

**THE IMPACT OF DISRUPTED FAMILY LIFE AND SCHOOL  
CLIMATE ON THE SELF-CONCEPT OF THE ADOLESCENT**

by

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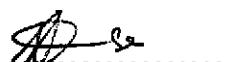
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## **DEDICATION**

**Dedicated to my late mother who nurtured and fired me with zeal and enthusiasm to learn though she was illiterate and did not live long enough to share my achievements and my late sister, who was like a mother to me but died during the final stage of this work.**

## **PROLOGUE :**

**To look forward with vision ,  
It is wise to glance backward  
with perception –  
Not to be bound by History ;  
Nor to blame ourselves or our  
Predecessors ,  
But to learn lessons as a  
Springboard to the future.**

**( Dr Mahler as quoted by Fulop , 1983 , p. 3 )**

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- God, for blessing me with the spark of creativity, patience and the motivation not to give up until reaching my goal.

## **SUMMARY**

### **The impact of disrupted family life and school climate on the self-concept of the adolescent**

This study was undertaken to determine whether a disrupted family life and school climate has an impact on the self-concept of the adolescent.

This problem was tackled and investigated from different angles : factors within the home, factors outside the home, intrapsychic factors, interpersonal factors and school factors. An analysis of the above factors and their impact on the self-concept of the adolescent was done by means of measuring instruments in the form of a questionnaire.

The results of the empirical research indicated that the more positive the family and school climate, the more positive the academic, social and emotional self-concept of the adolescent. The educational implications of the findings of the literature and the empirical study are discussed to assist teachers and parents to identify and eliminate factors that cause adolescents from disrupted families to underachieve and have negative self-concepts.

### **Keywords :**

disrupted family, academic achievement, underachievement, single parent, adolescent, relationship formation, conformity, intergroup relations, self-concept.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **AN INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Deteriorating academic achievement has normally been a matter of concern for educational personnel, parents and learners alike, particularly when it follows previously developed expectancies of success. Various measures have been introduced to improve the standard of education in South Africa. These, *inter alia*, include Curriculum 2005, in-service training for school personnel, teacher up-grading courses, guidance, extension of school hours, compulsory after school study and teacher appraisal programmes. Despite these measures, however, academic achievement of adolescents has not risen according to expectations.

It appears there are other factors, which influence the performance of adolescents, beyond didactic conditions. Other important factors that influence performance may arise within the family in which the adolescent is brought up. These factors are beyond the adolescent's control because most of them occur during their childhood. Even though most family problems may take place during childhood, they do not miraculously disappear when the child gets older. They find destructive channels, which finally disrupt the child's entire life. Even the unconducive school climate can be blamed of placing these adolescents at risk. If they are not secured at school, the family problems start to surface and leads them to destructive behaviour.

Adolescents who are exposed to such a disrupted life become vulnerable and suddenly display deviant behaviour or misbehaviour, their powers of concentration and their school performance begin to deteriorate significantly, they also tend to be emotionally disturbed, delinquent and confused in their sex role identification. This becomes prominent during adolescence because it is a transitional period. It is characterized by problems and feelings of instability. Since they are on the way to adulthood, they begin to think about their future and start to question and worry about their well-being.

## **1.2 PROBLEM ANALYSIS**

### **1.2.1 Exposition of the problem**

The researcher has witnessed the endeavours of senior educators to uplift education so as to improve academic results in the secondary schools in general with special emphasis on Grade 12. Efforts to improve the situation have contributed very little in improving examination results. It appears there is a set of other factors, which influence the performance of learners, beyond classroom situations. These factors can be traced *inter alia* to the family, which is expected to provide stability.

Furthermore, the researcher was brought up in a disrupted family, a fatherless home. After the loss of her father, when she returned to school none uttered a word about it, even the word 'father' was banned for a certain period because it seemed it could cause more pain. The researcher began to wage a lonely struggle against a sense of loss and felt changed, and hopelessly different from her peers. Many people believe that by ignoring a loss they are performing an act of kindness. Unresolved or inhibited grief does not automatically disappear when one gets older. The past is only past when it has been dealt with; otherwise it pervades the present and threatens the future.

### **1.2.2 Exploration of the problem**

A literature review indicates that there are a large number of problems that cause adolescents to underachieve. Research by Kroll (1994), Neuhaus (1974), Grossman (1986) and Aiken (1994) indicates that high rates of divorce and separation have a seriously harmful effect on children. According to Elliot (1986:149) marital breakup brings unpredictability, unreliability and insecurity into the child's world. The loss of a parent may also remove a valuable role model from the youth and can create altered behaviour patterns (McLanahan & Sanderfur 1994:46).

Research by Rimm (1986:31) shows that an out-of-wedlock birth creates a situation in which a child develops a very close one-to-one relationship with his/her mother, which may predispose the child towards underachievement. The mother is usually in a stressful situation in which she may feel rejected and is likely to question her life-style and, indeed, whether life is worthwhile living at all.

Family relations and other adjustment issues play a central role in underachievement. Specifically, family stress and conflict, poor communication between parents affects the child's level of education (Ford 1996:451). According to Ammerman & Hersen (1991:243) and Lauer (1986:451) a home with continual conflict or emotional coldness can be very damaging to the children. Conger (1991:200) makes it clear that in some cases parental hostility becomes extreme or gets out of control and serious abuse of the child or adolescent occurs. Many abused children show long-term adverse effects.

### **1.2.3 Statement of the problem**

From the exposition above, it is evident that adolescents from disrupted families experience problems, which are unique to their situation. It seems necessary to undertake an investigation of the learning situation of these adolescents and specifically of the problems related to their poor or negative self-concept. For the purpose of this study therefore, the following questions need to be investigated:

1. What is the nature of the problems related to underachievement of adolescents from disrupted families?
2. Does poor self-concept formation have a consistent relationship with being an orphan or the child of a single parent?
3. Are boys and girls affected differently by these circumstances?
4. What are the support systems available within and outside the family to help these adolescents and their families to cope with loss?
5. How do emotional problems experienced by adolescents from disrupted families affect their self-concept?

#### **1.2.4 Construction of the hypothesis**

##### **Main research problem:**

What is the impact of disrupted family life and school climate on:

- Emotional self-concept,
- Social self-concept and
- Academic self-concept?

#### **1.3 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study aims at:

- Reviewing literature with the aim of finding factors contributing to the disruption of the family in contemporary South Africa.
- Finding factors related to poor self-concept formation and underachievement at school in the literature.
- Conducting an empirical investigation to check whether these problems apply in a practical situation.
- Making recommendations for the improvement of education on the basis of the findings of the study.

#### **1.4 DEMARCAT1ON OF THE FIELD OF INVESTIGATION**

The study is centered on disrupted family life and school climate influencing the emotional self-concept, social self-concept and academic self-concept of adolescents. It does not establish whether the didactic situation can affect academic achievement regardless of family or socio-educative influence.

Adolescents from disrupted families are found all over the world, and to subject all of them to this investigation would be a physically impossible task. For this reason, the secondary schools in the

Bethlehem district, but excluding the towns of Qwaqwa and Kestell, have been selected for this investigation. The investigation endeavors to test the emotional self-concept, social self-concept and academic self-concept in line with family background and school climate of adolescents at secondary school level who differ in age and sex.

Although the investigation will be undertaken in the Bethlehem district, it should be of significance to adolescents from disrupted families throughout South Africa, and as such will be useful to all concerned with education and those implementing Curriculum 2005 in this country.

## **1.5 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

### **1.5.1 Disrupted family**

We frequently use the term 'disrupted family' to characterize children whose biological parents live apart as a result of marital disruption such as divorce, separation, are unwedded or through the death of one or both parents. In this study child abuse by parents, parental violence and teenage pregnancy fall within the ambit of the disrupted family (McLanahan & Sanderfur 1994:46).

Some researchers talk of the disrupted family as a non-nuclear family. According to Le Roux (1994: 49) a non-nuclear family is a family consisting of a husband or a wife and one or more children. In other words this refers to a single-parent family, or a group of people merely living together outside the bonds of matrimony. McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter & McWhirter (1998:49) define 'disrupted family' as the disintegration of the nuclear family as a unit through divorce, separation, death, spousal violence, substance abuse, work or parental psychopathology.

A nuclear family is comprised of a wife, husband, and their children living together in their own residence. The husband and wife maintain their own home and regard themselves as a more or less independent and self-sufficient unit (Havemann & Lehtinen 1990:27). Scanzoni & Scanzoni (1988:518) divided nuclear family into three basic types: the incipient nuclear family consists of married couple; the simple nuclear family consists of married couple with their children living with them; and the attenuated nuclear family consists of the solo or single parent whose children live with him/her. A single parent is a parent who lives alone with his /her children due to spousal death, being unwedded, divorce, separation and desertion (Elliot 1986:518).

### **1.5.2 Academic achievement**

The term ‘academy’ is derived from the Greek ‘academia’ meaning higher school. It is still used for some secondary schools or higher teaching institutions in many countries (Encyclopedia Britannica 1963, Vol. 1:57).

Academic is an adjective used to denote that which pertains to school. According to Hawes & Hawes (1982:3) it refers to the institutional system of formal education within a school, college or university. Achievement is defined by Collins (1973:6) as a skill or understanding acquired usually with reference to the basic subjects. According to Hawes & Hawes (1982:5) it is a successful accomplishment or performance in particular subjects, areas or courses, usually by reasons of skill, hardwork and interest.

Academic achievement, as Shafritz, Koepe & Soper (1988:5) define it, is a measure of knowledge gained in formal education usually indicated by test scores, grade point averages, and degrees.

### **1.5.3 Adolescent**

Bamhart & Bamhart (1976:29) define adolescent as a person growing up from childhood to manhood or womanhood. This noun is taken from the word ‘adolescence’. The term adolescence comes from the Latin verb ‘adolescere’, which means to grow into adulthood. It begins with the onset of puberty and ends with the assumption of adult responsibilities (Mussen 1990:568).

According to Herbert (1987:4) and Peterson (1991:419) the term adolescence refers, in essence, to the psychological developments which are related (loosely) to the physical growth processes defined by the term ‘puberty’. It starts when an individual attains sexual maturity and ends when he/she becomes legally independent of his/her parents (Hurlock 1973:2). Freud (Rice 1996:58) characterized adolescence as a period of internal conflict, psychic disequilibria and erotic behaviour.

During this stage the emotional development of adolescents are perturbed pertaining to the relationship with their parents, peers, teachers, and the whole society. The emotions of aggression and inhibitory (fear, anxiety, and worry) or joyous emotions are experienced by adolescents.

Growing older helps the adolescents to control their aggressive behaviour unlike during early adolescence where outbursts of anger and physical violence are common (Mwamwenda 1995:75).

Their emotions are also heightened by unfulfilled expectations of obtaining freedom to make choices, to exert their own independence, to argue with adults and to assume responsibilities. Although adolescents expect freedom, they do not want complete freedom because they end up realizing that they do not know how to use it (Rice 1996:336).

This is a period where adolescents are afraid of being talked about, teased, relationships with the opposite sex, certain persons at school, unfairness and parental interference in their affairs. At this level it is extremely important for the adolescents to love and be loved (Mwamwenda 1995:76). Eric Erikson cited in Rice (1996:196) finds that during this stage adolescents want to achieve their central development task. Their task is the formation of a coherent self-identity, which is achieved by choosing values, beliefs and goals in life. Erikson finds this a very crucial time where identity formation helps adolescents to explore alternatives and commitment to roles.

Mwamwenda (1995:73) makes it clear that during this stage the adolescents are preoccupied with search for identity because *they want to know who they are, what are they capable of achieving, what values they want to adopt as theirs and whom they want to spend their lives with, the kind of family they want to have and identity redefinition and refinement if things do not go according to their expectations.*

#### **1.5.4 Underachievement**

To underachieve means to perform below an expected level, especially in schoolwork. Collins (1973:207) using the discrepancy model, maintains that underachievement is a condition which arises when a child's normal academic performance in a school subject or standard falls below what can be expected of him/her on the basis of his/her intellectual abilities. It is a negative discrepancy between a child's school achievements and his/her potential as determined by intelligence tests.

Underachievement, therefore, is the inability of the child, who has a normal intelligence quotient (IQ) and is without apparent handicaps, to cope with schoolwork. This pertains to the fact that an

adolescent fails to meet the expectations and actualize his/her potential because of different inhibiting factors.

### 1.5.5 Self-concept

Bruno (1886:208) defines self-concept as the global evaluation made about one's own personality. It is derived from the subjective evaluations we tend to make of our behavioural traits. As a consequence, a self-concept will either be positive or negative. It is the ideas and feelings that we have about ourselves (Johnson 2000:277).

