been lacking in two or more of the severe deprivation indicators are considered to live in absolute poverty. Deprivation of daily services such as food, shelter, water and sanitation, is generally highest among rural children. More than three million children live in overcrowded environments, which affect their overall development and resulting in high levels of morbidity. “Many children, younger than 5 years in developing countries are exposed to multiple risks, including poverty, malnutrition, poor health, and unstimulating home environments, which detrimentally affect their physical, cognitive, motor, and socio-emotional development” (Grantham-McGregor et al. 2007).

In Nepal and other developing countries, poverty is characterized by inadequate food, and poor sanitation and hygiene which leads to increased infections and stunting in children. Poverty can also include increased maternal stress due to poor maternal education, and in a chain of effects, less mental stimulation at home for the child. The result detrimental for the child's mental and physical health (Grantham-McGregor et al. 2007).

According to UNICEF, 31 percent of the children aged 5 to 15 are involved in child labor in Nepal just to help their families sustain itself. Exploitive child labor is a serious problem in Nepal. Recent reports have shown that 2.6 million (2,596,000) children between the ages of 5 and 14 are working in Nepal. Of this, nearly 5 percent (127,000 children) are involved in what the International Labor Organization defines as ‘the Worst Forms of Child Labor’. Nepal’s poor economic status contributes to the high rate of child labor and poverty.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my research is to find out how child poverty impacts a child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development in developed country like Sweden. The aim of this study is co-relation between child development and social challenges of the poor children in Sweden. It also shows that holistic development of the child’s school and home environment, child behavior, social network and economic positions influences of children development. Thus the connection between family background as well society and child poverty play a major role in child development, that is an important aspect of this study. I think my study will bring new knowledge and understanding of the problem and contribute to social work and other related

fields.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the cause of child poverty in Sweden?
2. What are the main social challenges in the lives of poor children?
3. What are the effects of poverty on children's physical, mental, educational, skill, personal and social-emotional development?
4. How can the effects of child poverty in Sweden be improved from a social worker perspective?

1.5 Structure of grade report

The grade report is composed of six chapters organised as follows:

Chapter 1 includes introduction and background which is a highlighted history of child poverty in Sweden. Also the research questions and the purpose of the study are emphasized.

Chapter 2 presents the literature review of child poverty and child development. The chapter reviews literature regarding the correlation between poverty and child development.

Chapter 3 consists of discussions on the theoretical perspective, such as ecological system theory, self esteem theory and self efficacy theory in relation to this study.

Chapter 4 deals with Methodology. It discusses the choice of method and the justification of method in the study, the research process, sampling/selection of data, the data collection and the analysis. In addition, validity, reliability and generalizability, ethical questions as well as limitations are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5 is about the results, analysis and interpretations of the main results. It presents the results according to the different themes and mainly on the basis of the empirical research about child poverty and effect on their development through interview. It also analyses and interprets the results in connection with the theory and earlier researches.

Chapter 6 presents the conclusion and discussion about the main findings in relation to the research questions.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Child poverty is a serious problem in both developed and developing countries. Many children living in poverty face social, physical, mental and economical problems. Multiple researchers have focused the impact of poverty on child development in various fields in their works. Views from various journals and books have been aggregated for the composition of this study. These views include, among others, hindrances in verbal, mental and physical development, decreased academic performance and increase in emotional vulnerability and behavioral problems, etc. as a result of child poverty.

Impact of poverty on Child Development

Poor children are at risk for developing socio-emotional problems such as “depression, internalizing and externalizing symptoms, lower levels of sociability and initiative, problematic peer relations, and disruptive classroom behaviors. An example of internalizing is a behavior such as dependency, and an externalizing behavior is peer conflict” (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997, p.63).

Poor children may also struggle to form healthy peer relationships because of their inability to fit in at school due to clothing or inability to participate in extracurricular activities that their peers are involved in. The inability of a parent to involve their children into these activities can have a negative impact in “parent-child” relationships, wherein the child devalues the role of the parent. This devaluation can result in the parent resorting to harsh punishment due to depression or stress. These effects of dips in parent-child relationship can be observed in children's externalizing and internalizing behaviors, which consist of, among others, fighting and anxiety, respectively (Terbush, 2008).

Children experience poverty with their minds and hearts. Material poverty – for example, starting the day without a nutritious meal or engaging in hazardous labor – hinders emotional capacity as well as bodily growth. Living in an environment that provides little stimulation or emotional support to children, on the other hand, can remove many of the positive effects of growing up in a materially rich household. By discriminating against their participation in society and inhibiting their potential, poverty is a measure not only of children's suffering but also of their disempowerment (UNICEF, 2000).

Poverty is the main risk factor of the child development. According to Halleröd & Larsson (2007) the poor are those who, due to insufficient access to economic resources, have a low level of consumption of goods and services. The important consequences of this kind of definition is that, for example, malnutrition is not poverty; it is caused by poverty only if it is lack of economic resources that makes it impossible for a person to acquire food. The fact that malnutrition is most often a poverty problem. It is only a consequence of poverty if it is caused by an inability to buy adequate food, provide for shelter. There is plenty of evidence to show that unemployment is problematic even if the unemployment person is protected from poverty (cf. Nordenmark, 1999; Strandh, 2000).

Stages in a child's life can be divided into groups that correspond to major transitions in his/her life including entrances and exits of institutions (schools, etc.) biochemical transitions, cognitive transitions, etc. These groups are defined as: prenatal (2 years), early childhood (3-6 years), late childhood (7-10 years), early adolescence (11-15 years) and late adolescence (16-19 years) (Gunn and Duncan, 1997).

It is not difficult to realise that poor children have a greater share of deprivation, hardship, and bad outcomes in comparison with children from wealthier families. In academic performance, poor children appeared to achieve lower than expected scores and were more likely to drop out (Lewit, Terman and Behrman, 1997).

Brooks-Gunn and Duncan argue that negative effects of poverty are more apparent for some than for others and that the extent and duration of poverty plays a major role in exacerbating the negative effects. A parent's income also positively correlated with a child's physical health and cognitive ability (Lewit, Terman and Behrman, 1997).

Poor economic factors hamper the children's physical, biological and psychological hazards likely to compromise child outcome, for example under nutrition, specific nutritional deficits, infectious disease, environmental toxic exposure, parental home stimulation and sensitivity (Jorge A. Colombo).

Low income during the preschool and early school years is more predictive of low rates of high school completion than low income during later childhood and adolescence. Children who live in extreme poverty or who live below the poverty line for multiple years appear, all other things being equal, to suffer the worst educational outcomes. "The relative lack of income influence children's day-to-day lives by inadequate nutrition, fewer learning experiences, instability of residence, lower quality of schools, exposure to environmental toxins, family violence, and homelessness, dangerous streets, or less access to friends and services" (Özkan, Purutçuoğlu and Hablemitoğlu, 2010).

"Parents who are poor are likely to be less healthy, both emotionally and physically, than those who are not poor" (Adler, Boyce, Chesney, Folkman, & Syme, 1993). Parent irritability and depressive symptoms are associated with increased conflict between parents and adolescents, resulting in a lowered cognitive, social and emotional development (Gunn and Duncan, 1997).

Neighborhood poverty affects child development independently of family poverty and is particularly salient in large urban areas, where concentrated neighborhood poverty is most severe. Poverty enforces a constraint in the choice of neighborhoods and schools. Low income usually leads to residence in neighbourhoods characterized by social disorganization (crime, unemployed adults, etc.) Brooks-Gunn et al. (1963) established that a child's IQ, cognitive and physical health was highly characterized by the type of neighbourhoods they acquired. They mention that neighbourhoods with high employment and two-parent families had a lower probability of teenage births and drop outs (Lewit, Terman and Behrman, 1997).

There is a need to evaluate how the environment may influence basic cognitive processes

involved in school and social functioning and the impact of socially disadvantaged home on cognitive performance in task requiring basic operations related to different brain networks (Nobel, Mc Candliss, et al. 2007). Mezzacappa (2004) has verified a pattern of associations between children's basic cognitive functions of attention and their socio-economic status. He gives an example that socially disadvantaged children performed less proficiency under all conditions in a task involving attention.

Other researchers (Lipina et al., 2004; Lipina, Martell, Vuelta & Colombo, 2005) found that infants and preschoolers from socially disadvantaged homes performed less proficiently in task requiring working with memory, inhibitory control, attention, flexibility and planning.

Blair and Razza (2007) argued the role of self-regulation in emerging learning among preschoolers from low income homes. The influence of parenting and parents' educational levels on the development of educational function of children from different culture as well as socio-economic modulation of maternal speech on early vocabulary development (Hoff, 2003).

Researcher Paul Gregg and his colleague found that those with disadvantaged or 'delinquent' backgrounds fare badly in terms of earnings and employment chances as young adults, even at the age of 33. Men are also more likely to have had a spell in prison and women are more likely to be lone parents, by the age of 23, if they have negative childhood experiences. (Paul Gregg, Susan Harkness and Stephen Machin, 1999)

Gunn and Duncan mention that poor children are more vulnerable to emotional and behavioral problems than children at a good economical standpoint. They also mention that emotional outcomes can often be plotted along two dimensions, externalizing and internalizing behavior (Jeanne Brooks-Gunn Greg J. Duncan, 1997). White (1982) found some evidence that the relation between SES and intellectual/academic attainment diminishes with age.

