

Absence of Ubuntu as Precursor to Child Sexual Abuse within the Family System in South Africa: Implications for Social Work

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Abstract

Child sexual abuse is one of the most heinous crimes committed against children in South Africa and elsewhere. Media reports, research and finalised court cases have shown that sexual abuse of children is also prevalent within the family system. Children are, by nature, supposed to be cared for and protected, especially within the family system. However, the same family members are shown to be violating the rights of children to be safe by sexually abusing them. This violation is, undoubtedly, a betrayal of the trust of children by family members. This paper aimed to advance an argument that the absence of *Ubuntu* within the social system results in the occurrence of child sexual abuse incidents within the family system in South Africa. The paper adopted a literature review as its

methodology. Theoretically, the paper is based on Ubuntu theory, ecosystems theory and role theory to guide the discussions. Lastly, the paper provided ways in which social workers can work with families operating from the lens of the *Ubuntu* philosophy to strengthen families to ensure care and protection of children.

Keywords: *Care and protection, Child sexual abuse, Family system, Social Work, South Africa, Ubuntu.*

Introduction

It is incontestable that the family is a basic unity for the society. This paper regards the family as the epicentre of the society and community because, without families, there cannot be family members and without family members, there cannot be community members. Mbedzi (2021) states that in South Africa, during the pre-colonial and pre-apartheid eras, people's survival and social needs were taken care of by families and family members who did not expect anything in return. According to Seepamore (2016), the value and significance of the family are evident in communities throughout the world both as a building block of society and as a space for the provision of emotional, physical, and collective social support for its members. These imply that adult family members and mainly parents should perform various roles as part of building and strengthening their families. The roles include but not limited to the provision of care and protection to the children.

The above-mentioned roles of families in respect to the care and protection of children receive credence from various legislative frameworks. For instance, section 28 (1) (b) of the Constitution Act 108 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1996) stipulates that every child has the right to family care or parental care, or appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment. While Children's Act 38 of 2005 (RSA, 2005), section 18 (2) (a) states that the parental responsibilities and rights that a person may have, in respect of a child, include the responsibility and the right to care for the child. Furthermore, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which South Africa is a party to, states that throughout history, children have always required special protection as the most vulnerable members of the community (United Nations, 2019). Undoubtedly, these legislative documents place high responsibility on parents and family members, and it is for the best interests of children.

It is unfortunate to state that despite the above-mentioned legislative frameworks, children in South Africa as elsewhere in the world have been and continue to be victims of sexual abuse. According to Mitchell, Becker-Blease and Soicher (2021), child sexual abuse (CSA) is any case of sexual abuse, by any perpetrator, against a victim between the ages of birth and 18. Given that the wording in this definition states that “any perpetrator”, it can be stated in this paper that it means that even parents, family members and relatives are not immune when it comes to the perpetration of CSA incidents. It is for this reason as well as media reports, research, and finalised court cases that the scope of this paper is within the ambit of CSA within the family system in the South African context. This is important for various reasons. Firstly, Mturi (2016) indicates that usually, parents are involved in children’s lives from birth and monitor each stage of their development. Secondly, parents and family members should be responsible for the care and protection of children against any form of abuse. Thirdly, Masilo (2018) argues that when it comes to fathers, no matter who or what threatens the safety of his family members, he must be the first person to defend and protect them. It can, therefore, be argued that it is not, and will never be, appropriate, for him to sexually abuse his own children, even if he is the stepfather or uncle. Fourthly, Gerke, Lipke, Fegert and Rassenhofer (2021) state that CSA, particularly within the family, is the most hidden type of child maltreatment, as there are often no direct observers. Lastly, Nziyane (2010:1) is of the view that people belong to a particular family involuntarily in the sense that they do not choose to be born into a particular family. This means that children did not choose to be born to parents or families that are capable of sexually abusing them.

The reality is that when it comes to the scourge of CSA, it is not always that cases are reported to relevant authorities by the victims and family members of the victims. According to Ebrahim, Fouche and Walker-Williams (2021), no or delayed disclosure of CSA cause many victims to never report the crime and subsequently experience a loss of justice. While Masilo (2018) is of the view that the implication for not reporting the cases is that the acts of sexual abuse will continue because, without any statutory intervention, both the victim and perpetrator will continue to stay in the environment that enables the abuse.