Stratton & Hayes (1991:170) define self-concept as the sum total of the ways in which the individual sees herself or himself. It is often considered to have two major dimensions: a descriptive component, known as self-image and an evaluative component, known as self-esteem. They define self-image as the internal picture which an individual has of her or himself. Johnson (2000:277) also finds a similarity between self-concept and self-esteem, thereby he defines self-esteem as how high or low one ranks oneself in terms of subjectively personal status.

The self-concept comprises of the following dimensions which are closely integrated, namely:

- The *physical self*, or the self in relation to the body.
- The *personal self*, or the self in relation to its own psychic relations.
- The *family self*, or the self in family relationships.
- The *social self*, or the self in social relations.
- The *moral self*, or the self in relation to moral norms (Gouws, Kruger & Burger 2000:82).

## **1.6 THE RESEARCH METHOD**

### **1.6.1 Literature study**

A study of relevant literature to describe the impact of disrupted family life and school climate on the emotional self-concept, social self-concept and academic self-concept of adolescents will be discussed in broad perspective.

### **1.6.2 Empirical research**

A questionnaire will be used to facilitate research in this study. A self-developed questionnaire will be used for the gathering of data. It will be divided into six parts i.e. biographical information, school climate, family climate, social self-concept, emotional self-concept and academic self-concept.

## **1.7 PLAN OF STUDY**

Chapter 1 provides the analysis of the problem, objectives of the study, explanation of the main concepts, demarcation of the field of investigation and the methods of study.

Chapter 2 will provide an exposition of relevant literature concerning factors contributing to the disruption of the family.

In Chapter 3 a literature survey covering some other factors outside the family situation that are related to underachievement and self-concept formation will be presented.

The empirical research, the gathering of data and analysis of the results will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 will present conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE DISRUPTION OF THE FAMILY IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **2.1 INTERNAL FACTORS**

##### **2.2.1 Introduction**

There is, in nearly all accounts of disrupted families, an overriding emphasis on the difficulties and problems its members experience. The experience of living in a home that is unstable, for whatever reason, is unbearable and leaves its members with emotional scars. These emotional scars take time and are not easily healed. They pervade the present and threaten the future expectations of the victims. Unresolved problems or inhibited emotions do not automatically disappear but accumulate and often find destructive channels. These channels continue haunting, disturbing, and shattering the hopes of the individual. In school this can result in poor concentration, poor commitment to work, inability to cooperate, a reduced capacity to conform and underachievement.

Some homes may appear intact but have a pervasive oppositional style. This makes it difficult to identify disrupted families and to avoid those factors that lead to the disruption of the family. To eradicate this familial syndrome it is necessary to deal with those issues so as to enlighten everyone involved.

##### **2.2.2 Divorce and separation**

The 1996 statistics for divorce, from the Central Statistics Services in Pretoria shows a high rate of divorce: 15831 Whites, 7243 Blacks, 4190 Coloreds and 1489 Indians divorce each year. According to Lawson, Peterson & Lawson (1983:169) divorce is a major source of stress for the whole family. It may mean an end to domestic violence but it still signifies a broken promise of *till death do us part*. Divorce is defined as a termination of marriage officially by competence of law or legal dissolution of marriage between husband and wife. Separation is defined as the arrangements by which husband and wife remain married but live apart. In most cases it happens

when the married couple has reached the point of the irretrievable breakdown of the marriage, sometimes when they are waiting for the papers to be served (The Hutchinson Dictionary of Ideas 1995:153).

In a study of divorced people by Havemann & Lehtinen (1990:271) it has been found that a large number of couples regard marital breakup as traumatic whereas only 20 percent of men and 13 percent of women considered the event relatively painless. Although others considered it stressful but bearable, 16 percent of men and 27 percent of women regard it as 'traumatic and a nightmare'. What is traumatic is when one's whole life and everything that one has hoped for is turned upside down. As Havemann & Lehtinen (1990:272) put it: *For the person, who goes through a divorce, an entire life is often turned topsy-turvy. Intimate bonds with another person are broken, relationship with children is changed, friendship patterns are disrupted, and different living arrangement must be established.*

Divorced people wage a lonely war on grief. Their friends and relatives have no idea whether to congratulate or offer them condolences. They feel embarrassed and indecisive which makes their experience more difficult (Havemann & Lehtinen 1990:270). Neuhaus (1974:149) concurs that breakup of marriage leaves both partners with a feeling of failure or rejection. They both suffer the aftershocks of the divorce. This is usually evidenced by their feelings of guilt, grief, resentment, self-pity, frustration, depression, and feelings of failure.

Research by Rice (1996:362), Lauer (1986:452), Scanzoni & Scanzoni (1988:596) show that mothers who go through divorce or separation face the problem of economic loss, such as reduction of income or even poverty. This forces them together with their children to live in poor areas of the town and in uncondusive conditions. Moreover, they often fail to discipline and influence their children. Troubled children blame their mothers for the absence of their fathers. Mothers also aggravate matters when they feel guilty about the divorce and try to win the favor of their children by showing leniency.

Lauer (1986:449) states that: *Broken homes and homes in which parents frequently quarrel have been linked to stress in children and stress often results in physical or emotional illness.* Children who are victims of divorce suddenly display deviant or misbehaviour; their powers of concentration and their school performance begin to deteriorate significantly (Sandberg 1987:54). Divorce does not end there but also brings unpredictability, unreliability and insecurity into the

child's world. Bewilderment, anxiety, anger, grief, shame, and above all yearning for the absent parent are common responses (Elliot 1986:149; Rice 1996:354).

According to Neuhaus (1974:149) children have different reactions towards divorce. Many react with shock, anger or despair and show grief, loss, or emptiness, restlessness and possessive behaviour at school. Some children compare their teachers with their parents and start demanding affection and approval from their teachers; if teachers fail to conform they feel that their teachers do not love them. These children, especially adolescents, are likely to have a lower self-esteem and self-image, have more interpersonal difficulties, encompassed by guilty feelings and social embarrassment because of what happened to their family (Lauer 1986:454 ; Rice 1996:363). As Aiken (1994:103) clearly states that: *Teenagers often have a great sense of guilt about what has happened to their parents, amounting at times to a feeling that in some way the divorce is an outcome of what they have done, or not done.*

Adolescents fare badly when they see their family splitting or falling apart and find that there is nothing they can do because things are beyond their control. They start to regress, withdraw and become aggressive or depressed (Conger 1991: 181; Lauer 1986:453). Grossman (1986:166) makes it clear that family breakup threatens the children's positive sense of themselves and their world. Rice (1996:362) finds it delays cognitive functioning and the development of moral judgment.

According to Havemann & Lehtinen (1990:272) and Rice (1996:355) children of divorced parents have more difficulties than their parents do. In their research, they found that five years after the divorce only about a third of the children were doing well. About three out of ten revealed a mixed picture, sometimes doing well in some respects but badly in others. The largest group, 37 percent were depressed, failed to concentrate in school, could not make friends, and suffered a wide range of other behaviour problems. Ten years after the divorce, when many of the children had reached adulthood, 45 percent were doing well but 41 percent were worried, underachieving, self-deprecating and sometimes angry young men and women. Many of them were involved in multiple relationships and impulsive marriages that ended in divorce.

Another investigation by Rice (1996:356) provides evidence based on a longitudinal study of a national sample of American children born between 1965 and 1970. The study was based on the longitudinal data from the National Survey of Children and examines whether effects of parental

divorce are evident in young adulthood. Among 18-22 year-olds from disrupted families, 65 percent had poor relationships with their fathers and 30 percent with their mothers, 25 percent had dropped out of high school and 40 percent had received psychological help.

Conger (1991:182) and Lauer (1986:449) find that divorce affects boys and girls differently. Boys are more vulnerable to the effects of divorce than girls. Even six years after their parent's divorce, they perform more poorly and become very aggressive while girls tend to withdraw. Wyn (1964:147) associates divorce with juvenile delinquency while Berg (1990:9) sees it as causing children to become more disruptive in the classroom, less efficient in their study habits and show a bad attendance record. These children also view the school environment as not important relative to the personal problems created by their parent's divorce.

These children accept responsibilities that are often above their level of becoming. They lose their adult accompaniment because some parents become more dependent on them for intellectual and moral support (Rosa 1995:134). Neuhaus (1974:150) concurs with this statement when saying: *Some parents turn to the child for affection and assurance or ask them to take sides. The tendency to force the child to take sides or to attempt to win them over by indulging them is a common occurrence.*

Aiken (1994:105) indicates that the eldest daughter is forced into a domestic mothering role because the mother is no longer around and the eldest son is forced to become a father figure and perform duties, which had previously been done by the now absent parent. Lawson, et al. (1983:169) find that even one parent can be around but sometimes he/she is so involved in his/her own adjustment and grieving that he/she overlooks the reactions of the children.

Another aspect that can aggravate circumstances is when the stepfather enters the home. Children often idealize the missing parent or are jealous of the parent's attention to a new husband or wife (Neuhaus 1974:151). Considering that adolescence is a painful period, all these crisis or traumatic events can slow the process down and retard the natural maturing process that enables the young person to gain his own sense of independent identity (Aiken 1994:103).

High rates of divorce or separation have serious harmful effects on children. The trauma they experience is not easily erased from their minds. It leaves a syndrome that eats and destroys their own sense of self-esteem. Dwelling on many attacks during the ultimate conflict that led to

divorce is unbearable. These experiences become part of their daily lives at home, at school, in the community, in the playground – actually wherever they are or go their life is characterized by these traumatic events. This trauma becomes a barrier to their educational attainment and also causes high rates of instability.

Education needs dedication and concentration but it is not easy for these children to cope under such conditions. Since their life is encompassed by problems they tend to underachieve, play truancy, dropout and show destructive behaviour.

### **2.1.3 Parental death**

About one in twenty young people lose a parent through death by age eighteen. The reactions to the death of a parent are fairly predictable, involving a range of emotions. According to Procidano & Fisher (1992:160) about 800 000 spouses die each year. This means the partial or complete loss of a caring, emotionally and physically intimate relationship for a husband or wife. The remaining spouse often finds it difficult to meet the needs of the children because of his/her own grief. The family becomes stressed and its equilibrium is disrupted and this causes the level of anxiety to rise.

Staudacher (1991:52) states that loss of a parent is characterized by withdrawal of emotions, inability to share true feelings, intense and sense of loss. According to Neuhaus (1974:247) when the person realises the loss and sorrow, there may be an uncontrollable urge to express grief and deep profound sadness. He/she can do this in a unique way. Some people find it difficult to express their emotions openly, and may not want help through this experience. Others like to deal with it and express their emotions so as to, they believe, ease the pain.

Some adolescents fail to adjust to a loss of a parent and start to internalize it as a form of rejection. They like to blame themselves that they may be responsible for such a loss. They find this very painful as it means the removal of a valuable role model and also creates altered behaviour patterns. It can also contribute to many suicides or suicidal attempts. As Neuhaus (1974:246) finds that the loss of a parent includes: *Feelings of sadness, distress, suffering, hardship, guilt, and unhappiness. During the grief process, the intensity of the sorrow can lead to both physiological and psychological disturbances which are evidenced in the personal withdrawal from others and tendency toward a preoccupation with the loss.*

Adolescents may become confused, introverted and isolated in their grief, and this may cause major implications for the child's future. There is also the possibility of anxiety, which in turn affects the academic achievement of the adolescent (Neuhaus 1974:39). The danger of emotional response that results in denial, anger, bargaining, sadness, and depression is common (Aiken 1994:110). Readjustment and coming to terms with the reality of the loss is possible. But this readjustment process is difficult because people are likely to have periods of desperate loneliness and regression to the memory of what happened (Neuhaus 1974:247).

It is true that sudden death or the news that a loved one is dead creates a predicament for most family members. Some family members run the risk of long-term psychological damage. During this time of mourning the family experiences major changes in the home and children suffer severely. Their power of concentration, especially regarding schoolwork, starts to deteriorate.

Many researchers, mentioned above, agree that children in one-parent families have lower performance and poorer attendance records at school. The reason behind this may be the multiple responsibilities that face them. Some may be compelled to hold an outside job in order to support the family, especially adolescents. Some may find it difficult to make ends meet and cannot ease the pain and memories of losing their parents. Some do not get enough support because the remaining parent is also occupied by mourning.

