

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that apart from the recognized references and help, the mini-dissertation submitted for the Master of Arts in Social Sciences (clinical) degree to the Rand Afrikaans University is my own work and has not been submitted to any other university for a degree.

**PULENG RAKITLA**



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## **ABSTRACT**

The South African Government, through its social services, takes great caution about the children and their well-being. To emphasize this the minister of Social Development has priorities, which are outlined in the minister's Ten-Point Plan. In this ten-point plan, services are outlined according to their priorities and one of the priorities in this plan is the well-being of vulnerable groups, including all children in South Africa.

Foster care, as a form of substitute care, is not new in the system. For years, children who have been regarded as children in need of care have more than often been placed in foster care. This method is preferred by the Department of Social Development.

The current state of affairs in South Africa, characterized by the high rate of HIV/AIDS infections and death, as well as poverty, calls for more children to be placed in alternative care. Therefore, for such children, foster care has been identified as the most viable option.

However, it has always been the researcher's experience that once children are placed in foster care there is often limited if no contact by the social workers. Thus, the children's experiences are often not known. The assumption is often that if the foster parent is not complaining about the well-being of the child concerned, then the placement is perceived to be going well. The primary aim of the study therefore was to explore and describe the degree of contentment that foster children have about their status of being a foster child.

Quantitative descriptive methods were used in the study. A sample of 67 foster children was drawn from the population (i.e. foster children in Tsakane). The researcher made use of group administered questionnaires to collect data.

The results of the study show that most children have a positive experience about foster care. It is however significant to note that although the children are positive about their status, they feel that less attention is being given to them by their social workers and that procedures about foster care are often not explained to them.

Therefore, mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure that constant attention is provided to the children in need of care, for without this the social worker cannot assess whether the foster care system is effective for the child concerned or not.

The researcher provides inside knowledge about the foster children' degree of contentment about their status. The results of the study are discussed and recommendations are offered to improve on service delivery.