Considering the occurrence of CSA incidents within the family system, the need for provision of social work intervention services becomes necessary and urgent. The interventions should target families in communities that have high incidents of CSA. To this effect, Hochfield (2007) indicates that the family has also undoubtedly been the most

fundamental social institution to the social work project. Nevertheless, Kirst-Ashman (2017) is of the view that some families require comprehensive services and resources to solve problems and function as independent, healthy entities. It is against this background that, in this paper, the authors argue that the absence of *Ubuntu* in families contributes to CSA, and this warrants social work intervention. To our knowledge, there has not been a study or paper that has advanced the current argument that the absence of *Ubuntu* is a precursor to CSA within the family system, whether in South Africa or elsewhere in the world. Therefore, this makes this paper more unique as it significantly contributes to the knowledge base of the social work profession theoretically and in practice.

An Overview of Ubuntu and its Absence as Precursor to Child Sexual Abuse within the Family System

In this section, the focus of discussions is firstly to provide an overview of *Ubuntu* and secondly advance an argument that the absence of *Ubuntu* among family members is a precursor to the occurrence of child sexual abuse incidents within the family system.

The reading of literature provides that different scholars or writers have different and important views about *Ubuntu*. As a principle, some prominent and selfless South Africans, among them Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela (Amusan & Mchunu, 2017), promoted *Ubuntu*. According to Mayaka, van Breda, Uwihangana and Mugumbate (2023), the term “Ubuntu”, once known only in certain regions of Southern Africa, has become widely used, not only across Africa but also across the globe. While Ojakorotu and Bamidele (2019) are of the view that *Ubuntu* speaks to the idea of the wholeness of the individual in relation to his community and other people within it. Etieyibo (2017) adds that *Ubuntu* reflects the life experiences and histories of people in sub-Saharan Africa and defines the individual in terms of humanity or interdependency with others. The view of Etieyibo resonates well with the interconnectedness and interrelatedness of the family system.

Although not justifying the occurrence of CSA incidents across different settings such as schools, churches, and communities, ideally, they must not have any space within the family system as the family environment is supposed to be a safe place for children. In support of this view, findings of the study conducted by Nziyane (2010) reveal that the blood relationships that exist between the children and their relatives

as well as family members would create an enabling environment for the children to receive emotional support, care, and love. Considering the

above observations, it is unfortunate to state in this paper that this is not always the case as the very same relatives and family members are sexually abusing children. Masilo (2018) takes the discussion further by stating that the family should be a source of support, care, and protection when a child is sexually abused, whether the abuse occurs within the family system or outside the family. Therefore, it is safe to argue in this paper that the occurrence of incidents of CSA within the family system implies that there is an absence of the *Ubuntu* philosophy among family members and, as such, this is a precursor to the occurrence of child sexual abuse by family members. This is because the *Ubuntu* philosophy is based on the cardinal pillars of caring, respecting other human beings, and for children, it includes the value of nurturing and protecting children as the vulnerable group within our societies. The absence of *Ubuntu* within the family means that the family fails to fulfil its important role, which is to socialise children to become better members of the family and society. This, on its own, has a potential risk that the absence of *Ubuntu* may become a vicious cycle within the family system's generations, and it is not in the best interests of the family nor the unborn generations. Consequently, Shulman (2016) cautions social workers that, when working with families, it is important to look at the history of families that goes back to many generations.

In demonstration of the absence of *Ubuntu* within the family system, it is imperative that this paper should briefly refer to several cases of child sexual abuse incidents that occurred within the family system. These cases are undoubtedly raising questions around the morals and values of family members:

Case 1:

In a recently finalised high court case, 12-year-old boy who was raped and sexually exploited by his biological mother and stepfather for almost five years when he was younger, feels highly betrayed, saying he wants no contact with her (Bhengu, 2022). The available facts of this case show that the biological mother and stepfather of the child were arrested in 2017 when the child ended up in a place of safety and reported that he was being abused. The abuse and rape occurred between 2013 and 2017, from the time he was four years old until he was eight (Bhengu, 2022).