#### **2.1.4 Spousal violence**

Hampton, Gullotta, Adams, Potter III & Weissberg (1993:116) define violence as an act performed with the intention of causing physical pain or injury to another person. They define spousal violence as a behaviour pattern that occurs in physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, and economic forms developed to perpetuate intimidation, power, and control of the abusing spouse over the abused. The Department of Justice in Pretoria reveals that about 2297 cases of spousal violence have been reported in Pretoria in the year 2001. The statistics revealed by the Felicia Mabuza-Suttle Show indicated that about 56% of deaths among women in South Africa are caused by their husbands.

Feelings of powerlessness and frustration outside the home can result in abuse inside the home. Frequently when men feel angry and have no power to act against those who offend them, especially outside the home, they turn to find soft targets. Their soft targets are those with less

power, in most instances women. Men show their power by beating, dominating and ill-treating women (Straus & Hotaling 1980:107). Havemann & Lehtinen (1990:211) also concur that: *Violence is often the reaction of a man who feels he has not in any other way earned the right to control his wife and children and who therefore finds his masculinity threatened.*

According to Hampton, et al. (1993:118) violence towards women by their male partners is part of contemporary family life. Why women experience more physical or social consequences of violence than men is because men are typically larger than women and usually have greater access to power, property and prestige. Lawson, et al. (1983:152) point out that physical size is not the only factor that makes women victims of violence but also social norms. For many centuries women have occupied low status and have commanded little respect in the social hierarchy. This low profile has made them natural victims of a variety of impositions, including violence and disregard of women in general. This has caused many cultural groups to hide, disguise and ignore the concept 'abuse' and accept it as culturally consistent behaviour (Hampton, et al. 1993:114).

Havemann & Lehtinen (1990:209) disagree that men are the only offenders. Women can be as violent as men within the family but most of them are less aggressive and not physically strong. So they are less likely to cause pain or injury and their violence may be an act of self-defense and retaliation against men. Research by Hertzberger (1996:18) reveals that about 52 percent of women victims are vulnerable to be murdered by male partners but only 12 percent of male victims are killed by their partners. Violence and power struggles within the family can lead to child abuse or violence towards the children. The husband who beats his wife may beat his children. As a form of self-defense the wife and children may retaliate against the husband as well as each other (Lawson, et al. 1983:152). Rice (1996:47) and Hampton, et al. (1993:47) agree that: *Adolescents who are exposed to violence are more likely to use violence against their parents. Violence begets violence, which means it is passed on from generation to generation.*

Ammerman & Hersen (1991:8) find family violence a symptom of deeper and more extensive problems that affect an individual, family and society at large. If married couples always resolve their conflict by continually resorting to non-legitimate power, mixed feelings of exploitation, discontent and distrust may be generated (Scanzoni & Scanzoni 1988:400). Violence in the marital system affects both partners' ability to function as parents. They usually become emotionally unavailable to their children. Sometimes they find it very difficult to discipline their

children and if they do, they punish them severely, and some use them as outlets for their frustrations (Ammerman & Hersen 1991:238).

Downs & Miller (1998:63) state that parental violence usually contributes to the development of problems in adulthood for survivors. Involvement or witnessing interfamilial adult violence during childhood may have deleterious consequences similar to physically traumatic mistreatment in adulthood. As McWhirter, et al. (1998:48) put it: *The degree of violence between spouses is strongly correlated with the severity of children's problems. Violence signals general marital discord, which is also associated with problematic behaviour in children. Even when the child is not a direct target of family violence, exposure to adults who verbally abuse each other, who break and throw things, and who are not in control of their explosive anger can have long-lasting repercussions.*

A home with continual conflict and coldness can be more damaging to the children than a home that is 'broken' (Lauer 1986:45). Broken homes or intact but unhappy homes have a record of producing children with deviant behaviour, delinquency and maladjustment. Maladjustment affects all areas of children's life; as a result they are likely to have problems at school (Lauer 1986:453). McWhirter, et al. (1998:48) also concur saying: *The psychological effect of family violence on the development of a child is wholly negative, whether the violence is experienced or only witnessed. It can destroy the child's self-esteem and confidence. Such children are more vulnerable to stress disorders and other psychological disturbances that impede development.*

Downs & Miller (1998:66) confirm that experiences of parental violence in childhood cause low self-esteem and immoral behaviour in adulthood. If the father perpetuates family violence, children usually experience problems of alcohol abuse on reaching adulthood and psychiatric symptomatology, especially in women. But mother- perpetrated family violence is more strongly related to experience of male partner violence in adulthood.

Some children may not cope with traumatic memories brought about by their parent's violence. They feel powerless if not overly powerful to control people and events. Sometimes they experience emotional sensitivity and difficulty with emotional expression. Failure to express emotions can affect their behaviour at school (Ammerman & Hersen 1991:243). Parents may be blamed for projecting their negative attitude on their children, which cause these children to express the family conflict in their poor achievement (Berg 1990:7). As McWhirter, et al.

(1998:164) put it: *Coercive and aggressive behaviour learned at home frequently leads to academic failure. Uncontrolled behaviour adversely affects a child's ability to concentrate, to stick to a task, and to complete homework.*

Living in a home where there are continual fights, humiliates the children. Children feel embarrassed in such a way that they withdraw from their peers and community. They feel that everybody sees through their problems. It is difficult to share their problems with peers and teachers because they think the whole world is hostile towards them, so they keep things to themselves.

It is common to see these children acting aggressively towards their teachers and peers, thereby making it very difficult for anyone to approach them and offer some help. They think if they allow help from anyone that shows cowardice, which is not the norm of their family upbringing that is characterized by power struggles. The conditions to which they are exposed threaten their own development and maturity towards responsible adulthood. As a result their school progress suffers a great deal.

#### **2.1.5 Emancipation of women**

To emancipate means release from control or restraint (Brown 1993:802). Emancipation means setting free from slavery, intellectual or moral fetters, or legal disabilities, social, or political restraint (The Concise Reference Encyclopedia 1998:802). Emancipation of women means the changing role of women in social, economic, and particularly in political terms in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (The Hutchinson Dictionary of Ideas 1995:170).

Prior to emancipation, women especially blacks were not expected to work outside the home but now things have changed. Single mothers largely head some families, and these mothers tend to be employed outside the home when their children are still young. Even those who are not single mothers prefer to work for different reasons. Marshall (1992:204) states that traditional families are decreasing because a large number of women are leaving their homes to search for jobs in urban areas. These women leave their children behind thereby putting considerable pressure on educational and other social agencies. The mother figure is essential to the development of the child. The mother's absence is inherently and inevitably problematic because it creates emotional

and psychological vacuums. Children need the mother figure as a model of the feminine role and primary source of affection and care (Elliot 1986:168).

According to Le Roux (1993:104): *the women's dual role as a career woman and mother creates conflict and tension and this may interfere with healthy family life. This dual responsibility can cause fatigue and irritability in a woman and she may neglect her duty in providing adequate care for her children.* Because mothers are too occupied with their work they find it difficult to provide stimulation, directive, support and a rewarding environment for their children. This puts the emotional and educational welfare of children at risk (Elliot 1986:168).

At the end of long and demanding working hours outside the home the mother is exhausted and lacks time and energy to give enough attention to her children. Children need their mother in order to share their experiences and achievements or disappointments from school. But it is very hurtful for the child to find that the mother is not there because of her other commitments. The child starts to internalize this as rejection, insensitivity and feels insecure, lonely and dissatisfied with the way things are at home (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 1998:94).

Pretorius (1998:59) feels that it is not wrong for women to work outside the home if they do not sacrifice their elegance and femininity. A career may alienate women from their responsibilities and from being interested in real motherhood. Women become so committed, dedicated and want complete independence and may end up resorting to divorce for the sake of convenience. But children suffer the most because they lack security, safety and the acceptance that a planned home can offer.

Women's employment does affect parenting styles, which in turn can affect children's academic achievement. Parental styles may be altered in such a way that children do not receive enough warmth, attention and fostering of cognitive growth. Filling multiple roles, a career woman and mother, is a difficult task and may cause erratic behaviour on her side. The working mother is often short-tempered because of the stressful job she is doing. When she comes home she may take her stress out on the children by shouting at them and may never seem satisfied – no matter how they try to be good. This becomes very painful to children and could lower their sense of belonging and self-esteem.

## **2.1.6 Absent father**

The effect of parental absence is great, regardless of whether the parent is absent because of divorce, separation, death, desertion, neglect, or the illegitimacy of the child. According to American statistics about 22 percent of all children under the age of 18 live with their mothers only, and 4 percent with their fathers. The figures are much higher for black children, 53 percent live with their mothers only, and 4 percent with their fathers. Of all children under age 18, black and white, who live in one-parent families, about 82 percent live with their mothers, and therefore lack a father figure in the home (Rice 1996:360).

Lansdown (1984:48) sees the father as the most prominent figure of the family as he is the one who gives security, direction and assurance to all the members of the family. The father guarantees and protects the intimate relationship of the whole family. In this way the family is sure of their safety and security that contribute to emotional stability (Le Roux 1992:61). Different researchers (Lansdown 1984:48; Le Roux 1992:105; Prinsloo & Du Plessis 1998:95) prove that the father-absent family is particularly unstable in respect of being together and doing things together. If the father is absent too often or permanently, for whatever reasons, the socialisation of the children, especially boys, can be hampered because they do not experience adequate contact with the father as an identification figure.

This is confirmed by Rice (1996:361) when saying: *There is some consensus among experts that the loss of a parent in childhood is associated with a higher incidence of emotional and personality problems, high rates of psychiatric consultation, increased suicidal ideation and behaviour, higher levels of alcohol and drug use, lower self-esteem or self-image, lower levels of perceived competence in school work, and negative evaluation of parents.*

According to Wyn (1964:149) a child, especially a boy, who is not living with his father and receiving his guidance runs a great risk of becoming delinquent. But not only boys are affected by the absence of the father, girls are also affected in a different way. *Boys who lack an effective father figure and who are raised by their mothers are more likely to score lower on measures of masculinity. Daughters are affected less when young but more during adolescence. Their lack of meaningful male-female relationships in childhood can make it more difficult for them to relate to the opposite sex later on* (Rice 1996:361).

The fatherless home impedes the educational achievement of children as they have more limited intellectual stimulation with one parent than with two (Murray & Sandquist 1990:4). This was also highlighted by Mulkey & Others (1992:50): *Living in the mother-only family decreases the likelihood of completing school by about 5 percent for white children and 13 percent for black children.* According to Douglas (1994:130) a home without a father usually suffers economic deprivation or lower economic standing since most women earn very little in their work.

Father-absent families have their own unique problems that in turn affect the academic achievement of children, particularly boys. Boys feel more powerful and masculine if they are around their fathers. This helps them to conquer any fear, avoid failure and it also benefits their schoolwork. But if their fathers are absent, they become careless with their schoolwork and play truant so as to get attention because they feel nobody notices them.

### **2.1.7 Child abuse**

Pagelow (1984:48) describes child abuse as any act of omission or commission that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health and development. Herzberger (1996:8) gives an analysis of known cases of violence showing that at least one out of one hundred children is maltreated each year through physical, sexual or emotional abuse. About one-third of these children suffer from physical abuse.

Pagelow (1984:49) finds that, according to the earlier statistics in America from the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, over 1000 000 children are abused or neglected each year. There is an upward trend regarding child abuse in South Africa. The statistics reveal that in 1993 about 17 000 children were abused and the number increased to approximately 36 000 in 1998 (Mwanda 2001:2). According to Barth & Derezotes (1990:1) most of the adolescents are abused in their high school years in America and about 1.7 million cases are reported annually.

Lawson et al. (1983:153) state that the problem of abuse in the family is multicausal. It may be caused by poverty, negative family circumstances, occupational and emotional problems as well as drinking behaviour. As Pretorius (1998:366) puts it: *Child abuse implies an important dysfunction in parenthood. The abusive parent usually acts aggressively towards his child, because he feels frustrated.* Physical child abuse occurs mostly in a maritally distressed family

where there is a communication breakdown, role confusions, power imbalances, a lack of trust and spouse abuse (Hampton, et al. 1993:39).

Emotionally and physically devastated parents are likely to physically attack and hurt their children. These parents exhibit more psychological problems and have low self-esteem, which they project onto children. Their children are tortured, terrified and are deeply scarred emotionally, by the rage and hatred directed against them by their own parents (Rice 1996:346). In addition, Finkelman (1995:333) and Barth & Derezotes (1990:5) state that most adolescents experience infrafamilial and extrafamilial abuse.