However, Smith and colleagues (1997) found that the effects of family income on achievement among 7-year-olds were similar to the effects on intelligence for 3-year-olds. DeGarmo and colleagues (1999) examined the paths between maternal education, occupation, and income and found evidence of both similarities and differences in their connections to school achievement among 6- to 9-year-olds. Several analyses have indicated that the relations for family income and parental education depend on the number of siblings present in the household (Anastasi 1956, Mercy & Steelman 1982, Walberg & Marjoribanks 1976). Others have discussed the importance of unpacking the effects of socio-economic status owing to the high level of confounding between socio-economic and family demographic indicators, but few studies have done so (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan 1997, McLloyd 1998).

An important theme of the study is the social costs of poverty for children, in particular its effect on friendships and social inclusion. Middleton and others (1994) argue that the constraints on social participation associated with poverty mean that children begin to understand the reality of being 'different' at an early age. However, children described the impact of poverty on their lives in different ways. In Backett-Milburn and others' (2003) study, for example, they talked about the experience of disadvantage in terms of social relationships, as much, or more than, access to

material resources, downplaying the effects of inequalities on their lives.

Similarly, a number of children in Roker's (1998) study said that they were 'all right', 'not bad' or 'getting by'. Older children (aged >12) were less likely to give positive accounts, however (Ridge, 2002). The discourse that 'poverty makes no difference' was not universal therefore. Some children felt embarrassed about their circumstances, particularly if their social activities were restricted by low family income (Roker, 1998); while for others, fear of social exclusion was linked with concern over 'keeping up appearances' and potential bullying (Middleton and others, 1994; Daly and Leonard, 2002). Overall, the evidence suggests that for children living in low-income households, life can be a struggle to avoid being set apart from friends and peers. For example: 'if your friends have got something and you can't have that you feel like you are left out because everyone else has got it and they pick on you because you are the odd one out' (Willow, 2002, p. 53). Social acceptance for many children, especially amongst older age groups, meant being able to dress similarly to others in their social circle, wearing brand-name clothes and footwear. For a number of children in this review who fail to keep up with fashionable trends were met with verbal abuse, teasing or bullying from others. It was not only appearance, or access to fashionable clothes, which was a problem for disadvantaged children wishing to 'fit in' with friends. Practical difficulties involved in pursuing friendships and social activities while living on low-income were also described.

Access to transport has been a problem for a number of poor children, for example, particularly for those living in rural areas, or with single parents (Davis and Ridge, 1997; Ridge, 2002).

The greatest impact of poverty was felt by children whose families had been reliant on welfare benefits for a long time, and who perceived little possibility of change (Ridge, 2002). Taken together, these studies suggest that for some poor children, particularly in older age groups, opportunities for social participation, and feelings of social inclusion, may be reduced by the material constraints of poverty.

Summary

Poor children are suffering on their material well-being and on their relationships. Poverty also has deep-rooted effects on qualities valued and appreciated by the society such as academic achievements. However, estimating the magnitude of the effect of poverty on children is still a challenge.

Child poverty and child developments are complex multidimensional phenomena. Poverty increases a child's exposure to both biological and psychological risk that are most likely to affect child development and social opportunities which produces negative outcomes in long run.

Reading across the studies, children's narratives illustrate that the costs of poverty are not only material, but also profoundly psycho-social. Children are not passive victims of their circumstances. But their accounts demonstrate their inventiveness in coping with poverty. Despite their resourcefulness, however, some poor children experience a gradual narrowing of their horizons socially, psycho-somatically and economically.

Chapter 3. Theoretical perspective

I have used three theories to analyze my work. These theories are related to my topic and theoretical contribution can help coherent study to provide answers of how, what and why.

3.1 Ecological system theory

This is a biological system theory which proposes that all organisms are systems, composed of sub-systems and in turn part of super-systems. Thus, the children are part of the society and are made up of, circulation system cells and these are in turn made of a single human in the society. Ecological systems represent the lifelong progressive accommodations an individual makes in response to the changing environments in which they develop. This theory is the comprehensive view of the phenomenon of child development framework.

Germain argues ecological system theory closely parallels ego psychology in the importance given to the environment, action, self management and identity (Germain 1978). So this theory views people as constantly adapting in an interchange with many different aspects of their environment.

Bronfenbrenner of the well known scholars in the field of developmental psychology is a contributor to the ecological systems theory. Various development theories place emphasis on the nature and nurture interaction in the development of children. But Bronfenbrenner's (1995) ecological system theory looks at the child's environment in terms of its quality and context. The theory characterizes a child's development as influenced by distinct "layers" of the environment. The layers, as mentioned are: roles, norms and rules that shape of development. The systems consist of the following tiers:

MICROSYSTEM is the family, classroom or other associated systems in the immediate environment in which a person is operating.

MESOSYSTEM consists of two microsystems interacting with each other, such as the connection between a child's home and school.

EXOSYSTEM is an environment in which an individual is indirectly involved and is external to his experience, yet it affects the individual in some way. For e.g. a child's parent's workspace.

MACROSYSTEM influence a broader cultural and socioeconomic environments and chronosystems and transform gradually, often during the course of a lifetime.

Structure of ecological environment theories help explain the economic deprivation impact on children's development.

Microsystem is the first layer of the closest environment which the child has direct contact with, such as home and family, school and neighborhood and child care. At this level, relationships are bi-directional. At the microsystem level, there is a high tension between bi-directional influences and have the greatest impact on the child development.

The mesosystem – this layer is characterized by a network of the child's microsystems such as the child's interactions with parents at home and with teachers at school.

The Exosystem is the layer which defines the two or more social system in which the child has no direct role. Parent's workplace and home are examples of common settings for the child; events that occur at parents' workplaces can have consequences for the child at home. The child may not be directly be involved in this level. Social support network and overall neighborhood can be a factor for the child's social and emotional development in exosystems that may contribute to the child development process. Individuals with low income have fewer social contacts, receive lower levels of material and social support (Auslander & Litwin 1988). As these studies would suggest, poverty increase parental psychological stress by reducing the social support (Simons, Lorenze, Conger & Wu 1993).

The macrosystem – this layer consists of the social structure and activities that occur in the more immediate system levels and is comprised of cultural values, customs, and laws (Berk, 2000). For example, if a system believes that parents should be solely responsible for raising their children, it is less likely to provide resources to help parents. Ogbu (1981) agrees that culturally and socially defined role expectations influences parenting practice and developmental outcomes.

The chronosystem – this system encompasses the temporal dimension relating to a child's environments and change the child life course. Temporal changes encompass major or historical events or psychological changes along the aging of the child. Some researcher have documented the family process that mediate the effect of income loss from historical events such as the great depression (Elder & Caspi, 1988) and the 1980's Midwest Farm crisis (Conger et al , 1993) on children's emotional development.

This theory focuses on child environment & child development. It accepts a child's change and growth is affected by it's biology and environment. This theory proposes that an individual is encapsulated in many layers of systems, each of which influence the child directly or indirectly and if the relationship of the child to its immediate microsystem is disturbed, the child will lack the proper resources to explore other parts of his environment; hence, this leads to “gaps” in the child's experience which need to be fulfilled. These “gaps” are bridged by the child by seeking attention at socially unaccepted places (Addison, 1992).

3.2 Self-Esteem theory

Children who live in poverty are often influenced by family stresses that others do not have. It should not be their problem to worry about where money is coming from for their next school trip or groceries next week and yet they do. This can humiliate them further if they are centered out or made to feel different when they cannot present the proper funds for things like school activities. Self development is the evaluation of ourselves and value personal qualities (Taylor et al 2003:99). According to Deaux et al, there are several measures are available to assess self-esteem; they generally involve respond to statements of how satisfied people are with themselves (Deaux, et al 1993:64). People with high self-esteem have an obvious intelligence of what their

personal qualities are, think well of themselves, set suitable goals, and cope successfully with difficult situations. People with low self-esteem have less clear self conceptions, tend to be pessimistic about the future, and are more vulnerable to depression when they meet problems or stress (Taylor, et al 2003:99). The longer an individual is out of parents employment the more likely they will suffer from psychological problems combined with loss of self-confidence. The effects of a child's poor self-esteem can influence the quality of their education as well. If they are not feeling confident in their own abilities, it then can influence the outcome of their schoolwork and possibly their future employment prospects. One can see how a cycle of poverty and low self-esteem might be hard to break. Poverty has its own set of issues in the developed world and lack of funds, family stresses, stigma and peer influences can affect children's self-esteem negatively. Whitebeck et al (1991) examined whether economic family hardship had an influence on adolescent's self esteem (Mosley 1995).

Poverty has been shown to bring a variety of stressors to a family, and those stressors, both directly and indirectly, might also influence children's self-esteem (McLoyd 1990).