Case 2:

In another recently finalised high court case in the Gauteng Division of High Court, a biological father pleaded guilty to raping his daughter between 2010 and 2015. The biological mother of the victim, who testified that she did not wish for the father to go to prison, as that would worsen her financial predicament. The biological mother said they met as a family at the psychologist's office and discussed that the accused would make financial contributions towards the complainant's university fees and further discussed correctional supervision as a sentencing option (Mitchley, 2022). According to the facts of this case, the biological father started raping his daughter when she was seven years old and stopped after she turned 12 (Mitchley, 2022).

The above-mentioned cases imply that there is the absence of *Ubuntu* values among family members, or those parents and families do not accept nor adhere to the *Ubuntu* philosophies. Furthermore, these cases show that the occurrences of CSA incidents remain a vicious cycle for children as victims. This is because the abuse was not once off, but continued for several years, as cases were not reported to the law enforcement authorities. The implication of not reporting cases is that the incidents of sexual abuse will continue to affect the victims negatively. For instance, in one of court cases in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, a stepfather impregnated his 12-year-old stepdaughter through the act of rape that took place between November 2007 and January 2008 (*Monde Mzamo v the State* [2021]).

A very serious matter for concern is that even at the court of law, parents do not want to take responsibility as they even ask for leniency on the sentencing. This is evident in Case 2 where the biological mother pleads with the court not to impose a direct imprisonment for the biological father who has raped his very own biological daughter. The mother argues that direct imprisonment would worsen her financial predicament. In consideration of this observation, it is safe to state that breadwinners commit heinous crimes of sexually abusing their children knowing very well that their families depend on them financially and that dependence serves as a rationale for not reporting cases to the law enforcement agencies.

The above-mentioned cases demonstrate that sexual abuse of children relegates children as unimportant human beings, over whom adults exercise their position of power and intentionally and knowingly violate their rights. It is against this backdrop that this paper attributes

the absence of *Ubuntu* to the occurrence of sexual abuse in the family system. Therefore, the need to have social work interventions that incorporate the values of *Ubuntu* into parenting programmes should receive high priority. To this effect, Masson (2021) states that incorporating the principle of *Ubuntu* requires all sectors of society, community and cultural leaders, religious institutions, government and private, health, education, and social development to contribute to the promotion of a moral and just society through strengthening existing family structures and systems.

Research Methodology

This paper is a desktop study and literature were sourced from different platforms such as academic journals that included African Journals Online, books, and news reports and finalised court cases. The literature was thematically selected from different credible sources and the authors ensured that majority of the literature is recent and has relevance to the African and global contexts. Examples of search terms used include, but not limited to, *Ubuntu*; *Ubuntu* and parenting; family and *Ubuntu*; child sexual abuse; social work and *Ubuntu*; parental rights and responsibilities; care; and protection. The use of the key terms for sourcing the relevant literature enabled the authors to achieve the aim of the paper and situate the discussions to the title of the paper. This was necessary as it avoided deviation from the achievement of the aim of the paper as well as allowing the authors an opportunity to contribute to the body of knowledge.

Theoretical Frameworks

This section presents the various theoretical frameworks that are adopted in this paper. These theories are *Ubuntu* theory, ecosystems theory and role theory. According to van Breda (2019a), different theories make sense of the world in different ways. Further, different theories are based on different values, and they are applied through different procedures and skills. In the context of this paper, the authors purposefully selected the above-named theories to ensure that they are not only relevant and applicable to the topic discussed but also to enrich the discussions in the paper and most importantly, to contribute to the body of knowledge for the social work profession with special reference to childcare and protection services.

Ubuntu Theory

The question of whether *Ubuntu* is a theory in the social work profession does not arise in this paper. In the Editorial of the *African Journal Social Work* entitled “Ubuntu Social Work”, Mugumbate and Chereni (2020) wrote: “Now, the theory of *Ubuntu* has its space in social work.” This statement is, indeed, an affirmation that *Ubuntu* has an integral role to play in the social work discipline and what is left is for training institutions to train social work students on it and most importantly, for social workers in practice to embrace and infuse it in their interventions. Supporting this view, Mulqueeny (2022) states that embracing the *Ubuntu* philosophy in social work teaching and practice could improve social workers’ values and ethics. According to van Breda (2019b), *Ubuntu* champions human relationships, social justice and relational ethics. van Breda’s argument resonates very well with what the social work stands for. For example, social workers, in their daily functions, strive to promote and strengthen human relationships. In support of this view, Chigangaidze (2021) states that the philosophy of *Ubuntu* promotes the behaviours that make life worthwhile, promotes health and reduces human suffering. For this paper, it becomes significant to state that social workers that use *Ubuntu* as their theoretical framework have the potential and opportunity to educate parents and family members about socially and legally acceptable ways of raising children without harming them through acts of sexual abuse. Therefore, this paper stresses the point that in families where the *Ubuntu* philosophy is absent, social workers, through their interventions, can remedy the circumstances and, thus, social workers in practice are encouraged to work closely with families.