According to Herzberger (1996:9) both girls and boys are victims of family violence. Girls are three to four times as likely to be sexually abused while boys tend to be physically abused more often. Hampton, et al. (1993:44) find that: *Physically abused children exhibit a number of effective and behaviour difficulties, including acute anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, self-destructive behaviour, low self-esteem, social detachment, hyperactivity, excessive aggression and non-compliance.*

Conger (1991:200) concurs with the above extract and also adds that other effects of abuse include distractibility and lack of ego control in the victims. Some may show pathological fear, shyness, passive disposition, deep-seated hostility, sullenness, and a cold, indifferent inability to love others (Rice 1996:346). *Experience of childhood physical abuse may disrupt the development of factors that promote self-esteem. Social comparison processes regarding academic competence, peer reputation and positive social relationships, and a positive relationship with a competent adult are indirectly impeded if the child is involved in parental abuse* (Downs & Miller 1998:64).

According to McWhirter, et al. (1998:48) almost all children who are abused in their families find themselves at risk of future problems. Teenagers in these families have poor emotional and behavioural control. Some become easily upset, usually disturb the smooth running of the school with unusual behaviour, and have discipline problems. Child abuse frequently creates circumstances, which pose problems for the child's development with its characteristics of negative self-concept and loss of self-confidence. It destroys the personal, social, moral and physical dimensions of the self-concept (Le Roux 1992:171). Abused children also use

aggression, isolation, and regression as an escape route from the distress situation of abuse (Pretorius 1998:366).

Child abuse is a very traumatic event that breaks the bond between the child and parent. It also disrupts the trust that the child has with the parent and eventually with any grown-up. The child ends up being so sensitive and avoiding any contact with grown-ups. The child also avoids direct conversation with his/her peers, fearing that they might discover what has happened to him/her. This means the child loses adult and peer accompaniment and this has a direct impact on the development of the child as a whole. Some children resort to attention seeking by delaying their progress at school. They learn not to trust anything that the teacher, as a grown-up, is saying because trusting an adult is a fake to them. This makes it very difficult to them to deal or cope with the schoolwork.

### **2.1.8 Drug abuse**

Drug abuse is defined by Ghodse (1991:8) as a persistent or sporadic excessive use of drugs inconsistent with or unrelated to acceptable medical practice. Various factors have been identified as leading to drug abuse. Jaynes & Rugg (1988:61) found that drug using behaviour is mostly influenced by both family and peers. But some adolescents' experimental drug use is motivated by curiosity or the desire to experience new feelings or mad states (Macdonald 1989:16). In addition to this, Jaynes & Rugg (1988:14,19) found that adolescents use drugs because they are seeking pleasure or preoccupied with the moodswing. Boredom and depression can also lead to drug abuse or dependency (Glassner & Loughlin 1987:43).

But some adolescents find themselves in a drug world because they feel empty or experience hurt feelings about themselves due to unbearable family factors. In some families, the mother and father are always caught up in a row and children never feel loved. When the father finally leaves home, some children put the blame on their mother as the cause of the situation (O'Conor 1986:21). As Macdonald (1989:93) puts it: *Being a teenager is tough enough if all is going fairly well. This is made considerably more difficult if there is added divorce, death, or a move to a new area or school.*

Davies & Coggans (1991:40) agreed that most of the people use drugs as a response to life stress or as an emotional buffer against misfortune and hardship. These hardships may be caused by

poor communication and no apparent praise for good behaviour, lack of acceptance, closeness and warmth, divorce and separation (Jaynes & Rugg 1988:104). When children in trouble with alcohol were asked about their families they commented:

1. *their mothers lacked control*
2. *their fathers lacked time*
3. *there was little affection* (Macdonald 1989:94).

If a child lives in such a home he/she feels rejected and lonely and resorts to drugs. As Macdonald (1989:93) states: *Man by nature seeks pleasure, and if pleasure of long-range success is nowhere in sight, the euphoria of drugs is especially attractive.*

It is also true that parents should guard against their behaviour because adolescents learn by imitating and also want to experiment. According to Macdonald (1989:94): *Much of what becomes of children is a product of what the parents do and how a child perceives it. Basic anxiety is produced by domination, indifference, lack of respect, disparagement, lack of admiration and warmth, isolation, and discrimination.*

Adolescents living under these conditions feel that things will never go really well for them. They find themselves in trouble with someone or parents for something they had done or not done (O'Conor 1986:22). This feeling pushes them into a lonely world where they find themselves caught up in a 'do drug world' (Macdonald 1989:13). They involve themselves in drugs so as to feel 'ok', as they claim (Jaynes & Rugg 1988:20).

According to Glassner & Loughin (1987:146) peer pressure is also one of the factors that pushes adolescents into experimenting with drugs. In addition to this Macdonald (1989:88) states that it is not only peer pressure but also normal adolescent behaviour and developmental immaturity that makes teenagers more at risk of drug abuse. Once the adolescent has been introduced to drugs by peers, because of immaturity, he/she finds it very difficult to kick the habit. As O'Conor (1986:21) reports: *Peer group introduced me to practice, it was my own emotional state, which sustained the activity and fashioned it into a habit, which I could not resist.*

Despite all the factors mentioned, there are some other contributory factors to involvement in the drug world i.e. unemployment, breakup of local communities, drug pushers, organised crime, breakdown of parental authority (Ghodse 1991:16). When Jaynes & Rugg (1988:5) asked the subjects in their study for their reasons for using drugs, they responded:

- *Relaxes me*
- *Helps have fun*
- *Allows socialisation*
- *Makes me sleep*
- *Gives me happy feelings*
- *Makes me feel powerful*
- *Helps me to 'fit in'*
- *Makes me feel sexy*
- *Loosens me up*
- *Lets me say things I wouldn't say*
- *Allows me to forget my problems.*

Drug abuse creates many ill effects for someone who is hooked on or addicted to drugs. The areas that are affected, to mention a few, include scholastic performance, work performance, family relationships, crime, truancy, sleeping in school, change in short-term memory, and attention abilities (O'Connor 1986:9). Self-esteem and self-image are also severely affected by progressive drug use. Most adolescents, if not all, who engaged in dangerous drug use patterns were identified as having a poor self-image and low self-esteem (Macdonald 1989:93).

Although most adolescents use drugs as a scapegoat for their problems, it had a negative effect on their self-concepts. This is caused by the effects the drugs have on the self-esteem and self-image of the adolescents. When the adolescents have a low self-esteem and poor self-image, it becomes difficult for them to survive in the academic world. *A child with low self-image may have little interest in school* (Macdonald 1989:93).

### **2.1.9 Alcoholism**

Narramore (1973:33) defines alcoholism as a disorder associated with the excessive use of intoxicating beverages. It is likely that the alcoholic will be left financially, physically and spiritually bankrupt.

Alcohol use and abuse is certainly among the highest of all drugs affecting broad segments of the population. Many individuals find consumption of alcoholic beverages pleasant. These pleasant effects reinforce alcohol seeking and are important factors in alcohol abuse and alcoholism. The

well-known ill effects of alcoholism are seen through domestic violence, child abuse and loss of control (Cook 1993:201). McWhirter, et al. (1998:48) find parental alcoholism causes emotional damage and social adjustment problems among children.

According to Havemann & Lehtinen (1990:269) alcoholism results in poor marital relationships, problems and breakups. As Le Roux (1992:155) puts it: *Alcoholism is a stressor, which disturbs family harmony and leads to increased indecent aggressive activity.* The home with an alcoholic parent is often characterised by family conflict, arguments, incongruent communication, spouse abuse, emotional neglect and isolation of children. The children bear the emotionally disturbing experience for the rest of their lives and observe unpredictable behaviour from the concerned parent who says one thing and does another, leaving them without knowing what message to respond to (Lawson, et al. 1983:175).

Alcoholism brings instability, indecisiveness, guilt feelings, hopelessness, social isolation and shame into the home. Some families start to avoid inviting friends to their homes and try to resolve problems on their own (Royce 1989:138-143). Other families feel embarrassed and build a wall of defence around the family members. This makes their socialisation and peer relationships inadequate (Lawson, et al. 1983:176). Research by Saitoh, Steinglass & Schuckit (1992:98) reveals that the children in this situation are characterised by neurotic disturbance, antisocial behaviour, and suicidal tendencies.

Woodside (1986:448) concur that: *Children feel invisible and unloved because all attention is focussed on the alcoholic parent while neglecting or ignoring their needs. They have problems in separating real from unreal. Their confusion stems from the implied family conspiracy to deny, overlook, ignore bizarre events at home. They dare not bring others home for fear of embarrassment the alcoholic parent may cause.*

Children of alcoholics are exposed to the unbearable situation whereby their parents refrain from disciplining them, but abuse and neglect them and also assault each other. They are likely to behave more extremely (Hertberger 1996:148). This results in children becoming tools in the struggle between parents (Royce 1989:142-146). They become terrified, having behaviour problems within and outside the home, confused, withdrawn from other children, inattentive in school, hostile, lonely, rebellious, insecure and defensive. Some act out their resentment and

frustration by engaging in vandalism, truancy, shoplifting, early marriage, illegitimate pregnancy, eating disorders and drinking or other drug abuse.

Saitor, et al. (1989:99) and Royce (1989:165) find that mother alcoholics and father alcoholics have different effects on children. Father alcoholism is a major stress factor for children, which leads to lowered self-esteem, inferiority complexes and identity crises. But the effects of mother alcoholics are worse since mothers are usually with the children. She, sometimes, is the one who blames children for what is happening and creates unreasonable and guilt feelings in them. In other families children are forced to perform adult duties because parents are unable due to alcohol abuse (Lawson, et al. 1983:176).

Children of alcoholics are subjected to daily tension and pressure, which results in severe stress among school going children. These children hardly get the time to do homework as a result of family squabbles. In these families children's basic emotional needs are ignored and their feelings are unacknowledged, they are provided with few concrete limits and guidelines for behaviour. This ruins their lives and causes depression, temper tantrums, disruptive classroom behaviour and poor academic performance (Wilson & Blocher 1990:100-101).

Gress (1988:19) finds that emotional scars that children of alcoholics suffer are severe and their social development is retarded in such a way that the inview of themselves is also distorted. Some children learn survival roles by shunning all relationships or choosing impulsive peers who agree with everything they suggest. Others feel helpless for failing to stop their parent's drinking. In testing intelligence, memory and attention Saitoh, et al. (1989:99) find that 60% of children with an alcoholic parent had an Intelligence Quotient (I.Q.) below 75, and 53% had disturbances in short-term memory.

The above mentioned researchers emphasize that children from alcoholic families are at risk of psychodynamic problems and their problems are beyond human understanding. The life they live is unbearable and characterised by anger and fear. They are not only angry with themselves for failing to smooth things at home but also with their parents who choose to live an unpredictable life. They live in fear that if their problems become known they will never be given the same respect as their counterparts are, their peers will laugh at them and people will pity them as cowards.

Finally these children, especially adolescents, use fantasies to work through unresolved feelings about their families. They bring to school family roles that allow them to survive in their alcoholic home but only to find that these roles are dysfunctional outside the home. Since a home with alcoholic parents is characterised by family violence, these children see school as a battlefield where they expose all the negative things that are happening at home. They see teachers and peers as rivals in their war. They punish them by not obeying the school rules and this in turn affects their whole behaviour. The failure to cope with school expectations usually leads to underachievement.

#### **2.1.10 Teenage pregnancy**

The research by Neuhaus (1974:62) on national figures indicates that at least 340 000 children are born out of wedlock each year in America. An estimated two-thirds or more of these infants are kept by their mothers while their teen fathers are neither willing nor prepared to assume a responsible parenting role.

There are a variety of factors that cause girls to have children out of wedlock. Some of these causes are evident, while others are more subtle. Narramore (1973:253-254) outlined the following problems:

- Seeking of affection through an illicit affair.

Every person desires to love and to be loved. If a girl does not receive the recognition and acceptance from her parents, she may resort to pregnancy.

- Seeking to punish parents.

If the girl feels rejected by her parents she may do something that she knows will hurt her parents. Her feelings of rejection may be so great that she feels justified in becoming pregnant.

- Trying to gain approval of others.

Social pressure and the desire to be accepted by peers may be so strong that a girl will have sexual relations to please her peers. The adolescent may choose to follow the crowd rather than remain chaste.

- Lack of sex education.

The desire to explore and experiment may cause a girl to participate in premarital relations. If the parents do not educate their children properly, they may experiment and, in so doing, bring much heartache and unhappiness to themselves as well as their families.

- Some adolescents have never been taught adequate moral codes and standards.