3.3 Self-Efficacy theory

"Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change," is the subject that has become one of the most studied topics in psychology (Bandura 1977). As Bandura and other researchers have demonstrated, self-efficacy can have an impact on everything from psychological states to behavior to motivation. Most of adult can identify goals they want to accomplish, things they would like to change, and things they would like to achieve. However, most adult also realize that putting these plans into action is not quite so simple. Bandura and others have found that an individual's self-efficacy plays a major role in how goals, tasks, and challenges are approached.

Self-efficacy theory attempts to define the character in all individuals that defines whether to take an action, not take an action, persist on an action or give up. It proposes that an individual's self-efficacy is often better at prediction of future performances than their individual achievements – since individuals are more influenced by how they achieved a certain goal rather than the goal itself. Individuals also rely on past experiences (personal or perceived) to judge the outcomes and possibility of their future actions and that persuasion, specially by another influential individual can make an individual believe that they are capable of performing a certain action (Shakibaie, 2010).

Summary

The impact of child poverty on child development can be deduced in parts by utilising these theories. Ecological system theory based on the ecological environment is focused on the child's home and neighborhood environment. Poor children have low self esteem, they have less self conception and their confidence is challenged due to these factors. These self-condescending qualities also interferes the child's self efficacy which in turn reduces the child's productive output capability. This can possibly throw the child into a positive-feedback loop of lowered self esteem and eventually depression – which in turn can result in drug misuse and related crimes.

Chapter 4. Methodology

Using appropriate method is the main criteria of any good study. Without appropriate method a study cannot investigate representative findings. Every study needs one or more methods on the basis of its type. Depending on the topic, objectives and availability of data the methods are chosen for a study. There are two main approaches to conduct a research, using qualitative or quantitative methods. While quantitative research relies on measurement and precision, using statistical analysis and testing hypothesis and theories; qualitative research tries to characterize certain circumstances, using verbal analysis and formulating hypothesis and theories. Qualitative data emphasis on people's "lived experience," are fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes, and structure of their lives: their "perceptions, assumptions, prejudgments, presuppositions" (Van Manen, 1977) and connecting these meaning to the social world around. Qualitative methodologies refer to research that result in usually non-quantifiable, descriptive data. (Robert Bogdan, 1975). According to him qualitative method allows us to know people personally and to see them as they are developing their own definitions of the world, and what they experience in their daily struggles with their society as well. So this methods enable to explore concepts (pain, faith, suffering, frustration as people are defined and experience in their everyday lives) whose essence is lost in other research approach. The main principal of qualitative research are based on and centers around a number of fundamental concepts, such as communication, understanding, subject and everyday life (S. Sarantakos, 1998).

4.1. Research Designs

This study is a qualitative research, and the information gathered are, therefore, based on semi-structured interviews, and literature reviews. This research applies the previous studies and the statistics gathered about child poverty in Sweden. It intends to review the subjective experience of integration in depth. Due to the complex nature of this experience, it cannot be described fully with quantitative methods. Thus, the main part of this report is based on qualitative information. Quantitative data from previous research were used for background research.

I used previous research data from different organizations which has been done before and some of the information collected from additional literature and the Internet. I focussed on the perceptions of social workers working with children, their everyday life, their social and economical situation, their socio-emotional state and development, and above all the deficiencies of the state endeavours towards child poverty mitigation. According to Kavle (1996) interview allows people to convey to others situations from their own perspective and in their own words. Researched interview are based on the conversation of child poverty and their activities.

This study tries to explore in according to their views what could be attractive for recruiting children. For the purpose of the study semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to adapt the respondents level of understanding thereby generating new findings. To strengthen the validity of the knowledge gained, semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to probe in order to get more information and also to prevent misunderstanding.

4.2 Sampling

The present study is conducted on child poverty in different municipality of Gothenburg. To get information of my topic I interviewed seven respondents of different organisations including five child social workers, a school social worker and a school nurse. All participants had to be staff of different government and non-government organization, working with children and families in different municipalities of Gothenburg. It was too tough for me to find out English speaking school social worker. So I used snowballing elements. Elements of snowballing cannot be ruled out in the first inquiry in which case the contacts with the respondents were done through snowballing/networking . My supervisor also gave me information about child NGOs. At first, I sent e-mails to all child social workers of selected organization. I got reply from some of them, but they said they have no idea of this topic and they can not explain in English. I informed this to one of our department Professors. He supplied me with contacts of three professional social workers, which was very useful during my research period. I emailed to them but I got response from only one social worker among them. I fixed an interview appointment with her. Thereafter she referred to another social worker who is working in Child Department of Sahlgrenska Hospital. I also collected some contacts from another social worker when I was doing my field practice at The family law office (Familjens Jurist). Then I contacted with all of them and request them to participate in my study via e-mail informing my topic and purpose of the study. I also made a futile effort to get some respondents to my studies by contacting the Head of the Psychiatry Unit of the Sahlgrenska Hospital. Thus, all my respondents were professional social workers in the age bracket of 32 to 56 years, currently involved in family and child issues with an experience between one to five years. However, each of them expressed their views on different aspects of child poverty and development.

4.3 Data Collection

In this study, two kinds of data were collected, the primary and the secondary data. While the secondary data information was material derived from the brochures provided by the organizations, literature as well as published documents most specifically those connected with child poverty in Sweden. Face-to-face interview guide was used as the main and primary data-collecting instrument. All interviews were conducted in June and July of 2011. Interview were conducted in a relaxed environment with no tensions since the researcher and respondents were acquainted to each other.

Since interviews are like two way traffic, it is imperative that the interviewer has a good grasp of the subject under investigation. Kvale (1996) emphasizes the need for the researcher to have knowledge on the subject, he or she is researching on. An interview guide (Appendix I) was used during the interview. The entire social workers' interviews took place at their premises without any disturbances. The interview lasted approximately 60 to 80 minutes, were tape recorded and later transcribed. According to Kvale "the way of recording interviews has been with the use of an audio recorder, which frees the interviewer to concentrate on the topic and the dynamic of the interview." Transcription was done verbatim immediately after the interviews and all the transcripts were printed prior to analysis. Utmost ethical standards were maintained throughout the interview process. Six respondents used English (except some terms in Swedish and most of them they explained for me) during dialogue. A respondent replied in Swedish with the help of an interpreter - the interviewee arranged himself.

All the respondents were asked about the possibility to contact them if any difficulties face to get clear meaning of their statements during transcribing the interviews and all of them agreed to contact with them if any additional questions would arise, or in case of further verification if required.

4.4 Data analysis

The amount of data collected was enormous and the purpose of analysis was to reduce it by fitting it into similar categories or condensing the meaning to exclude irrelevant details and avoiding redundancies. According to Kvale “ To analyze means to separate something into parts or elements and analysis abridges the meanings expressed by the interviewees into brief statements” (2009).

In this study, I have recorded all the interviews with a professional voice recorder from Sony. On completion of interviews, I transcribed all interviews of respondents *verbatim*. Then I summarized the transcripts by using meaning condensation method whereby long statements compressed into briefer statements in which the main sense of what is said is rephrased in a few words (Kvale, 2009) When analyzing I examined how respondents defined themes presented to them during interviews. Finally, I have used my theoretical framework and earlier research for interpreting and discussing the themes and tried to relate those with research questions of the study.

4.5 Validity, Reliability and Generalizability

4.5.1 Validity

Validity in a research is not a discrete step that is performed but instead is a process that parallels the development of the study in every way wherein data is collected, processed or analyzed. On a similar note, Kvale (2009) suggests seven possible stages where validity is challenged in a typical interview process:

1. The first stage is defined as “thematizing”, i.e. the concreteness of the proposed conjectures for a given study or research.
2. The second stage involves the design of the interview and whether the questions asked optimize (in terms of precision and accuracy) the amount of data received from the respondents.
3. The third stage is active during the interview process and is fulfilled by the interviewer’s ability to execute a good, unbiased interview.
4. The fourth stage comprises of proper transcription of the recorded interview *verbatim*.
5. Analysis is the fifth stage, it is important for both the interviewer and interviewee to have understood the question under the same context and semantics – else the interviewer risks getting ambiguous or imprecise answers which can blur the validity of the interview.

Additionally, in cases of malapropism or other verbal mistakes – the interviewee must be asked to revise the interpretation.

6. The sixth stage is reflection on the overall process in relation to the requirements of the study in question.
7. The final step involves laying out the findings of the study in a scientific and comprehensive way which conforms to the aim of the study. It must be ensured that validity was maximized at each of the seven stages by steps such as refraining from leading questions, educating the interviewees about the research scope, minimizing interviewer bias and minimizing the effect of the environment on the interviewee during interview.

4.5.2 Reliability

Reliability depends mainly on conducting the study twice (to repeat) with same methods and same population. Besides, it depends on some other basic things such as bias and neutrality, sampling, appropriate methods, triangulation, questions' type (leading etc.), skills and honesty of interviewer, respondents' answering type, transcribing, analysis and interpretation of data etc. According to Kvale (2009), reliability concerns the consistency of the respondents' responses. This particular research was made specific by selecting the interviewees who worked directly with the children and families. Their answers were measured based on the information supplied by them and the experiences they had, based on the years they had been working with the children. Researcher relied on the fact that they were knowledgeable in the field of study. If interviewees asked the same questions by a different researcher, they would probably give the same responses.