Ecosystems Theory

One of the theoretical frameworks adopted for this paper is the ecosystems theory. According to Mbedzi (2019), ecosystems-oriented social work practice centres on promoting a balance between the person and his or her environment or both. This theory is very important for this paper as part of the social work intervention on allegations of sexual abuse of children is to place children in an appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment, as stipulated in section 28 (1) (b) of the Constitution (RSA, 1996).

Through the lens of the ecosystems theory, it is a well-established and accepted fact that family members, as part of the family system, are interrelated and interdependent. Therefore, within the context of the

Ubuntu philosophy, it is correct to argue that parents and family members have an obligation to be humane towards one another, and more especially the children. Furthermore, this obligation puts a responsibility on other members of the family to report any incidents of sexual abuse that occur against children, whether within or outside the borders of the family system. This responsibility is consistent with section 38 of the Constitution, which is about the enforcement of the rights that are enshrined in the Bill of Rights. Section 38 (b) indicates that anyone acting on behalf of another person who cannot act in their own name, has the right to approach a competent court, alleging that a right in the Bill of Rights has been infringed or threatened (RSA,1996).

One of the indisputable functions of families is socialisation of children. Consequently, Shambare (2022) avers that parenting facilitates this process by nurturing children from birth to adulthood and ideally, this needs to be done within the ambits of the *Ubuntu* philosophy. According to Verhoeven, van Baar and Dekovic (2019), the goals of socialisation are to support children to develop as independent beings and to teach children to comply with social rules and regulations. As part of the socialisation process, children become aware of moral conduct, acceptable behaviour in society and how to deal with conflict and consider the needs of others (Masson, 2021). Given that children learn as part of the socialisation process within the family environment, when there are *Ubuntu* values within their family system, it is highly possible that they will also learn values associated with *Ubuntu*. Accordingly, Etieyibo (2017) states that *Ubuntu* and the values that emerge from it help children to develop the value of kindness and sociality. Unfortunately, without parents and family members displaying the *Ubuntu* values to their children through provision of warmth, care and protection, children will not develop the value of kindness and sociality.

Role Theory

In this paper, role theory is adopted as one of the theoretical frameworks. First and foremost, it is important to state from the beginning that parents are the first members of the family. Therefore, they should be in the frontline to perform different roles in the best interest of their families. Supporting this view, Love and Knott (2018) state that parenting begins with the news of pregnancy. This means that the mother and father start performing parenting roles and support each other during the pregnancy process, and this should serve to advance the best interests of the unborn child/ren. While Dancaaster (2014) becomes

more explicit and states that when it comes to the father, the role is not only bonding with the child after birth, but also to provide support to mothers after birth. Setlalentoa, Ryke and Strydom (2014) hold the view that if a system is to enjoy stability and integration, there must be some reciprocity of expectations between role players. According to Masilo (2018), whatever role those parents or other members of the family perform, it must have positive effects on the total functioning of the family system. Unfortunately, as demonstrated in the previous section of this paper, children have and continue to be victims of sexual abuse by their parents and family members. It is against this background that role theory becomes relevant for this paper as it aims to elucidate in the discussions that sexual abuse of children and inability of parents and family members to report such incidents amount to relegation or non-performance of their legal roles. According to Masilo (2018), sexual abuse of children is not and will never be one of the parental roles in the history of humankind. Therefore, there is no doubt that sexual abuse of children and failure to report or disclose such incidents can be regarded as the failure of parents and family members to uphold, defend and respect the Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic.