In some homes, parents fail to teach their children what is wrong and right. As a result, the children have little or no conviction about immorality. Other parents may have even set standards of immorality, which the children have adopted, for themselves.

- Lack of genuine spirituality.

Power to control the sex drive is aided by a dedicated life in Christ. When a girl is not committed to Christ, the temptation of an illicit love affair may become overwhelming.

- Lack of any definite aims or worthwhile life plans.

In any area of life, motivation is an important element. Many girls would be less likely to become involved if their eyes were set on meaningful goals.

- A strong desire to get married.

A girl deliberately becomes pregnant in order to get married. This is often used as a lever against her parents, who may be unwilling to allow her to marry, so becoming pregnant forces them to do so.

- Attempting to hold a boyfriend or force him into marriage.

This usually follows the instinct of insecurity and belief that she is in danger of losing the boyfriend.

- Victims of rape and extreme cruelty.

Some men take advantage of girl's innocence and bring about pregnancy with no thought of marrying the girl or caring for the child.

According to Ramalebana (1995:26) an unplanned and unwanted pregnancy usually causes major physical, emotional and practical upheavals in any women's life. It leaves the life of an unmarried adolescent in a traumatic scenario. Child bearing during this phase of the life course is correlated

with special and long and short-term problems for the mother and child. These problems may bring about psychological, social and economic consequences of teen parenthood (Everett 1990:143). Broude (1994:243) concurs by saying: *If a girl becomes pregnant before she is married, her situation can cause problems for the girl herself, for the family, for the father of the baby, and for the child.*

Other problems experienced by pregnant teenagers are that of being rejected by society. Many cultures disapprove of premarital pregnancy and expect an unmarried pregnant girl to rectify or to pay for her mistake one way or another (Broude 1994:244). In our culturally bound society unmarried parenthood and illegitimate births are regarded negatively and as a violation of the cultural norms. The girl who bears a child out of wedlock becomes a target and victim of malicious attitudes, emotions and insinuations (Neuhaus 1974:62).

Ramalebana (1995:29-33) and Neuhaus (1974:66) find that adolescents who become pregnant out of wedlock also feel a deep sense of loneliness in a world that frightens them. Their problem is not only loneliness but also the shame of having an illegitimate child and being rejected by their boyfriends and parents. This has a negative impact on their children's development. It causes them to vocalise less to their children, have less realistic expectations about their children's developmental progress and be unhappy about their pregnancy (Everett 1990:144).

The sudden change in status from being a child to a mother brings critical disruptions and dislocations in the youngster's development. In fact it distorts the adolescent's transitional period and causes low self-esteem in the teen mother and father (Bolton 1980: 109). As a result the girl's education is interrupted and she is forced by circumstances to permanently cease school attendance. This causes psychological distress, loss of self-esteem and further destructive behaviour in the adolescent (Stuart & Wells 1982:320). Some adolescents resort to a back street abortion, which is very dangerous and often costs, their life (Broude 1994:244).

Osofsky (1968:60) states that it is not pregnancy that compels adolescents to drop out of school but circumstances within the school. As Stuart & Wells (1982:367) put it: *Most schools require pregnant adolescents to drop out of classes as soon as their pregnancy becomes known. The reason given for exemption from attendance are given as the possible impact on the girl and her inability to function in a school situation, or her detrimental influence on the morals of the school.*

Half adolescents who do return to school after the child's birth dropout again within one year. They dropout because they lack motivation, school support through programming and childcare. When these adolescents are forced to terminate school, they are left with little or no motivation to return to school after the birth of the baby because: *they are not only deprived of the stabilising experience of involvement in a study programme but also of the social contact which school ordinarily provides and stimulates* (Stuart & Wells 1982:367).

Furstenberg (1976:137) and Osofsky (1968:64) contend that it is not imposed circumstances and pressure of pregnancy that force these adolescents to terminate school. Sometimes those adolescents were already marginal learners and had the least opportunity for a meaningful role in the future or clear future plans. Some may be passive in their approach to life with a strong tendency to be absorbed in their own fears. Their lives are out of their control and self-reports show that they have no right to their own life (Bolton 1980:59).

Findings by Elliot (1986:167) show that teenage mothers find it difficult to rear their children without the support of the father, as teenage fathers are likely to reject their children. Adolescents end up questioning their life-style and whether life is worthwhile living at all. Some think of their children as their only purpose for living and this predisposes the mother and child to a one-to-one relationship (Rimm 1986:31). Sandberg (1987:53) states that some teenage mothers may dedicate themselves to their children's needs in an excessive manner. Others may treat them as their partners, filling the gap of the father, and give them too much power. This may distort their initiative or make them to expect power and find it difficult to give it up. This can ruin the children's school years because these children become reluctant to conform to the school requirements.

Most teenage mothers and their children are a family under the roof of another family. Bringing up the child in a world of two generations of parents also causes problems. There are always arguments as far as child rearing is concerned and this leaves the child confused and hurt by these opposition between caregivers (Rimm 1986:32). Ramalebana (1995:35) also points out that teenage pregnancy puts the adolescent in crisis because she is compelled to divide her attention between schoolwork and attending to the baby's needs. Some babies are hospitalised, as a result of illness and the mother should be there to breastfeed the child. The continuous absence from school may affect the teenage mother's schoolwork.

As Lerner, Petersen & Brooks-Gunn (1991:798) concur: *Offspring of adolescents have been found to be less likely to have adequate early development and tend to: (1) do more poorly on standard tests of intellectual ability and achievement; (2) have poor grades; (3) have higher rates of behaviour problems and school suspension; (4) be less socially secure and skilled; (5) be more likely to abuse harmful substances; and (6) be more likely to engage in sexual behaviour.*

Changing status from being a teenager to an unmarried teenage mother is very embarrassing. A inferiority complex begins to characterise their life and they feel that they are no longer on the same level as their counterparts. Their boyfriends also aggravate matters by rejecting them, also fearing the embarrassment of being teenage fathers. The teenage mothers become outcasts of society and school, parents and peers. It becomes very difficult for them to raise their children properly.

Teenage mothers, if they return to school, lack concentration as they are thinking about the well-being of their children at home and how to make ends meet. The circumstances of teenage mothering not only affect adolescents' educational progress but also of their children when they enter school. The society and friends also aggravate problems by calling them names such as 'illegitimate child'. In black culture being called by this name is degrading and in most cases, it arouses unfavourable emotions, which might end up in serious violence. This also lowers the child's sense of belonging and eventually leads to underachievement.

### 2.1.11 Polygamy

The word polygamy comes from two Greek words meaning many marriages. It can refer either to a system in which a man has more than one wife at a time, or less commonly, to a system in which a woman has more than one husband at a time (The World Book Encyclopaedia: 661). The New Encyclopaedia Britannica (1973:97) defines it as the possession of more than one spouse at a time. Scholars divide the term polygamy into two terms, polygyny and polandry. They use the term polygyny for the taking of more than one wife, and polandry for the taking of more than one husband. Polygyny is much more common than polandry (The World Book Encyclopaedia: 661).

Many people have practised polygamy, and some still do, especially in Asia and Africa (The World Book Encyclopaedia: 661). There are various reasons why people prefer polygamy as it is stated in The New Encyclopaedia Britannica (1973:97): *The economic contribution of the wife,*

*the desire for sexual companionship, especially when the pregnancy and lactation of a wife dictate abstinence, enhanced social status and prestige, and an occasional surplus of women in the sex ratio.*

Hillman's findings (1975:19) show that men perceive plural marriages as a source of wealth, for they are likely to command the labour of many sons and wives. They also expect to receive the marriage cattle (lobolla) of many daughters. Another reason is when the first wife is barren, or gives birth to daughters only. In this situation, the man fears dying without an heir and starts to consider polygamy. Some people follow this practice to form alliances between family and clan groups, especially when clans are involved in faction fighting (Hillman 1975:117).

Some women still support the custom of polygamy because the shared labour with co-wives lightens their burden (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica 1973:97). Other women believe that it is a disgrace to be the only wife of a man. They give all sorts of reasons for desiring a partner or co-wife. Although polygamy creates problems, as long as women themselves, who suffer the consequences in the end, have this idea polygamy will no doubt remain (Hillman 1975:97).

Some people still prefer polygamy despite the problems it brings to all the members of the family. Wives and all children usually live together under one roof, sharing the domestic responsibilities. Some have separate compounds but have one breadwinner. The number of births increases because each and every wife wants to have her own children. It becomes very difficult for the breadwinner, usually the man, to support such a big family (De Witt & Booysen 1995:18).

According to a Hindu proverb: *A thousand moustaches can live together, but not four breasts.* The saying illustrates the conflicts and jealousy among co-wives caused by polygamy (Broude 1994:153). The mutual relationships in a polygamous household depend more on the co-wives than on the relationship between the husband and the particular wife. A woman may get along well with her husband, but not with the co-wives (Hillman 1975:122).

Jealousy and fighting between co-wives stem from sexual envy, favouritism, status and competition. In a polygamous household there is system of hierarchical grading among wives that most of the time causes trouble. The senior wife has more authority over family decisions than junior wives. The wives in modern society see this as embarrassing and degrading their status, thereby stirring conflict in the family (Giddens 1990:387).

Although sexual contacts are on a rotational basis, there is a lot of favouritism judiciously hidden. Therefore, women compete for the sexual attention of their spouse and bitter confrontations usually erupt. The first wife becomes jealous of a new co-wife, fearing that the man will spend more time with her. It is said that no polygamous family is tranquil. The quarrelling is so pervasive and so disruptive that the family is unable to sleep at night and no day ends without a fight. Husbands hesitate to interfere in their wives' disputes, fearing to be poisoned, bewitched or murdered (Broude 1994:153).

According to researcher's knowledge, polygamy is still widespread in parts of Africa including South Africa as well as in many tribal societies. It is still practised by most traditional leaders and some well-known people in Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei, KwaZulu Natal, Qwaqwa, and Gazankulu areas. But nothing will erase the fact that it comes with different and unsurmountable problems, especially in modern society. Although men believe that polygamy breeds wealth, it is not always the case especially in this changing society. It not only brings economic problems but also emotional problems. In these families men are traditionalists who do not allow their wives to work outside the home. But it becomes very difficult for the man to support such a big family.

Emotional problems are caused by jealousy among co-wives and eventually spreads to the children. There is no peace because of fighting, co-wives fighting one another and children are forced to take sides and engage in a fight. This syndrome of conflict and instability characterizes the life of the children and when they come to school, they bully everyone and hardly listen to the teacher.

### **2.1.12 Extended family**

The extended family is an expansion of the nuclear family, parents and dependent children, usually built around a unilineal descent group (The New Encyclopedia Britannica: 11). If married children and their offspring live with the parents, the family is called an extended family. An extended family's household may also include aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents and grandchildren (The World Book Encyclopaedia: 19).

The extended family system often occurs in regions where economic conditions make it difficult for the nuclear family to achieve self-sufficiency. Co-operation being necessary, aid is recruited,

usually either from the patrilineal kin or the matrilineal kin (The New Encyclopedia Britannica: 11). But social changes have created new sets of influences and experiences for children and adolescents. The mobility of the population, the decline in the influence of the extended family and the disappearance of the small farm make this society one in which nothing seems certain (McWhirter, et al. 1998:21).

Conger (1991:175) states that isolation of the nuclear family is likely to be stressful to all the members of the family. The more the intimate emotional relationships of the parents and children are confined to the nuclear family, and the smaller the family unit is, the more intense family relationships are likely to be and the more difficult and stressful to modify. Parents and adolescents find it more difficult to adjust to changing circumstances than might be the case in an extended family in a close-knit community.

In the past the extended family provided different role models and opportunities for members to anticipate and always be personally available to serve as caregivers. But in this changing society, parents and their children have less access and contact with the extended family in times of crises. The family that was once vibrant with life and received help from other members of the family is under pressure. This does not only result in a reduction of social networks for young people but also in stress and frustrations due to changing family circumstances, which in turn place them at risk (McWhirter, et al. 1998:41).

Gone are those days where child rearing was the responsibility of each and every member of the extended family. Grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins used to nurture the young ones with love and comfort in all times of need. They used to teach them norms, culture and respect. Children never felt so lonely and afraid because the larger family was always around them. But now children are limited to a small family circle of only parents, brothers and sisters. In most cases these members of the small family are not always around because of work commitments.

There is also a system, especially in black communities, to involve grandparents in childrearing when parents go to the city to work. But bringing up children by two generations of parents sometimes causes problems. The problems are caused by the contrast in certain beliefs: traditional way versus Christianity and witchdoctors versus Westernized doctors. Sometimes grandparents take their grandchildren wherever they go, even to shebeens. This may confuse children and they find themselves not knowing which way to follow (Rimm 1986:32).