4.5.3 Generalizability

Generalizability demands on the basis of the findings of a sample study, the researcher can predict about the whole population. But it should conduct on a representative sample of that population. As Kvale (2009) states, there are three types of generalizability: naturalistic, statistical and analytical. For generalization representative sample size, random sampling, statistical tests etc. are necessary. The present study conducted on a small sample that is not representative. It also did not use random sampling technique but use purposive sampling and it is not capable to use statistical test at all. During the interviews, respondents constantly elaborated on their experiences on a general concept by linking their experiences with previous work done by other scholars, therefore, it should be general that child poverty affects children's development.

4.6 Ethical Consideration

Ethical decisions do not belong to a separate stage of interview investigations, but arise throughout the entire research process. A researcher should follow the ethical guidelines in all the seven stages of the research (Kvale, 2009: 1). In conducting this study, I have tried to take the principles of informed consent, confidentiality and consequences are of primary consideration. At first, when I contacted to the respondents I sent a brief description about the aim of my study including title. In addition of that, at the beginning of the interview before signing a contract of informed consent, I again informed the respondents about the purpose as well as of possible

benefits of the study. I assured them about the confidentiality of data and informed during analyzing some data may be changed so that anonymity of every interviewee will be recognized. I recorded their interviews with prior permission. A letter of consent (Appendix 2) containing information about the study, the purpose, implications and benefits including there in contacts of the researcher and supervisor was given. In my opinion, it was important to put ethical issues into consideration in order to ensure privacy for the participants.

4.7 Limitation

Each research work have their own limitation of methodological consideration. It is difficult to me to find English-speaking social workers and some social worker were extremely reserved with restraint to give away any information about Sweden. That's why all of my respondents were referred by other social workers who are known to them as English speaking persons. Not only that due to the language barrier, because I conducted all of my interviews in English but it was not the mother tongue either of the respondents nor of me. So, sometimes it made difficulties to get the exact word of the respondents due to their different accent and linguistic alleles. Another problem that I have faced to conduct this study is most of the literature on this topic are in Swedish language. So, I tried to understand myself with my limited knowledge of Swedish, but it was not possible for me to use of those sources in my degree report. I have used only different English sources and few Swedish sources from other English sources. On times, I simply used online machine translation to get acquainted with the general situations.

Chapter 5. Results

This chapter attempts to present the results of the study in accordance with the main theme following the research questions and explore from the respondents' views and also analyze and interpret the findings in relation to the theoretical perspective and earlier research, as discussed in the theoretical perspective (Chapter 3) in this report. The analysis will be presented qualitatively but quantitative data from earlier researches will also be utilised, and literatures (published both in English and Swedish) provided by some of the organizations especially working with the children.

The concept of child poverty is context dependent, thus, before any discussion is made on the subject, it is important to disambiguate the definition of child poverty. To fulfill this criteria, section 5.1 commences with the concept of child poverty in Sweden followed by the cause of the child poverty in section 5.2 and the main social challenges posed by child poverty is illustrated in section 5.3 followed by the impact of child poverty in child development in section 5.5 and finally the view from social workers' perspective in section 5.7.

5.1 Concept of child poverty in Sweden

From social worker's perspective, child poverty in Sweden is that children who can not participate in activities such as, social activities, school's extra-curricular activities which average Swedish children enjoy. Some of the children can not play tennis, hockey, swimming, ski, ice skating, play an music instrument, horse back riding, go to the cinema with friends because their parents can not afford that money they don't have an economy to make this possible. Children who grown up under the poverty they have several risk of their development. In this context social worker (3) said -

“Maybe if you cannot never buy new cloths for example or if you can't never go outside the home because of parents are too poor. I have seen in my job like an example they live in Angered, they have never been to the city center of Gothenburg. They spend all the time in Angered. I heard some children haven't seen sea although they live in the Gothnburg on the coast of Atlantic Ocean. Most of them haven't had an experience of going to swim in the sea, there is the big difference in Sweden between children who have like normal living standard and children who have poor living standard.”

Poor children have no opportunity to go outside and see something new and to gain new experience, especially that is the time of learning stage of children. Many poor children spend their free times inside community. Poor children want to go to restaurant with their parents and want to share their experiences with their classmates. They cannot participate in the activities that could enhance their personality. A comparison between haves and have-nots is very stark. Parents with marginal income cannot fulfill the minor wishes of their kids like colorful cloths and

fancy shoes. That is very hard and strange to cope with for adolescents.

Another school social worker (2) said-

“I can see from the school point of view when I see, school arrange the some activities they are going for skiing or doing some swimming activities something, The example, for the skiing school is offering 500Kr. To be in the activity but there are kids who can not afford to go with school because they don't have money.”

“Few month ago, there was a kid here in school and they are talking about something, and I noticed he had a big shoes which was 3,4 size bigger then his size, and I started to ask and lot of time after he said that belongs to his father, his father doesn't have money to buy the shoes for him thats why he had his father shoes.”

“Children living in poverty [are those who] experience deprivation of the material, spiritual and emotional resources needed to survive, develop and thrive, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society.” (UNICEF)

In the 2010 Social Report of Sweden, new data from several different fields is presented. Poverty is not permanent for most people as they tend to cast it within a year. However, they are more likely to resume to poverty, not due to the unavailability of resource but rather due to the mis-allocation of resources and failure of prioritization. Here what the Social Worker (6) said is relevant to quote-

“Always the same poverty, and we had to mother who comes to us they were very ill we gave to them penicillin against pneumonia example, after one week she came back, and she was even worse, and we asked, did you take every tablets as we said, and she said no. I brought food for the kids instead. So we gave her about one hundred Swedish kroner and she went away to buy pasta or rice something just to feed to kids. So she was so ill, I thought that is poverty.”

Some theorists have characterized the poor as fatalists, resigning themselves to a culture of poverty in which nothing can be done to change their economic outcomes. In this culture of poverty—which passes from generation to generation—the poor feel negative, inferior, passive, hopeless, and powerless. Children living in poverty [are those who] experience deprivation of the material, spiritual and emotional resources needed to survive, develop and thrive, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society.

5.2 Causes of the Child poverty

Respondents of my study were univocal about the causes of poverty which is underlined as follows:

- Un- and under-employment of parents
- Immigrants especially from Non-EU countries
- Single parents
- Disabled and chronically sick parents

The high incidence of poverty among lone parent families and large families suggests that demographic factors are important for national child poverty rates. Risk for child poverty was higher for children in families with foreign background (30.2%), children with a single parent (25.9%) and highest for children with foreign background and a single parent. Nearly half of them (49.2%) are categorized as poor. Child poverty is also related to segregation between different parts of the big cities. In the big cities you find both the richest and poorest districts - in six districts child poverty was shown as higher than 40%, pointing at very segregated housing areas (Save the Children Sweden 2008).

The main factors that determinate a country's child poverty rate thus can be found in macroeconomic developments and particularly in welfare traditions. The example of Sweden during the 1990s shows the influences of economic developments and social investments. During the economic slowdown and a time of rising unemployment social benefits and services had to be cut. Consequently child poverty rates were on the rise. With the recovery of the economy social investments were increased again and poverty levels fell, though not to the former level (A Balance Sheet ... 2000; Halleröd 2003).

The obvious reason people are poor is that they don't earn enough income. Unemployment is main cause of the child poverty. Sweden's unemployment rate jumped to 9.8 percent of the workforce in April from 9.1 percent a month earlier, the national statistics agency said, announcing a much higher rise than expected. Some 483,000 people were actively seeking employment in April 2010, which was around 80,000 more than the same month a year ago and 35,000 more than in March 2010, Statistics Sweden said in a statement. Many immigrants parents have not work they are dependent of social welfare money. OECD report shows that native born employment population rate are 75.5 percent and foreign born are 62.3 percent. Unemployment rate of native born are 4.8 percent and foreign born are 11.1 percent (OECD report 2003 Sweden). People born in Asia and Oceania are continuously at the lowest levels of employment in Sweden (Integration Board, 2006). Recently-arrived immigrants with language problem, few skill and low productivity will have difficulty to finding employment. As social worker (1) said-

“... it's not easy to come to Sweden and get work because they don't know the language and their previous education and training don't get recognized. Many people who come to Sweden poor from the beginning and have not the special skill, they have a problem to take care

| themselves.”

If people have not a good job its not easy to afford money for their child activities, whatsoever that are social and activities outside school. According to Taryn Ann Galloway and his colleague, vastly higher rates of child poverty for immigrants children than native children in each of the Scandinavian (Norway, Sweden and Denmark) countries. And they have explained in their paper the big differences child poverty between natives and MLIC (Middle Low Income Country) immigrants is the significantly lower employments rates for immigrants and refugees. Immigrants have less access to networks helpful for finding a job (Behtoui, 2008), (Immigrant child poverty in Scandinavia). In 1994 to 2004 Swedish welfare have challenges because of an increase in refugee immigrants and exceptionally high unemployment rates. That factors as among the most important proximate causes of poverty among children (Bradbury, Jenkins and Micklewright, 2001; Vleminckx and Smeeding, 2001, Gustafsson et al., 2007).