In line with role theory, this paper argues that one of the most important roles that parents and family members must perform is to be educators to their children at home. According to Ojakorotu and Obah-Akpowoghaha (2021), the family teaches the child the culture, norms and traditions of his/her nation. This implies that parents and elderly family members are not ordinary members of the family and, therefore, are always expected to lead by good example for the children to follow the behaviour that they display. This means that parents are expected to be positive role models to their children, and this is consistent with the values of *Ubuntu*, which demand that parents need to see their children as human beings that should be protected and nurtured.

Implications for Social Work

In this section, the focus is to discuss the implications for social work that arise as result of the absence of *Ubuntu* which has been noted in this paper as a precursor towards the occurrence of CSA incidents within families.

Educating Families about Ubuntu

It is the researchers' conviction that any social work intervention on CSA may not bear fruits if the *Ubuntu* philosophy is not incorporated in such interventions, especially at the family level. It is necessary also to state that ideally, any debate or discussion about *Ubuntu* must firstly start within families before it could be taken to the community level because the socialisation process of children begins within the family system. Setlalentoa, Ryke and Strydom (2014) endorse this argument by stating that children model their parents' behaviour and learn how to develop social support systems and relationships by imitating or reacting to parental behaviour. It is indispensable that families should be educated that a person is first recognised by the membership of his or her group before being reckoned with as an individual (Ojakorotu & Bamidele, 2019). Therefore, considering CSA perpetrated by parents and family members, questions that become important and need answers are, what do children learn from their parents' behaviour of sexually abusing them? Will these children imitate the acts of CSA to their children when they are also parents at some stage?

Ubuntu is also about interconnectedness in detail. *Ubuntu* is a phenomenon according to which persons are interconnected in a holistic manner, physically, socially and spiritually (Mkabela, 2014). Parents and families need to be made aware that *Ubuntu* is a philosophy that binds the family together for the purpose of unity, sustainability, safety, love, care, and protection of one another within the family system. Similarly, it is very important that families should be reminded about acceptable values that they are expected to transmit to their children as part of socialisation. According to Ojakorotu and Obah-Akpowoghaha (2021), family values provide cultural template for the child's development and life decisions, especially career, mode of operations, selections and reactions to the world. This means that parents and family members have an obligation to teach their children about *Ubuntu* and to do this, they need to display behaviours that resonate with the characteristics of *Ubuntu*.

Although there are different types of families, Ojakorotu and Obah-Akpowoghaha (2021) state that the family that constitutes the father and the mother has been seen as the primary caregivers who bring up the child based on values and rights known as ethics. It is on this note, which the importance of the *Ubuntu* philosophy within the family system cannot be overemphasised or neglected as it is in the best interests of children. This paper makes a call to social workers to educate parents and

families about the philosophy of *Ubuntu* to remind them about their pivotal role in ensuring care and protection of children within the family system. This will go a long way towards contributing towards minimising or preventing not only incidents of CSA, but also other forms of abuse that children are faced with in their families.

Family Training on Parental Rights and Responsibilities

So far, this paper has shown that parents and family members fail in the performance of their roles of providing care and protection to their children as vulnerable members of their families. Furthermore, instead of providing care and protection to the children, many parents abuse them sexually. Therefore, consistent with role theory, it is the obligation of social workers to remind and educate parents and family members about their roles and responsibilities of the provision of care and protection to the children.

According to Amos (2013), parenting refers to carrying out the responsibilities of raising and relating to children in such a manner that the child is well prepared to realise his or her full potential as a human being. This implies that parenting is the process of taking care or supporting a child from birth to adulthood involving the physical, emotional, social and intellectual capabilities. In education of parents and family members about the importance of positive parenting of children, it is necessary for social workers to refer to the laws and policies that give mandate for the provision of care and protection of children. In this instance, the most important documents are the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996; Children's Act 38 of 2005; and other relevant policies.

For the purpose and relevance in this paper, the focus shall be on the relevant sections of the Constitution and Children's Act of South Africa. Section 10 of the Constitution is about human dignity and states that everyone has the inherent dignity and the right to have his or her dignity respected and protected (RSA, 1996). According to Kateb (2011), the subject of human dignity is the worth of human beings or their high rank, or even their special place in nature. This makes it clear that human dignity resonates well with *Ubuntu*, which must ideally receive promotion and protection from the family system. Therefore, social workers should emphasise to parents and family members that any act of abuse including sexual abuse against children amounts to degradation and erosion of the human dignity of the children.