### **2.1.13 Unemployment**

The Central Statistical Services reveal that 22,9 percent people in South Africa were unemployed in 1997. This number is increasing daily. According to Giddens (1990:505-506) the experience of unemployment can be very disturbing to those who have become accustomed to having secure jobs. In modern societies, having a job is important for maintaining self-esteem. It is not difficult to see why unemployment may undermine an individual's confidence in his/her social value.

Unemployment, particularly of the father, could lead to all forms of domestic violence (De Witt & Booyse 1995:140). As Warner (1981:15) puts it: *Unemployed men are violent towards their wives and beat their wives three times the rate of fully employed men.* Unemployment leads to sharp increase in rates of child abuse, family violence and divorce or separation (Conger 1991:173 & Watson 1985:150-154).

Unemployment affects all the members of the family and diminishes tolerance to one another. Members blame one another as if he/she chooses to be unemployed. In a family where both partners are working and a father loses his job, a feeling of inferiority characterizes his life. He starts behaving badly and tries to make his wife feel that although he is not working, he is still the head of the family by bossing everyone around.

In a traditional family where women are deprived of the opportunity to be employed and the father has lost his job, the wife may start to blame him, saying if she were allowed to work things would better. Children witness these disagreements and find it very difficult to live in a family that fights about money and other material things. Even if they want something important, they have to go without it. They are often shouted at and scolded for not respecting the situation.

Suicidal thoughts characterize the life of many parents when they see that ends do not meet. Some of them even tell their children that if they keep on pestering them, they are going to commit suicide. This is likely to affect children's concentration at school, thinking that parents may die at any time.

## **2.2 EXTERNAL FACTORS**

### **2.2.1 Parent's social class**

According to Scimecca (1980:37) parents are the major influence upon academic achievement of their children. The concern and high expectations of parents improve academic achievement of children. These parents are likely to instill their own middle-class values in their children. Swift (1970:183) states that parental education, income occupation, attitude and living space are related to achievement. Children do better at school if their parents motivate them and are interested in their school progress.

Ushasree (1990:8,10) finds that low caste and tribal learners are likely to be intellectually inferior. This is due to the conditions of life in the slums and in rural isolated areas. Their motivation to achieve is affected by the poor schooling of their parents, lack of parental interest in education, poverty, poor nutrition, health, and over-crowding and insecure economic future. According to Wadkar (1989:16) and Berg (1990:7) there is a positive correlation between educational environment at home and achievement. Educated parents encourage their children to be educated too thereby guiding them to a better future. As Ushasree (1990:16) puts it, poorly educated and economically deprived parents fail to provide their children with necessary stimulation and experiences that are important in school achievement.

Conger (1991:344) found that children from upper-class families are unlikely to drop out of high school while lower-class children are faced with serious economic problems that compel them to discontinue their education. Children from the lowest socio-economic background have serious health problems that interfere with alertness, attention to studies and the ability to do academic work. Scimecca (1980:38) also states that higher status parents are likely to perceive a tertiary education as essential to economic advancement, whereas this is not the case for lower-status parents.

According to Ushasree (1990:18) in disadvantaged families parents tend to be indecisive, disorganized, apathetic, rejecting and have a low self-esteem. They do not believe that they can control their children's lives as well as theirs. They are likely to give their children immediate gratification rather than guide them toward long-term gratification.

The findings of Marshall (1992:204) and Kvaraceus, et al. (1967:5) show that children of low status parents are marginalized and reside in a deteriorated neighborhood, which brings staggering obstacles to achieve decency, dignity and success. Because the parents of these children have less knowledge about education, they tend to have less personal contact with the school. This poor involvement with the school affects their children because most of the time their parents are not involved in the major issue of the education of their children.

Achievements go hand in hand with parental education, well-being, attitudes, occupation, guidance and encouragement. If parents are less educated and not economically independent, they lack skills to guide their children in school work let alone encouraging them to do well at school. Holding a low status in the society, earning less respect and occupying a low class job influence their minds so that they become incapable of handling educational matters. They do not bother to check their children's work and homework. They scarcely provide their children with a conducive environment to study. The only encouragement they give their children is to do household chores after school hours, telling them that school work should be done at school not at home. All these things contradict what the school expects and confuse the children. Coping with schoolwork is a hard task for a confused child.

### **2.2.2 Socio-political changes**

Rogers, Burdge, Korschning & Donnemeyer (1988:16) define social change as the process by which alterations occur in the structure and function of society. The structure of a society is the pattern of relationships between individuals and social group while function refers to the consequences of these relationships. These consequences can be desirable and undesirable. The desirable ones are those that help individual and social groups achieve common goals and solve problems while undesirable ones are those that block achievement such as social and political violence (Rogers, et al. 1988:17).

Social changes that are seen as bound up with political changes can be defined as those alterations that occur as results of democracy or seeking for freedom (Levin & Riffel 1997:147). Political and social transformation has had a profound effect on South African cities. New and non-racial forms of democratic local government are being established, and reconstruction and development have begun. The process, however, has been far from painless. While political violence is

generally on the decline in most but not all parts of South Africa, rising levels of crime have characterised the transition to democracy in South African cities (Shaw 1995:216)

Van Zyl & Theron (1995:70) defined victims of political violence as: *all those who have died as result of action by the security forces or as result of black-on-black violence*. The above researchers also reveal that political violence has also physically and emotionally traumatised large numbers of the black community. They found that in Natal townships, 48,7 percent of the black subjects attributed violence to political factors.

According to Cairn (1995:10) political violence is violence, which is perpetrated by one group of people on another group of people who were often strangers to each other before the violence occurred, or as a result of political reasons. On the other hand social violence is perpetrated by family members, hijackers, robbers, rapists or thieves in a non-political situation.

Social and political violence are responsible for shaping South Africa dramatically. The statistics of political violence reveal that about 16 000 people died between 1990 and 1994. Although since the 1994 elections, political violence has dissipated, crime has continued to increase. Violence began before 1990, but increased from June 1991 in Kwa Zulu-Natal and on the Reef. Deaths in Kwa Zulu-Natal particularly, rose from an estimated 800 in 1989 to more than 15 000 in 1990, dropping slightly in 1991 and 1992 but increasing to 2009 in 1993. When battles waned, they were replaced by drive-by shootings and hit and run attacks (Shaw 1995: 216).

According to police figures, recorded serious offences rose by 22 percent, and less serious ones by 17 percent; murders increased by 32 percent; rape by 24 percent and burglary by 31 percent, for the period from 1980-1990. Other crimes increased markedly over the transition: assault increased by 18 percent, rape by 42 percent, robbery by 40 percent, vehicle theft by 34 percent and housebreaking by 20 percent. Although political violence has reported to be declining it has left a legacy with important consequences for crime trends. Campaigns to retrieve illegal arms have been organised but have been largely unsuccessful. Political violence also weakened social control, producing marginalised groups who rely on conflict and crime for a livelihood (Shaw 1995:217).

Changes in social or family setup may be experienced when adult members of the family become entangled in political or social violence. This may lead to their death or imprisonment or absence

from home for long periods. Male members of the family often find themselves on opposing sides. In these circumstances the impact on the family can be devastating and affects the family's role in providing succour to its younger members (Cairns 1995:74). Children also have been caught up in South African political conflict. In 1992, police records show that 12 children were killed and a further 102 were injured in political violence. Conflict can be blamed for disrupting lives it does not take. Many children have been orphaned and others come from families, which have been forced to leave their homes, sometimes after seeing them looted and burnt (Kimaryo & Hilsum 1993:19).

After the violence, in most cases women become survivors. They are expected to be the breadwinners and at the same time to act as an emotional buffer between their children and the outside world. Authoritarian parenting also follows this stressful situation and mothers sometimes resort to physical violence. They use a restrictive and punitive style of discipline in an attempt to protect children from the dangers of the environment around them. Sometimes neither parent is available and the older children take on the responsibility of looking after their younger siblings. Depression, school problems and excessive quarrelling have been cited as characteristics of survivor children (Cairns 1995:75).

In the case of hijacking or kidnapping, Morris, Hoe & Porter (1987:49) find that there is considerable evidence to show that hostages will experience psychological problems in adjusting to normality. They may experience sleep problems, flashbacks, the feeling that they are being followed and general insecurity, which can in some cases border on paranoia. It places people under conditions, which are inherently stressful. Others, especially children, grow up believing that violence is the only way to address problems. Many children lose respect for authority and are subject to no restraint or discipline (Kimaryo & Hilsum 1993: 20).

Political violence has dominated South Africa for so many years. During the time of this violence adults were expected to join forces in order to protect their families and their community. Even school going adolescents dropped out of school in order to help adults. Some dropped out because they were afraid that if they were waylaid on their way to school, they might be killed. Many people were killed or crippled in this process and some families were killed at night while sleeping.

The consequences of political violence cannot be separated from social violence where a member of society is hijacked, raped, kidnapped, robbed and killed. These events do not end in the community but even at home, many married or unmarried couples become involved in femicide and some of them rape and sexually harass their own children. Children witness or even become involved in these killings that affect their immature beings. It is not easy to see your parent or loved one killed in front of you and remains unaffected. These incidents do not easily vanish but creates a wound that destroys the reasoning power of the one involved. Consequently, the school progress become affected.

### **2.2.3 Economic changes**

Economics is the science of how people produce goods and services, distribute them among themselves, and how they use them (Barnhart & Barnhart 1976:667).

Overpopulation, urbanisation, demographic, social and political changes can be classified as having an impact on the country's economy. As a result of national trends that have reduced available benefits, curtailed investments in rural economic development, and feminized poverty, certain groups like the rural poor have suffered the most. The nation cannot afford to make provision for so many people who are poorly paid, ill-housed, under-educated and under-treated by the health care system (Beaulieu 1988:77).

Tarver (1994:337) found that more than 7 million people in South Africa live in informal housing, including 2,5 million in the PWV area (Gauteng), 1,7 million in greater Durban (Kwa Zulu-Natal), and another 1 million split between the Winterfeld (North West) and Kwa Ndebele (Mpumalanga). Such deprivation derives from both the powerlessness of the poor and the fact that South Africa is increasingly a labor-surplus economy, with between 25 and 40 percent of the economically active urban African population formally unemployed.

It is obvious that the rural community suffers the same as the urban community. Although in rural areas the crisis that faces the community is the delivery of services such as those services people have come to rely upon for meeting their daily needs. Their income is below the poverty level, especially those black families who are headed by women. These communities are not only depressed by problems of access to vital resources but also by failures in the farm economy and the weakening of the non-farm economy (Beaulieu 1998:97-99).

According to Elliot (1994:85) many residents of the cities are also characterised by poverty and as a result are forced to live in environments that are detrimental to their own well-being. The number of people who are underemployed is higher in the cities than unemployed. Those without regular employment or with only scattered part-time employment are also among the very poor. As a result the urban poor are unable to afford preferred locations because of low incomes. They have no option but to live in inferior housing, experience high vulnerability to hazard, inadequate infrastructure and are exposed to ill-health (Elliot 1994:86-92).

Torado (1994:53) also concurs when saying: *Persistence of low levels of living, rising unemployment, and growing income inequality is the highly unequal distribution of economic and political power between rich and poor nations.* Political power and democracy can also be blamed for shaping the economy of the country and arousing the aspirations than satisfying them. As Rogers, et al. (1988:37) put it: *Aspirations are more easily aroused than satisfied. Satisfaction is a ratio of 'gets' to 'wants', of achievements to aspirations. Mass media audiences were encouraged to want more but not fully informed on how to get more (food production, higher income, better education for their children), the net result was frustration.*

Another aspect that affects the economy of the country is the high rate of childbirth. Women in underdeveloped countries are too occupied with pregnancy and childcare to participate in production outside the home. Because of poverty their children are put to work at an early age. This deprives them of schooling opportunities and thereby limits the acquisition of ideas and skills suited to modern technology. The efforts to provide them with adequate schooling are defeated by the high rates of children born each year. This also exhausts a huge portion of the national budget (Merton & Nisbet 1976:275).

Even those who try to attend school dropout at an early age. As Torado (1994:381) puts it: *The poor are the first to dropout because they need to work, the first to be pushed out because they fall asleep in class as one result of malnourishment and the first to fail tests because upper income children have had better opportunities at home.* As a result of large numbers of youths entering the labour market each year, the economy is expected to expand rapidly to absorb so many. If it falters, large numbers of youth, educated or not, become unemployed (Merton & Nisbet 1976:277).