5.3 Main Social challenges of child poverty

Respondents to this study assume that the level of poverty is growing in Sweden because of the unemployment and increasing immigrants. Unemployed parents are feeling sad and worried about their every day life situation. If they relied in social welfare money that is not enough to participate in extra activities. Social welfare have been support to the people who have not any income but they have strict rules and regulations. So it is difficult to unemployed people to live in social welfare money with bindings.

Eamon (2001) states both the lack of money and economical pressure on a day-to-day basis affects families in poverty; additionally poverty and stress are precursors to depression which makes parents less supportive for their children. “The stress of meeting the accommodations results in eroding parental coping behaviors...psychological distress, marital discord, and result[s] in parental practices that are uninvolved, inconsistent, emotionally unresponsive, and harsh” (Eamon, 2001, p.262).

Parenting is important to children’s development as are that influences from the children social context (Zaslow Elderred, 1998). Every parent wants to be good parents and to see their children happy, but that is not very easy to accomplish when it comes to practical life. Without resourceful parents, it would merely be a daydream. Lack of resources leads to depression and deterioration of health, both to parents and their children. In this context Social Worker (1)'s view is relevant -

“I wanted to say something most important of the impact of the parents- if the parents are depressed because they can't give to children, what they wants that is the most important challenges to the children in their social life. And children are dependent their parents feeling and parents they are depressed. That is the biggest impact to the children, I think. Because if the parents are not content and unhappy they are trying to do children happy.”

Poor children are not comparable with rich children because their societies and living standards are very different. So rich children don't want to involve poor children in any activities, giving rise to a sense of exclusion. Aside from the lack of opportunity, children find the stigma of living in such rundown and marginal communities to be a serious issue. Far from taking their physical environments for granted, children are extremely sensitive to their surroundings, finding them a source of satisfaction but also a cause for humiliation and distress. Most children want to blend in with others but in some circumstances, they involuntarily stand out. In recent years, there has been a huge push by the media to obtain expensive brand name clothing. Children are influenced as well and many notice what others are wearing and want to imitate that. If someone has outgrown their clothes or is not wearing the latest "in" thing they can become a target and stigmatized. Access to other activities can be a problem as well which can contribute further to a child's negative emotional state. And that changed child behavior, might be they choose negative way for including in their society. As Social Worker (4) said -

"They are not feeling excluded within themselves but maybe if you measure it against the Swedish, many of them feel excluded."

Discrimination is another social challenge, emanates from poverty. Poor children are discriminated by friends within school's group and their own society. Discrimination breeds inequality. Unequal access to the levers of economic success generates some income and wealth inequalities (Bradley R.Schiller, 2008). Poor families have their own area in Sweden because most of the poor families live in the suburb area such as Bergsjön. Angered, Hjärbo, Kortadala and Biskopgården are the area of Gothenburg where the poor people are living. Rent expenses are cheap and easy to get apartment because it is not near the town so most of the immigrants are found in that area of Gothenburg. So rich people have their own society and poor people have their own society. It's very hard for immigrants to involve in Swedish society because of the language barrier, people mingle with those who knows their language and their culture and are of the same class means higher class people have keep relationship with high class of family and poor family have their relationship with poor family. This gets reflected in children's world also, mostly directed by the unvoiced, but desired, wishes of parents to get onto a higher ladder of success and social strata. It is not limited only to Swedish society, but sporadic all around the world. In this context Social Worker (5) said-

"In that situation they are discriminated by other friends. I think, as we know that problem is often. For example that this problem is some of the part of Gothenburg, not all part. It may be many children in this part have same situation so then it would be easier. But you live in a poor area and you have very poor parents but all your friends are rich and rich parents that is very hard to poor children. Of course, it could be hard for children. Some of the children are not understand why they could do of their friends. Some times children are excluded from their group, that problem is increasing. Children feel very uncomfortable, sad and angry. It is very hard to them."

Social status promotes self-efficacy and an individual's self-esteem. Clearly, individuals who are

at a socially disadvantageous position have lowered efficacy and esteem, and this is further proliferated by consumerism where logos and brands dictate the socio-economic status of a person. As a result social interaction is usually only accessible to a select social group and thus, children who cannot afford or do not have access to these services are naturally excluded.

5.3.1 Cultural Problem

Individuals all over the world are characterised and shaped by their cultures. Cultures and social frameworks have been developed and evolved over many generations and have profound impact on how we look and perceive the world. However, just as much as culture and our conceived social norms affect us positively, it can affect us negatively when applied in a different cultural environment. It is this diverse definition and implementation of culture and social framework that can sometime blur the lines between right and wrong depending on whose perspective we are looking from.

People migrating to Sweden also bring their social and cultural norms with them. They are repeating the same culture from generation to generation. In developing countries parents believe children are a tool for home or families so they used children as labor. Parents are not educated so they think education is not important especially for girl children. Parents want to repeat exactly how they spent their childhood in their native country with their children even when they are in Sweden. That is big challenges of child. In this context, Social Worker (3) said-

“Then also the culture, their own religion can also be the factor, sometimes indirectly can also effect how could they can integrate in the society. For example there was a girl, in school who was not in school everyday and the mother of the girl called him and told him “Why must she go to the school five days a week? It's ok with just three days.”, because she has to stay home and help with the dishing and cleaning and, because they are from the culture the women should stay home and take care of the home. So in her mind, her mother's mind, it's nothing for them going to school. 3 days it's ok. So that is also a cultural problem, they don't get the support form their parents always, how to function. The goal is to read and write little bit and get to get married like in their country. Not many, but there are.”

5.3.2 Child's feeling

Human being have their own feeling. Some shares their feelings with others and somebody doesn't. That depends on human behavior. Particularly, small children don't want to share their feeling with other people, except their family. Parents have their own problem and are worried, they do not have time to think about their own children. Many children do not expose their feelings which hampers their mental and physical health and seed problems for their future. Children find it hard to share their feeling with their parents if the parents are depressed. It takes some time and effort for children to develop trust to be comfortable with sharing their

feelings. Small children are responsible and dependent on their parents and they don't want their parents to be punished by others, thus, creating an environment where they can share their thoughts freely can be a challenge and a time consuming process. *Au contraire*, some teenagers are very willing to share their feelings. They are more aware and conscious about their family problems and may believe that sharing their experiences and difficulties with a related person can yield a possible solution. Social Worker (2) rightly stated -

“Sometimes parents have divorce and they have economical problems. They have a better situation before and the after divorce situation going much more worse and unemployed. Their parents splits maybe father who made the money, mother didn't have a full time work . When the parents split, children give with mother. I met teenagers who are telling this is the problem such as she wanted to be riding the horse and playing the instruments, it is very expensive then when the parents have split she can't afford to do. Before she did thrice a week but after the divorce just one time. Of course, she was sad about this. Some children are understand their situation (OK, my mother doesn't make so much of money so I have to except to them and to do only on thing) but some children are not understand and they get angry and aggressive.”

Immigrants should conform to the rules of their society where they are living. Compliance to the legal instruments can also help to child personality development. If parents don't accept and adapt to the norms of the society, it tends to affect the child's dignity and develop an inferiority complex. That situation could change child behaviour and they forced to choose negative way. In this context social worker (3) express -

“Poor children to react if they understand their circumstances they are smaller than other children either may be draw. Most of this children are angry and frustrated, when they react more when they are teenagers, when they are smaller I think, but I don't know how father talk to them. I mean small child have hard to understand then why he has that circumstances. May be you can not have a veckåpeng means most children in Sweden they have some money of give to them every week or every month, not a lot of money when you are small child you get 10 Kr. every week. That money you can spend to buy a candy. when children grown up older than 10 or 11 like that they got 100.00 Kr. from there parents. But of course, there are different in the society too. Some children never have their own money they can't buy anything themselves and some of have lot of money and they can buy what ever they like. It is very sad to Sweden has going to this way.”

5.4 Family Poverty

In Sweden many of the immigrant parents and single parents are facing the risk of poverty, some are unemployed and some are underemployed. Most of the immigrants parents came to Sweden, first reason is, they have not good economic condition of their home country and second reason is war. They left everything in their home country of course some of have bring extra money, but not so much and most of people could not able to took all those things from their country. However, people need to survive and they are forcing to move place to place and they should to integrate to a new society and culture. So it is important to learn new language which is easier for the young immigrants. Some of the immigrants come to Sweden in and after their 40s age 40 when people cannot learn and concentrate with new things. Of course, learning a second language actually keeps the older language learners mind active. People of all ages can benefit from learning languages for those people who has better economic situation. Job-seeking and language-learning put the immigrant parents into Catch 22 situation. Neither they could concentrate on building their language skills due to other day-to-day priorities in life not they could get a job without having knowledge of the Swedish language. Economic situations impact on family interaction by creating economic pressure or day to day expenses resulting in parental depression which is related with ecological system theory.