Furthermore, parents and family members should know that they are the first people entrusted with the constitutional obligation to provide care to the children in terms of section 28 (1) (b) of the Constitution Act 108 of 1996 (RSA, 1996). This section is about the right of a child to family care or parental care. Any violation of this section by parents and family members leads to a violation of section 18 (1) (a) of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 (RSA, 2005), which is about the provision of care for the child as one of the parental responsibilities and rights a person may have in respect of a child (RSA, 2005).

Rights of Children

In South Africa, the rights of children are enshrined in Chapter 2: Bill of Rights within the Constitution. A right in the Bill of Rights must be promoted, protected, respected and fulfilled (Mogoeng, 2020). Caring for and protecting children within the family system is an important realisation of the rights of children in South Africa and elsewhere. In fact, Chopra (2015) maintains that children should demand to be provided with care and protection by their parents and elders. That is why the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa guarantees children of several rights in section 28 (RSA, 1996). This section is the constitutional source of the high standards in which South Africa is supposed to preserve the future of her most vulnerable group, namely children. However, Masilo (2018) states that it appears that the primary caregivers, namely parents and other family members, who are supposed to preserve the child's rights hardly know them and are the very people who violate them. This situation requires social workers to teach not only children but also parents and family members about their rights. Supporting this view, Sandberg (2019) states that to prevent the placement of children in alternative care, it is necessary to support families and improve the caretaking abilities of parents to avoid neglect and abuse of the children. Given their positions, parents and adult family members must be alive to the need of upholding, defending and protecting these rights and must guard against their violation.

Children are born and grow up in the family environment. It is, therefore, important to look at the right to an environment. Section 24 (a) of the Constitution states that everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being (RSA, 1996). Based on this section, it cannot be disputed that sexual abuse of children, whether in the family environment or elsewhere, is harmful to the health and well-being of children. Sexual abuse of children is also a

violation of the child's right to protection from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation in terms of section 28 (1) (d) of the Constitution (RSA, 1996). It must be emphasised that it is not part of the roles of parents to sexually abuse children, but it is part of their roles to protect children from being sexually abused.

Importance of Healthy Relationships within the Family System

Healthy relationships are of paramount vitality within the family system, and especially for children. According to van Niekerk and Atmore (2021), building healthy relationships is essential for the healthy development of children and must be cultivated from conception onwards. Seepamore (2016) asserts that healthy families add value to healthy communities, thereby enhancing society and the economy. According to Masson (2021), children who have not experienced secure attachments in childhood often struggle to develop and maintain healthy relationships in adulthood and in turn provide nurturing and structured environments for their own children. Therefore, social work intervention should focus on how families may be able to build healthy family relationships.

It is beyond reservation that the absence of the *Ubuntu* philosophy among family members also signifies that there are unhealthy relationships within the family system. Where unhealthy family relationships exist, it is obvious that the family will experience instability and the needs of children such as care and protection from any form abuse will be neglected. Thus, there is a need for social workers to assist families to rebuild their relationships for them to be fully functional and meet the needs of their members.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to advance an argument that the absence of the *Ubuntu* philosophy among family members serves as precursor to the occurrence of CSA within the family system. Considering that observation and discussions in the paper, several implications or ways in which social workers may remedy the situation before it can escalate further have been discussed. The central thesis was that such interventions by social workers might help to instil the *Ubuntu* philosophy in parents and families and therefore contribute towards prevention or minimising the occurrence of CSA incidents within the

family system. Hence, this paper proffers the following recommendations: given that this was a desktop study, it is recommended that future research be conducted with families to establish their understanding of the *Ubuntu* philosophy and how they have incorporated that in their daily lives within their families. Furthermore, social workers should facilitate educational social work groups on parenting with families to strengthen and improve the social functioning of families. This paper concludes that there is an urgent need to have policy regulations that regulate parenting in South Africa, with special reference to biological parents and family members. This is because, unlike foster and adoptive parents, there are no screening processes that determine the suitability of biological parents on whether they are capable of parenting children well and meet their basic needs. Considering this view, one way to attain this recommendation is to have regulations that state that all biological parents, family members and prospective parents must attend and participate in compulsory parenting programmes. Social workers have unique and competent expertise to lead this process and programmes.

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