The fluctuation of the economy affects the younger generation. Parents focus their hope on their children and the children need to join the work force. Children doing part-time jobs often cannot manage with the extra burden and fail to cope with their schoolwork. They are often forced to choose between the school and work and eventually drop out of school.

#### **2.2.4 Demographic changes**

Demographic changes can be linked with urbanisation. Urbanisation is defined as the process of making a city or has the essential characteristics of a city or town (Barnhart & Barnhart 1976:2302).

Most people are forced to migrate to the cities by the undesirable and unanticipated result of improved agricultural technology. Over-urbanisation and overpopulation become a contemporary social problem as people flock in vast numbers in search of higher wage jobs and better living conditions in supercities (Rogers, et al. 1988:366). Merton & Nisbet (1976:278) concur that in this process of development about 60 percent of people move from the country to the cities but governments seem reluctant to face this too-rapid growth of the city population.

The problems that face newcomers in the cities are that they enter the city environment with little preparation. Since in rural areas reading skills are not important, most of them cannot read and write, and possess no occupational skills. But in the cities they come across a new milieu where everything such as street signs, pricetags, labels and instructions requires a certain level of literacy. These problems cause newcomers to be unemployed and end up living in undescribably miserable slums or unconducive places (Rogers, et al. 1988:366).

It has been stated, *over-urbanisation means a shortage of jobs in the towns for newcomers: unemployment or underemployment are the norm for those who lack education needed for work or family contacts that could help in finding a job* (Webster 1990:116). Torado (1994:250) states that over-urbanisation causes a prolific growth of huge slums and shanty town. Rogers, et al. (1988:361) concur that these people live under unconducive conditions in thrown-together shacks. Their misery is caused by the lack of water, electricity, sewerage and sanitary facilities. According to Torado (1994:251): *Metropolitan town is attempting to cope with a population of 10 million people with a water and sanitation system built to service 2 million*. This is because millions of these people dwell on land unlawfully and build shacks with waste materials such as

wood, metal and polythene. That is why these sites usually lack water supply and provision of sewerage disposal (Merton & Nisbet 1976:280; Webster 1990:116).

Merton & Nisbet (1976:280) find that even outside the squatter areas, housing is crowded. The youth of this population could be constantly violently agitated. This is because their basic needs are not met and this also results in a high crime rate. High levels of political and economic frustrations lead the slum dwellers to welcome violent methods of social change (Torado 1994:249). As Prinsloo (1988:16) puts it: *squatter camps have become threatening with regard to health, personal safety and the safety of the possessions of all who live nearby.*

Over-urbanisation and industrialisation do not only cause human misery but also weaken the traditional family relationships of black society. The strong sense of social solidarity that was previously part of the black culture is vanishing rapidly (Dale & Nieuwoudt 1991:17; Schoeman 1985:131). Ndabandaba cited in Van Zyl & Theron (1995:72) adds that: *When the discipline and care of the traditional family are disrupted by migration, problems such as promiscuity, teenage pregnancies, juvenile delinquency and violence may occur.*

In the 1990's the demands for development set against a background of rapid urbanisation and violence resulted in the depiction of informal housing as one of the major social and political problems in South Africa (Lucas 1995:188). This is because people living in informal housing usually known as 'shack-dwellers' have little or no access to basic services and infrastructure. Since they occupy settlements illegally, there is a constant threat of eviction. It is this material vulnerability that leads them to rely on strong leaders who can offer protection and basic resources (Lucas 1995:189).

The results of high population growth rate, accelerating urbanisation of Africans and a growing proportion of young blacks are putting more pressure on government policies. By the year 2010 the number of urban Africans is expected to increase to 33 million, which means more demands, will be placed on the education system in urban areas (McGregor & McGregor 1992:39). If the education system cannot meet these demands the results will be, as McGregor & McGregor (1992:40) put it: *African children will swell the ranks of the 'lost generation' who have never attended school, or who have dropped out, failed or rejected the system. They will have few 'safety nets' or 'second chances' and fewer jobs.*

The sudden change from living in a rural, primary group, to an urban secondary group environment results in adjustment problems (Rogers, et al. 1988:92). In his discussion, Van der Waal (1996:38) states: *The family moving out of settlement due to geographical changes may cause problem of social adaptation to new neighbours. It also meant leaving behind sometimes important care-giving relatives and having to build up new bonds amongst age-mates. When moving out of the settlement as a family had been precipitated by conflict between relatives or by economic disaster, such as the illness or retrenchment of an employed parent, such a move could be accompanied by high levels of insecurity.*

When parents migrate to the cities, their migration does not only affect them but also their children. Firstly, children become corrupted by city life, and due to starvation they look for easier ways to survive. They end up dropping out of schools and joining gangs. Child labour also affects them as they enter work force very young and are not ready to face its demands. The thought of continuing with school or doing schoolwork becomes a lost dream.

### **2.2.5 Change in value system and future perspective**

Rogers, et al. (1988:37) defined values as symbolic statements of what is right and important. Values are also defined by Barnhart & Barnhart (1976:2311) as the established ideas of life, customs, ways of acting that the members of a given society regard as desirable.

The coming of democracy has changed most things that people valued as important in their lives. Researchers like Prinsloo (1998:19) report an increasing loss of honesty, integrity, chastity, diligence, a pride in the work well done, and respect for the lives and possessions of others. The morale of South Africans has been influenced negatively by crime, corruption, violence and moral licentiousness. A gap has been opened between parents and their children. The misunderstanding of democracy causes the children to become more and more uncontrollable and disrespectful of their elders. They also regard themselves as equals to adults.

Rogers, et al. (1988:27) concur when saying: *Human beings, the world over, have very different ideas about what is pleasant and unpleasant, polite and rude, true and false, right and wrong. Many people have become extremely confused because they are exposed to different value systems. There is a conflict between traditional and modern value systems. Everyone wants to be*

modern, rich and successful but they do not know how to achieve their ideals without sacrificing and abandoning their traditional and spiritual values (Prinsloo 1998:20).

According to Prinsloo & Du Plessis (1998:153): *Highly valued attributes at present are productivity, success, effectiveness, (material) utility, performance and power. When somebody no longer meets these criteria, such an entity is replaced or even discarded. We become immoderate, even presumptuous instead of 'wanting to be' we 'want to have'. All this might well have to happen at the expense of our fellow human beings.* Even community leaders complain that people have grown greedy and materialistic to a large extreme. Material wealth is valued and anyone with a lot of money is highly respected and honoured. All those valuable things like marriage and family life are no longer respected. Poor morals and sexual licentiousness are increasing at an alarming rate (Prinsloo 1998:19).

The youth is more powerfully influenced by the beliefs and practices of intimate friends, mass media, peer interaction and shared reference groups than by parental beliefs and practices. Continuities in value transmission from one generation to the next appear to be less dependant on direct adolescent-parent resemblance in values (Merton & Nisbet 1976:160). The state has been blamed for giving children legal rights although they are not legally adults. It has also assumed authority to intervene in the family affairs by trying to protect the rights of the children. Some years ago children were seen primarily as property of their parents but now the status of children has altered. Today children are legally and morally accorded more significance as persons and parents' control is questioned and directed to what 'to do' and 'not to do' to children (Levin & Riffel 1997:136).

Frequently, children's rights contrast with local cultural beliefs. In some cultures parents were given power over their children. They were given the right to inculcate the values that they deemed important to their children. Now parents have to listen to the children's views or submit to their power and let children tell them what they think. This is difficult because it is traditional to a number of cultures to perceive children as less rational, less secure about their identity and less autonomous than adults (Douglas & Sebba 1998:21). *Adults have to be willing to relinquish some of their power before a new culture that of seriously listening to children, can develop* (Douglas & Sebba 1998:19).

Many parents feel that children's rights violate their God-given authority and their religious values. Respect for adults is rapidly deteriorating. Children no longer respect biblical principles like *Honour thy Father and thy Mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee* (The Bible, Authorised Version, Exodus 20:verse 12). Children also have a misconception of their rights. It seems as if they miss the point of what is written in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child that it is the duty of the child 'to respect his parents and elders at all times' (Douglas & Sebba 1998:22).

Change in values cannot be separated from a change in future perspective. Children become frustrated when their aspirations, especially for material wealth, are denied due to the poor economy of this country. It has been mentioned that they are living in a dream of 'wanting to have' but unemployment becomes a barrier. According to an estimation by the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NICRO), 50 percent of black youth between 15 and 20 years were unemployed in 1990. The weakened economy means that black youths, even with a certain degree of schooling, cannot find employment (Mokwena 1991:22). In 1991 only 20 percent of people searching for jobs were successful, compared with 72 percent in the seventies (Van Zyl & Theron 1995:72).

Prinsloo (1998:18) finds that youths regard education, especially tertiary education, as a waste of taxpayers' money because too many learners receive diplomas and degrees but cannot find jobs. Education and training are being criticised as producing unemployable youth who are expected to change their world. As Merton & Nisbet (1976:277) put it: *if they attend school they become a class of educated unemployed.*

This unemployment compels the youth to be politically explosive, ready to follow any leader who promises a quick even violent solution. They cannot stand aside and see their youthful energy and idealism wasted without a stake in the existing society. They become impatient and accuse the ruler who pursues a policy of basic economic development as being too slow. They are more impressed by threats of war, confiscation of foreign assets, liquidation of the wealthy and nationalistic zeal.

## **2.3 CONCLUSION**

The evidence gleaned from the literature has illustrated that disrupted family life results in poor school performance. It is clear from the theory of family environment that the success of any learner depends on how positive the home is. Many adolescents lean heavily on their parents for support and understanding. The range and quality of relationships within the family and surrounding environment are all important in assisting adolescents with life achievements. *A clear, stable environment encourages the child to explore his life world without any fear of being ridiculed, a secure environment nurtures self-confidence as well as a feeling that one can manage a situation independently* (Nemangwele 1998:132).

If parents cannot provide sustenance, nurturance, support and intimacy the future of most adolescents may be vulnerable, if not doomed to failure. Adolescents need positive relationships with their parents and society at large. Negative family, school and social interactions and increased psychosocial stressors have also been identified as causing potential problems. Adolescents who are living under these conditions are usually disruptive or evidence behaviour problems at school. They feel inadequate, slighted, rejected and frustration and resentment characterise their life.

Residing in a disadvantaged neighbourhood cannot be singled out, most of these adolescents are members of marginal families – economically, socially, and culturally. No matter how they try to achieve, their past experiences usually catch up with them. They are unable to enjoy those privileges they are entitled to as human beings and cannot achieve or become whatever they wish because of their weakened morale and diminished opportunities. *Social and economic deprivation has always affected a proportion of the school population and has resulted in extremes of anti-social behaviour* (Nemangwele 1998:176).

It is clear that a negative home environment is a major causative factor in the adolescent's underachievement. But there are some other factors outside the family that also contribute so much to underachievement. The topic to be discussed in chapter three focusses on these factors which can be identified as intrapsychic factors, interpersonal factors and school factors.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **FACTORS RELATED TO POOR SELF-CONCEPT FORMATION AND UNDERACHIEVEMENT AT SCHOOL**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will focus on various aspects that affect the academic achievement of adolescents. It is very important to note that another key to success is desire. Without the desire to succeed, maybe because of unforeseen circumstances, anyone's effort is doomed. This situation places adolescents in a state where they cannot control their own personality, as they do not feel good about themselves. Their organisational abilities are affected by this, and they find themselves in a situation where they do things haphazardly.

Another aspect that can affect them is the way they perceive themselves within social context and the way society perceives them. There are distinctive characteristics that force them to withdraw from society. Some withdraw because members of the society reject them. The society is divided into different groups of which some are positive and others are not. The same can be applied to cultural groups in affecting academic achievement.

One cannot deviate too much from the school situation when discussing academic achievement. The type of classes in which learners are grouped and the large number of learners in each class are seen as problematic. The behaviour of teachers is also taken into consideration. It is true that teachers who are not well trained and who do not teach as they should or create a climate conducive to learning at school cannot expect pupils to learn seriously.

#### **3.2 INTRAPSYCHIC FACTORS**

Intrapsychic means arising, or taking place, within the mind, psyche, or self (English & English 1974:275). Bhagi & Sharma (1992:571) define it as something that pertains to impulses, ideas, conflicts, or other psychological phenomena that arise or occur within the psyche or mind. Intrapsychic factors are those factors that arise within one's mind and lead to intrinsic motivation. Nemangwele (1998:40) defines intrinsic motivation as *the internal satisfaction the learner feels*

*when performing a task.* Although these learners are driven by inner motivation to perform a task, they need the encouragement of their parents and the direction of their teachers. *An intrinsically motivated child is not super human, he also needs support for his efforts and praise of his success, as do other children* (Nemangwele 1998:41). In this section the intrapsychic factors that will be discussed will be based on achievement motivation, self-concept, cognitive style and study habits and attitudes.