Single parents also have a risk of poverty. Approximately 20 percent of the families are single parents families in Sweden. A group of poverty, income of both parents and income of single parents are huge different for the children. Employed single parents also cannot afford money for their own children because the cost of living is rather expensive in Sweden than in other countries due to high taxation rate. In the past twenty years, there has been a significant growth in the number of single of parents families in all OECD countries (Bradshaw et al 1993; Whiteford and Bradshaw 1994; Duncan and Edwards 1997; Lewis et al 1997). The number of single parents has increased is parallel with transfer spent of the poor group and these parents has very often been taken as an example of a group which tends to be dependent on state income support. However, many reasons can be identified for the economic problems of single parents families, young, poorly educated and divorce female is head of the single parents family which makes the children more vulnerably to social risk, they are weak in labor market and underemployed, so single parent families run a very high risk of poverty (Burkhauser et al 1988). Single parents can be viewed as a highly disadvantages group in terms of their resources which include money, time and social work networks(Hobson 1994). Children and single parent families are five times more likely to live in poverty than children in two parent families (Moore et al. 2009). In this context Social Worker (6) said-

“... family of other country have a risk of poverty because when they come here like refugees then its harder. And also family have only one parent and low income, we know that this family also poor. Even in Swedish family also have same situation. They should be difference between Swedish and immigrants family. but also different one parent house and two parents house then it depends on where you live.”

Social worker (7) said-

“When I worked with children in foster care, I worked in Angered in the northern part of Gothenburg which is a part of the city where many people are poor. With the foster care children was very varied; many Swedish children, it was a big mixture. Many of the Swedish families, the parents are unemployed, they never had a work in their whole life.”

5.5 Impact on Child Development

Child poverty has implications in the children holistic development areas. Such as physical development, mental development, educational, socio- emotional development, and personal development. The diversity of poverty effects are also mediated by accumulation of risk factors at home, at school, and in community institutions and organizations (Walker et al., 2007). As development proceeds quality of parenting, Opportunities and stressors in the child and parents lives social circumstances, social institutions and historical events are all part of a widening circle of influences shaping who the individual child becomes (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

5.5.1 Physical and Mental Development

Growing up in poverty is associated with a variety of worse health developments. In western industrialized nations economic disparities in health tend to grow from early childhood through adolescence (J. Currie and M. Stabile)- So, Worldwide poverty has a strong association with decrease in physical and mental health. This is, in part because income seems to protect children's health at the onset of early chronic conditions (A. Case, 2005).

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the Early Child Care Research Network (2005) analyzed the impact of poverty on the timing of child development from birth to age 9 by comparing children exposed to poverty at different times. If child was poor in early infancy or child was poor after infancy and child was lived in chronically poor homes. In the latter condition children have had the lowest performance level in language, school standardized and inventories e.g. the Raynell Development language Scales, Woodcock- Johnson Psycho Educational Battery and Child behavior Check List (Sebastian J. Lipina and Jorge A. Colombo). Ecological system theory explain how family, community and cultural factors influences each child's physical and mental development.

Mother and teachers involved with children from chronically poor homes rated the children as having more externalizing and internalizing behavior problems than those in other groups. Children who experienced poverty between 4 and 9 years of age had less favorable developmental outcomes than children whose families had been poor only during the child's first 3 years of life (Sebastian J.L., and Jorge A.).

Previous Research has found so many things which is coherent with child development that poverty is associated with disease, a lower life expectancy, stigmatization as well as psychological distress. (Barbarin & Richter. 2001: 174)

Recently, public health researchers found, in Sweden almost 17 percent children were overweight and 3 percent who were obese.” More highly-educated people live in the big cities than in smaller towns and rural areas” (A. Sjöberg, 2011). “We found that the difference in the prevalence of overweight and obesity depends largely on the general level of education in the area where the children live.” (A. Sjöberg, 2011) Sjöberg clarifies that overweight and obesity are more common in children in areas with a low socioeconomic status in comparison to areas where much of the population has a high socioeconomic status. Overweight and obesity in childhood often follow children into adulthood and carry a greater risk of poor health in the future (A, Sjöberg, L. Moraeus, A. Yngre, E. Poortvliet, U. Al- Ansari, L. Lissener (2011).

Among adolescents, poverty is related to health status, but relations are less consistent than for adults. Goodman (1999) found that poverty was related to depression, obesity, and self-rated overall health whereas it was not associated with asthma and was inconsistently related to suicide attempts.

Community socio-economic status (SES) factor modify those factor which was suffering illness in the poorest living condition and SES factors influences health through two main channels. One is by shaping the household level such as parents occupation another is by directly affecting social, economic and physical environments, which in turn affect health outcome (Sebastian J.L., and Jorge A).

Lower SES during childhood has been associated with poorer pulmonary function, poor dental health and delayed physical growth in childhood as well as increased risk for suffering from coronary heart disease, and stomach cancer in adulthood (Adler & Newman, et al.,2002).

If people have no good job they cannot be happy rather develop stress, depression and anxiety which further resulting to a wide range of illnesses – both corporal and psychic. Chronically-ill parents cannot provide better environment and living standards to their children. The Swedish health care and social insurance system is so much bureaucratic that even most of the Swedes wants to avoid and quoted saying, “You have to be well to be ill in Sweden.” Situation of such parents leads to stunt, malnourished, obese and anemic children. The financial state also determines choice of food between low-quality processed foods and fresh food. Since the poor parents cannot afford fresh, but costly, foods their children naturally tend to experience malnutrition and its derivative health problems. Recently, a study conducted by the Department of Epidemiology and the School of Public Health at the University of Washington found that inexpensive ways to add nutrients to a person's diet include potatoes and beans for potassium and dietary fiber. Introducing more potassium in a diet is likely to add \$380 per year to the average consumer's food costs. A lot of people assume the poor eat cheap food because it tastes good, but they would make better choices if they could afford to (Seligman, 2011). It is worth mention the views of some of the social workers who took part in this study.

Social worker (1) said-

“But in general you are unhappy and poor, your health is worse. Its general connection to them, If you have stress, that impact on your health. Of course, both physically and and mentally.”

Social Worker (2) said

“We start from health, I think in poor families have don't money to eat that well. Food might be less good then in rich family. May be you cannot to buy fresh food (vegetables, meat). So they eat not so good food and that gives health problem. For example, in my experience most of poor teenage girl are suffering from anemia and I heard some of poor children are stunted of their ideal age. Because of unnutritious diet. Maybe you cannot participate in athletics for example and can't do anythings in your free time, stay home and can't moveto buy. Because more children who are fat in poor families and you can't get the help with school work.”

Social Worker (7) said-

“I seat in the shop every day here in Angered. Lot of family has, they don't have enough money. They go to shop to buy cheapest bread and they have usually buy a liter cola and the cheap things in the shop. I think that hampers to child physical development.”

Social worker (6) said-

“Psychological, mostly psychological, there is of course, depression they don't see the meaning of life. There are also kids who are really in danger, mentally and physically in danger because they have very traumatized parents who have been in war, who are very very violent and very sad, very depressed, very desperate.”

5.5.2 Education and skill Development

The temporal location at which poverty occurs also has significant impact on the child's outcomes. Children experience poverty during early school years are more likely to drop out than children who experience poverty during later school years. Children living in poverty or in families with persistent social assistance were seen to be leaving compulsory schooling with lower grades and also had a higher risk of psychological problems (Gunn and Duncan, 1997). Poor children are more likely to attend schools with few resources (National Research Council, 1993), and lower achievements and poor economic environment affects the child's behavior in a negative way (Werthamer- Larssons, Kellam &Wheeler, 1999). And adolescents who perceive their school environment as less supportive also are more likely to exhibit psychological problem and they can not be active, most adolescent can be involved in criminal gang because they are suffering more problem in their life. They have no idea of right and wrong. And situation

becomes more complex with the parents with multiplicities of problems who cannot put aside their time to supervise and guide their children on a day-to-day basis. The effects of a child's poor self esteem can influence the quality of their education, poor children not feeling confident in their own performance, it then can influence the result of their schoolwork and possibly their future skill development prospects.

The 21st century has been marked as the dawn of technology and everything from record-keeping to industrial design is consumed by technology. In such a technology-infested society, it becomes crucial for individuals to have a formal education to be successful. "Well-documented inequalities in access to and use of IT such as computer and Internet reflect existing patterns of social stratification in the all over the world. Children who are cut off from these resources are going to be affected as youth and also as adults. Concerns about children not having access to technology fall into four categories, "educational advantages, future employment and earnings, opportunities for social and civic involvement, and equity and civil rights issues" (Eamon, 2004, p.92). Children in poverty are deprived of these opportunities to understand and put technology into use, which puts them into a disadvantageous group.

Social worker (2) said-

"when growing older only on you come to Gymnasium, you can see the line when they break up from the normal society may be go to the criminal way of the living, and I have seen here they have some tendency where they can not see any future and light in the end of the tunnel. The older criminal they are using the more weak young guys and kids under fifteen,, they are so young and telling them to you can go in criminal things, even the police statue that s not problem because you are under the fifteen. When they see the tendency they are going the criminal way and they are not taking a in the school and education which often when they get 8 or 9 grade."

further adding-

"Here I met one family, they don't have to place to live, they are living with their cousins, friends wherever they found sleeping places every nights, and when I asked with them , he said, I don't know where I am going to sleep tonight. So, how can I think the school is important. School is not important for me."

"For example, there was a boy who was very good in football, and plying here and he got opportunity to play for the other team much more highly but cost more also to be in that organization, and the family said no, because they don't can't afford too. Swedish government couldn't afford to help in that activities. Social welfare, they don't help in this kind of area,

there's only food, clothing, place to live and maybe a bicycle but when it comes to the sports and like that, they see that it's more special things.”

According to Swedish law, no legal sanctions can be imposed for acts not, except under special circumstances, be sentenced to prison but must be referred to the institutional care facilities of the social welfare authorities. (Janson 2004)

5.5.3 Socio emotional Development

Poor children face a higher risk of developing a variety socio emotional problems, these include economic conditions parental depression resulting from stress and economic anxiety. And parental depression impairs children's socio emotional functioning directly by causing conflict in the marital relationship. Poor children are more vulnerable to psychiatric disturbances than their counterparts. Poverty is often associated with likelihood of depression and poor adaptive functioning in adolescents and psychological problems such as schizophrenia and personality disorders Özkan, et al, (2010). A lower quality of community environment is likely to affect child socio emotional development by either understanding parenting practice or providing fewer economic and social opportunities, inappropriate role models, inadequate adult supervision or detrimental peer influences (Keegan Emon ,2001).

5.6 Poverty and Children's Behavior

“Emotional outcomes are often grouped along two dimensions: externalizing behaviors including aggression, fighting, and acting out, and internalizing behaviors such as anxiety, social withdrawal, and depression.” (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997, p. 62) Internalizing behaviors including anxiety, depression and dependency while externalizing behaviors include antisocial behavior, hyperactivity, withdrawal, etc. McLeod (1993) mentions that the time spent in poverty is directly proportional to the children's unhappiness, anxiety and dependence.

Bradley and Corwyn (2001) iterate that the relationship between socio-economic status and children's behaviour problems are a result of the access to stimulating materials. Absence of positive social arousal mechanisms lead to boredom and frustration in children which attracts them to behaviors that arouse negative responses which promotes repressive control from parents which have been hypothesized to proliferate behavioral maladjustment. Eight major differences have been proposed in patterns of socialization in children from different social classes by Adams (1998); however, the emphasis is given to verbal skills, independence, achievement and creativity.

Social worker (3) said-

“Some years ago, when children (young boys) coming from the poor parts and they were met other boys from more rich parts. Most of the children look outside what they look like, and where they come from. And this more rich boys they always have their own mobile telephone

and there are many cases that the children from the poor parts stolen mobile phone of the richer children and they were fight and its happen all the times. There was problem of poor children angry with rich children. Some children have immigrants parents and other rich children have Swedish parents. That is an example which I saw.”

Social worker (4) said-

“Yes, becomes problem for children, they don't want to go the school for instance and the sometimes they are worried to bring the subject up, there is something. They want to do because they don't know their parents can't afford it, so they don't asked for it. They just keep it inside themselves and tries to handle it. Such as I am sick or going to my grandmother or whatever, you know, they don't want to show their problems really. So they can tell things like that. That is the big problem to children, what shall I say to my teacher or friends. Can I lie, can I do this. And they developed their lying attitude . I means the small children becomes the problem. Yes, that is mental stress, feel very responsible to works. May be, they don't want to irritate to their parents, to ask and make them feel to bad and sad that they can't tolerate.”

Lying is not good it becomes a habit formed through constant practice and children become unruly and more dishonest. It is important questions “Why children are compulsive lying?” Lying can be early indicator of a more severe problem which children can not solve themselves so they are lying to friends and teacher. Compulsive lying usually accompanies other problem behavior such as stealing, cheating, aggression, violent temper and poor behavior in group.

5.7 Social worker's view to improve child poverty

All respondents to this study acknowledges that though poverty has impact on children's whole life, child poverty is growing in Sweden, posing a challenge to the nation - widely known for it's welfare policies. Article 27 of Convention of the Child Rights (1989) of which Sweden is a party since 1990 states “State parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. According to the first sentences in article 27, the Swedish government has the responsibility to make sure that every child has a right to a standard of living adequate, but the question is does the policy makers act to comply with what Sweden has agreed to? Though child poverty is a political issue in Sweden with wider ramifications to social and economic life of the country now and in the future, has the policy makers set aside adequate resources to overcome the situation before the problem becomes out of control? A timely consideration by politicians can only help avoid the disaster which is on the way of Sweden.

Social worker (1) said-

“Of course, through the political system, you can do things to prevent so many people from being unemployed and I think unemployment has to do with poverty. So the political system

can effect the consequences of the child poverty. That the welfare system there can help through different the barnbidrag and other different support systems to help children from being poor. For instance, parents who are separated, and that children live with the mother .The father gives money. In Swedish, we call that underhållstöd. It's through Försäkringskassan and it's 1,273 crowns for one child. That has been the same amount of money, I think for 15 years ago. So, I think it's time to increase that amount of money. And also the barnbidrag, that's the same for all families, for all children. Maybe it's possible to have something which, where the parents were poor, maybe they could receive some more, many people who receive this barnbidrag, they don't needed it. Because they earn enough money, they save it in the bank. About myself, I earn enough money, I don't really need this, I can support my child, me and my husband, we can support to our child without any problem. We don't really need this extra money. It's better for another family, actually, to receive it, but it's given to everyone.”

Inflation is a part of the global economy. It is much accelerated in Sweden due to the economic crisis of the 90s and the global economic crisis since 2007. Despite several fold increase of the market prices in the past decade and half, the amount children receive from the state (*barnbidrag*) remained unchanged for the last 15 years and remained symbolic without any practical meaning. This is where policy makers should immediately pay attention to and act.

The same applies to the unemployment benefits. The amount unemployed parents receive from A-Kassa (Unemployment Insurance) is so meagre that the sum hardly could fulfill their own basic needs, leave alone children's additional needs in such an inflated global economy of which Sweden cannot remain unaffected.

Social worker (3) said-

“One thing would be to get more social benefit. If you dependent in social welfare money it need to be make higher [increase], and also a family who have a one parent to make higher income and to make barnbidrag also higher. I think we really changed barnbidrag should not pay all children. If you have certain income may be you could lose or you have a higher income you don't need barnbidrag. Take with this people and give it to the poor people. And also bostadbidrag for example, if you have many people and low income it will help to bigger, But also we will try to more that immigrants family get it well and make it easy.”

Social worker (5)-

“It must be easier to immigrants have opportunity to work. And may be in activities can do

when children have free time may be lower the prices and some activities can be provide free. So poor children can be participate. So general and structural things we can do. I think, politician can do a lot to change the political system. Such as different kind of social benefit barnbidrag, bostadbidrag and social bidrag help to improve the child poverty.”

Social worker (2) said-

“Main thing to give full time job opportunity to all immigrants. That can be improve the child poverty. Still, in Sweden they have racism of opportunity like black hair, Arabic name. Its not a rational thing. That is very important issue for globally, I want to say every people has need to be think to solve that problem.”

5.8 Other opinions about undocumented children

Undocumented children's situation is very vulnerable in Sweden. Those children who have no permit to stay in their country of residence, they were not protected by any of the regular legal instruments and economic measures. Sweden reportedly has a large group of "hidden children" who have previously sought asylum and gone underground to avoid deportation. But there are also children who have arrived here in order to work in the informal sector or to visit relatives, and others who have been brought by traffickers. Some have fled their countries without seeking asylum. These children do not appear in any official registers. Almost 10,000 undocumented children are reportedly hiding in Sweden. They have almost nothing, no place to live, no food to eat. They are not only onto problems but also posing problem to the entire Swedish society. Despite their undocumented status, some of the schools are generous to provide opportunity for education. Both those children and their parents (if any) are struggling for survival and to avoid arrest. Some parents are working hard in restaurants and building companies but they are underpaid. They are obliged to work under 7 kr per hour from the employee although the official minimal wage is more than 12 times higher. Some of the schools facilitate their undocumented children according to Swedish law, but the law does not permit to go outside the school. Always they are afraid to go outside and talk with other friends. That situations is making children's life is miserable and vulnerable. The only inspiration for them to go to school is that they get free meal every day. In school these "hidden children" are alienated by themselves. The more they mingle the more information they tend to release to public via friends and maybe that has been something warned by their own parents to be aloof from the rest of the class. They remain inside apartments without going out in the fear of exposing themselves to the public and authorities. Forced seclusion has effects on physical, mental, and emotional development. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is prevalent in all age groups, as well as sleeping difficulties with intrusive nightmares, anxiety, depression, abdominal pain, headache and anorexia among them. These symptoms of ill-health create an overall high risk of ceased or obstructed development among the children. (Henry Ascher, *Children living in hiding today and tomorrow*, 2009) These children in hiding lack their own identity and existence in the population registry of Skatteverket.

Social worker (6) said-

“This kids don't even exist because there is no nationality no nothing. Positively no rights, no rights to food no right to house. I have heard so many strange ways of living here in Sweden for these hidden persons...in a parking place for bicycles, in a car, in a park, many places. So these kids, if you're talking about poverty, they don't even own an identity and then they have the poverty, of course, of clothes and food and everything.”

Save the Children, Sweden mentions these “hidden children” as “paperless children”. Save the Children reported in 2008, “A special category of children was attended to, namely paperless children. Paperless persons in Sweden are estimated to 10-50 000. The number of children is unknown. The children have rights to go to school, to get health care, but the risk to be discovered and sent away mean that many of them are living as outsiders. Newborn children to paperless parents are not registered and do not get a citizenship.”

Chapter 6. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study tried to explore social workers' perspectives on why child poverty is one of the big issues and what the social worker saw as the biggest risk factors to child poverty in Sweden?

Previous literature has mention in their research depression were all significantly related children behavior problems. Living in a persistently poor family in one with persistently depressed parent substantially increase the risk, respectively of children experiencing delay cognitive development and having high level of behavior problems in the future (Jorge A. and Sebastian).

1. Child poverty being the main risk in child development has been emphasised by multiple researchers. (Bradley & Corwyn 2002, Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997 etc.) These results are further validated by the first-hand experience as narrated by the social workers who defined child poverty in Sweden as a financial and material condition which influences the children's social, cultural and health aspects. Furthermore, unemployment levels are significantly high in families with a foreign background which has had a major impact on the family structure and the children (Save the Children Sweden). Children belonging to this group of families, thus, are not equal in terms of development, opportunity and economy with other children.

2. Unemployed parents and immigrant single parents appear to be a significant factor of child poverty in Sweden. Sweden still suffers with high unemployment rates (9%) compared to the 1960s since there was a higher demand for unqualified workers for the industrial sector where education and language skill were not essential. Currently, there has been a paradigm shift where there is a demand for skill, education, communication and linguistic skills and a familiarity with the target culture and society. This change has hoist challenges for immigrants to establish themselves and many who were already established have had difficulty maintaining their employment (SCB 2003). Many of immigrants men and women continued with education, perhaps as an alternative to unemployment . Parents were also affected by the recession. Lone parents, especially lone and young ones with low educational level, and parents not born in Sweden suffered from high unemployment rates during the 1990s, and with it a decrease in disposable incomes.

3. As stated earlier (Chapter 5, Section 5.8, page 43-44), some 10 to 50 thousands of children are reportedly in hiding and are not recorded officially. This is one of the fundamental issues that Sweden needs to handle with priority because it tends to create an 'undocumented underground movement' without any records which in the long run would be difficult to handle for the government. A situation like that could also imbalance the harmony and balance of Swedish society and her values. If not, it would have profound impact on the self-esteem of those children which later gets translates into a rebellion and violence of unpredictable nature.

Since those paperless children landed or born in Sweden without any of their fault and knowledge, it is against natural law to deny their rights to identity. It also goes against the very spirit of international legal instruments like Article 7 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) of which Sweden is a party. "The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents."

However, the recent agreement of September 2011 that ensures the undocumented children to schooling as promised by the Sweden's Minister for Education Jan Björklund is extremely commendable and is a very position towards the direction of not only integration and development of kids, but also a remarkable step of ending child poverty.

4. Immigration is not only a transfer of individuals, but also their traditions and cultural norms. When migrating, the cultures of one society may not always comply with the culture of another; however, individuals are usually hesitant in changing their cultures whether it affects the society positively or negatively. An encounter of such a case was summarised by social worker 2.

5. A recurring theme of this study is that Social Workers (1, 2 and 3; , p. 41-43 *see page respectively*) that child poverty is also the result of the welfare sum (*barnbidrag*) that does not reflect the realities in the market since the last 15 years. They categorically stated that the sum remained unchanged in the last 15 years.

6. The physical, mental, educational, skill and socio-emotional development of children living in poverty is greatly affected by the unemployment of their parents; this loss of developmental opportunities also hinders the future proliferation of the children. According to Halleröd and Larsson, the socially excluded in today's Sweden are poor and unemployed and the poor children experience health problems, loneliness and psychological distress. The socially excluded, thus are excluded from society, from group and for ordinary consumption of goods, materials and services, and addition they suffer from more social and individual problem such as, group exclusion and psychological problem reason of the poverty (Halleröd and Larsson, 2008).

Recommendations:

1. **Creation of inclusive opportunities:-** To encourage proactive development in children, all activities such as leisure activities, school activities and transportation must be free or be provided at a nominal cost. Besides, access to public spaces like museums, botanical gardens, parks etc. should be made free. This will bridge the gap between the haves and have-nots eliminating a form of social exclusion. Personally, I believe this will heighten a child's creative development, diminish negative thoughts and elevate social interaction.

2. **Employment generation:-** An in-depth investigation among poor parents with special focus on immigrants is needed to review the employment policy. Such a study would not only identify the reasons, risk and challenges of unemployment of poor and/or immigrant parents, but also helps implement new employment opportunities, conducive to these specific groups.

3. **Document the undocumented:-** Documentation of the paperless children who are in Sweden without any fault and knowledge of theirs should be carried out in urgency similar to the bailing out of the banks back in 2008 during the economic crisis not only to bring them into the social mainstream of Sweden, but also to avoid a social disaster Sweden is likely to witness due to this group when they grow up. Without an early intervention, this tends to pose a threat to the entire Swedish social, economic and political values.

However, the new agreement of September 2011 “that grants the undocumented children the right to attend school, a promise made by Sweden’s Minister for Education Jan Björklund” is an admirable and continuous commitment of the Swedish state to overcome child poverty.

4. Revision of integration policy:- Despite the very commendable of the Swedish state, the existing integration policy seems to lack it impact. Therefore, a review of the existing integration policy seems very urgent to bring the poor children from the immigrant groups to the mainstream of Swedish cultural values. An effective integration pro grammes should be administered in order to educate and familiarize immigrants and their children with the accepted Social and cultural norms in the target country.



5. Revision of state welfare sums:- Since Sweden has an average inflation rate of 3.4% in average (worse during economic crisis of early 90s and the one since 2007. See chart above on inflation in Sweden from 1995 January to 2011September) yet the "symbolic" sum of *barnbidrag* reflects insensitivity of the state to address the child poverty in Sweden in harmony of the economic inflation in real life. Therefore a review of the welfare sums ought to be revised at the earliest so that poor families and children get economic support in reflection of the market trends.

Since this study is limited both in time and coverage and is not representative to the whole Sweden, the conclusions and recommendations above may also be limited in nature. However, based on interviews and previous research performed, it can be generalized that poverty has serious impacts on children's development and development opportunities.

Besides, this study has limitation in the study the impact of child poverty on the physical and psychological health of children under difficult circumstances despite the mention by some of respondents. A separate pilot study on the correlation of nutrition and health of children in poverty seems to be an urgent need for categorically analysing the problem and devise measures.

I feel that a wider study ought to be conducted at a more advanced and higher level, covering social workers from diverse geographic regions of Sweden in order to formulate a generalized framework to address child poverty in Sweden.

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Appendix 1 : Questionnaire

Introduction to the interview process and letter on consent which were mentioned at the beginning of the interviews.

1. Background information:

Age:

Nationality:

Working experience: (number of working years)

2. In your own words, How would you describe child poverty in Sweden
3. From your experiences, what could be reasons for children of being poverty? Could you explain some example?
4. What kind of social problem are they suffering in society and Why?
 - Are they discriminated against?
 - Are they excluded from their society and group?
 - Do they feel uncomfortable within their society and group?
 - Do they participate in all or most social activities with others?
5. Do they share their socio-emotional feeling with you? Could you explain?
6. Which families are at greater risk of poverty and why?
 - Swedish families,
 - Non Swedish families
 - Others.
7. How does poverty impact the child and their development areas such as?
 - Physical and Mental development-
 - Education and skill development-
 - Socio emotional development-
8. Can you do some thing to help them?
9. Could you give your opinion to improve the child poverty in Sweden?
10. Are there additional important aspects, which did not touch during the interview, about child poverty issues?

Appendix 2 : Letter of introduction



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Letter of introduction

The following is a presentation of how we will use the data collected in the interview.

The research project is a part of our education in the Master's program in social work and human rights at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. In order to insure that our project meets the ethical requirements for good research we promise to adhere to the following principles:

- Interviewees in the project will be given information about the purpose of the project.
- Interviewees have the right to decide whether he or she will participate in the project, even after the interview has been concluded.
- The collected data will be handled confidentially and will be kept in such a way that no unauthorized person can view or access it.

The interview will be recorded as this makes it easier for us to document what is said during the interview and also helps us in the continuing work with the project. In our analyze some data may be changed so that no interviewee will be recognized. After finishing the project the data will be destroyed. The data we collect will only be used in this project.

You have the right to decline answering any questions, or terminate the interview without giving an explanation.

You are welcome to contact us or our supervisor in case you have any questions (e-mail addresses below).

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