### **3.2.1 Achievement motivation**

The term motivation is derived from the Latin verb '*movere*' meaning to '*move*' (Nemangwele 1998:18). Nemangwele (1998:18) also asserted that: *Motivation grows from a need to become competent, from a need to self-actualisation, from a need to become functional, from a need for personal adequacy, from a need for some satisfactory level of self-actualisation – a need to be somebody.*

Mclelland (Muqsud & Coleman, 1993:850) explain that: *Achievement motivation is based on a desire to excel.* Nemangwele (1998:50) put forth Atkinson's theory of Achievement Motivation to clarify why some learners choose to become actively involved in learning while others withdraw from active participation. Atkinson makes it clear that: *The hope of success motivates people to engage in achievement tasks and fear of failure causes them to avoid tasks.* A person becomes involved in a task when the hope of success is stronger than the fear of failure. One avoids the task when the fear of failure is stronger than the hope of success (Nemangwele 1998:51).

Motivation is the key not only to effective learning but also to good discipline. It is expected that teachers will involve learners in learning activities so that effective learning can occur, but demotivated learners will not become involved. Pretorius (1998:210) states that: *A lack of motivation can lead to school fatigue, bunking, leaving school, underachievement and problem behaviour.*

Parents have a strong influence on the development of their children's achievement motivation. Children, whose achievement, initiative and competitiveness are reinforced by their parents, are more likely to develop a high level of achievement motivation. Thus, children who live away from their parents for longer periods may have a lower level of achievement motivation (Muqsud

& Coleman 1993:850). It is very clear that every learner wants to experience the friendly wink, the slap on the shoulder, the listening ear, the sympathetic glance and the encouraging voice of his/her teacher or parent (Pretorius 1998:217).

If parents fails to motivate their children due to their own problems, the children feel rejected, threatened and inferior, which affects their whole existence and their academic achievement as well. It is clear that learners from disrupted families manifest little motivation to learn. This is caused by the lack of concern from their parents who are depressed and disturbed by their family problems.

### **3.2.2 Self-concept**

*A self-concept is a global evaluation made about one's own personality. It is derived from the subjective evaluations we tend to make of our behavioural traits. As a consequence, a self-concept will either be positive or negative (Bruno 1986:208).*

Gumey (1988:11) explains that satisfaction or concern of an individual with his/her phenomenal self is datum of great importance. Persons who think of themselves negatively will behave in self-defeating ways, even though they may choose a variety of behaviour patterns in the process. These people can be classified as having a negative self-concept and low self-esteem. Bruno (1985:208) finds a similarity between self-concept and self-esteem. He defines self-esteem as such: *Self-esteem refers to how high or low one ranks oneself in terms of subjectively personal status.* Therefore, a person with a positive self-concept will have high self-esteem, and a person with a negative self-concept will have low self-esteem.

This is very clear in the school situation where one finds the relationship between a learner's concept of himself/herself and his/her performance. Learners who feel good about themselves, their abilities as well as their surroundings are likely to succeed. But those who see themselves, their abilities and their surroundings in a negative fashion usually tend to underachieve (Purkey 1970:14). Fitts (1972:16) perceives this negativity as the root of academic difficulty, social and emotional problems. In a form of attention seeking the learners create problems in the classroom because of boredom, frustration and indifference. There is also a tendency and possibility of dropout from school system.

Learners resort to this behaviour because they see themselves as less adequate, less accepted by peers and adults, withdrawing, self-derogatory, have a depressed attitude towards themselves, show behavioural immaturity, strong inferiority feelings and lack the following: self-reliance, a sense of personal worth, and a feeling of belonging (Purkey 1970:21). In his discussion on learners who have a negative self-concept Pretorius (1998:154) reveals that: *The underachiever tends toward immature behaviour, he is less accepting and also regards himself as less acceptable than other people, he tends to withdraw socially, he lacks personal value, sense of belonging and he experiences feelings of inadequacy and inferiority.*

Al-Timimi (1976:35) finds that learners need parental acceptance to stimulate their achievement. Parent values and discipline play a major role in the development of self-image, which in turn influences the child's attitude to his/her life. Warm, nurturing and democratic parents tend to have children who are more mature (Rosa 1994:7). Parents' love and acceptance also develop a child's self-actualisation. Le Roux (1992:16) defines self-actualisation as "a deliberate process whereby individuals, in accordance with their self-concepts, strive to optimally realise their potential, talents and abilities". Self-actualisation enables the learners to develop their own potential and enter into an unknown world, through self-belief. The learners become aware of what they might become, motivated by this possibility they strive to grow into proper and responsible adults, which leads to self-enhancement (Nemangwele 1998:90).

A poor self-concept is one of the characteristics most frequently associated with underachievement. The underachievers, because of their repeated failures in the past, lose hope and convince themselves that they can't do anything fruitful. Parents play a very crucial role in nurturing a positive self-concept in the child. The parent is incapable of developing this positive self-concept due to dysfunctionality within the family. The child develops negativity, which is a barrier to achievement. He/she blames himself for everything wrong happening in the family. Finally, he/she thinks that because he/she failed to restore mutual co-operation between his/her parents, he/she is less competent to meet school demands.

Once the child classifies himself/herself as incompetent to meet the challenges of life, he/she becomes less eager to learn, less self-confident, less ambitious and shows an inferiority complex.

### **3.2.3 Cognitive style**

*Cognitive style refers to the characteristic ways in which individuals conceptually organise the environment* (Goldstein & Blackman 1978:2). It puts more emphasis on the structure rather than the content of thought. Structure refers to how cognition is organised, content refers to what knowledge is available (Goldstein & Blackman: 3). Corsin & Averbach (1996:46) define cognition as the psychological process of obtaining knowledge.

According to Hjelle & Ziegler (1983:456) cognitive style is another way of conceptualising the hierarchical organisation of personality structure and dynamics. It incorporates individual's self-concept, personal belief system, worldview, typical coping responses and ideals. It refers to the individual's mode and accuracy of perception, style of thinking, goal-directed behaviour and focus of attention.

People's cognitive abilities increase rapidly during the adolescent years, with the result that they can perform tasks more easily, quickly and efficiently. Without the cognitive development, the child is unable to carry out the degree of abstract thinking required for the development of generalised standards, as opposed to highly specific, concrete prohibitions (Gouws & Kruger 1994:72,180). Bruno (1986:42) defines cognitive development as: *the growth of the intellect over time, the maturation of the higher thought processes from infancy to childhood.*

Cognitive development depends mostly on parental child-rearing practices. Parents' status also plays an important role in cognitive development. Effective child rearing is more highly valued by parents from middle class homes than parents from lower socio-economic levels. Perhaps it's because middle-class parents have more education and therefore are more aware of how child rearing practices influence cognitive development in their children. Higher status parents are more likely to discuss their actions, reasons and probable long-term results of actions with their children. They like to encourage children's verbalisation of ideas, imagination and playfulness. They are also likely to encourage distancing in their children (Rosa 1994:35).

McGillicuddy-Delisi quoted in Rosa (1994:36) explains the term distancing as: *parental behaviours that encourage the child to anticipate possible future actions or outcomes, reconstruct past events, employ imagination in dealing with events, events and people, and attend to the*

*transformation of phenomena.* But lower status parents are likely to devalue cognitive development. They devalue curiosity, inquisitiveness, an interest in ideas and bookishness.

According to the above exposition it is clear that in disrupted families the intellectual development of the child could be hampered. The child depends on parents in order to develop his/her full potential, totality or wholeness. But what if the parent is so pre-occupied with other things or is not there when the child needs him/her most. Obviously, the child may never realise his/her full intellectual potential because of the uncondusive environment or dysfunctional home he/she lives in and grows up.

### **3.2.4 Study habits and attitudes**

Learners' incorrect and poor study methods, such as passive learning, aggravate underachievement. *The underachievers soon learn, through persistent effort, that learning is a passive process, that they simply are the vehicle through which the material is passed from one source to another without that material really been savored, digested, and absorbed. The resultant lack of nourishment often leaves them with a nagging emotional emptiness. They find no meaning in their academic work* (Du Toit 1994:57).

The attitudes of learners towards learning determine their level of interest in learning and motivation. A learner who has a bad or negative attitude towards learning cannot succeed in learning effectively. This negative attitude causes low self-esteem. Learners' attitude towards doing a task determines the extent to which they can involve themselves in the task. If their attitude is negative, the task would be unsatisfactorily done. The reason behind learners' failure rests upon their self-perceptions and beliefs about their own abilities. Learners who regard themselves as incapable will probably not be able to attempt any task positively (Nemangwele 1998:155).

Rosa (1994:63) believes in the connection between attitudes and values in enhancing effective learning. The amount of time spent doing homework, watching television and reading is determined by learners' values. Sometimes learners' positive attitude to learning is shaped by poor learning facilities. For learners to involve themselves more actively in the learning situation, they need different learning materials and techniques to stimulate their desire to learn. Effective learning cannot occur where learning facilities are poor or lacking (Nemangwele 1998:162).

Lack of learning resources and poor learning limit the learners' possibilities and may handicap them learners and prevent them from pursuing and exploring their possibilities. Adequate learning resources help the learner realise his/her capabilities optimally while inadequate learning resources are poor motivators of learning. Positive attitude towards learning is also affected by an irrelevant curriculum. Learners are sometimes bored by things that are taught at school which have little or no bearing on their lives or needs. They find it a waste of their time and energy to do tasks that appear meaningless to them. A curriculum that is irrelevant might contribute to reinforcing underachieving behaviour (Nemangwele 1998:163).

When these learners, who are labeled as underachievers because of their poor study habits and negative attitudes, are learning, they soon develop an attitude of helplessness, fear of failure and become anxious and tense when they face a learning task. They also show poor attention in class, react impulsively, are irresponsible and unreliable. Parents also aggravate matters because if they are wrapped up in their own problems, they become unavailable and not supportive of their child's effort to learn or study.

### **3.3 INTERPERSONAL FACTORS**

Interpersonal refers to something that occurs or exists between two or more persons (English & English 1974:273). Interpersonal relation mentioned above is defined by Petrovsky & Yaroshevsky (1987:153) as *a system of attitudes, orientations and expectations of group members with respect to each other, which is determined by the content and organisation of joint activities and values, on which human communication is based.*

Bhagi & Sharma (1992:567) define it as interactions among individuals which involves the pattern of one's dealings with other people, which the father of Interperonal Theory, H.S. Sullivan, regarded as the crucial aspect of one's personality and the basic source of one's emotional security and insecurity. He believed that *a person's attitudes to himself and indeed his whole personality were a reaction to how others saw him* (Sutherland 1995:215). He went as far as saying: *It takes people to make people sick and it takes people to make people better* (Benner 1985:599).

Therefore, interpersonal factors are those factors which one acquires through interaction with others or that one performs in order to please others. This can be best described as extrinsic

motivation. Nemangwele (1998:41) defines extrinsic motivation in such manner: *a person who does a certain task or performs an activity due to outside reasons, like being given a reward, looking for something in return or pleasing someone.* The external pressure could compel someone to do a certain activity or task or withdraw from that activity or task. The discussion here will be based on linguistic development, intergroup relations and cultural diversity.

### **3.3.1 Linguistic development**

Parents play a dominant role in the acquisition of language. Bloom & White (in Richek, et al. 1983:72) confirm children's language development is mainly influenced by their relationship with their parents. This is because an emotionally stable relationship with their parents determines the quality of their self-image and self-confidence they show in experimenting with language. Other members of the family also play a role in language acquisition, as the child grows older. The more developed a child's language becomes, the more effective it becomes as an instrument of socialisation (Mwamwenda 1995:171).

In disrupted families, children are negatively influenced because parents are concerned with their own problems and do not get the time to communicate meaningfully with their children. The children end up depending on each other's conversation and have little opportunity to listen to adult language use. This contributes to children's language problems. Once the child has a language deficit from the beginning, it becomes very difficult for him/her to master any concept (Mwamwenda 1995:170).

In a school situation, especially primarily black South African schools, the child's mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction during the first three years or in foundation phase and lower phase, thereafter English becomes the medium of instruction. Learning a new language creates problems because children spend their time trying to master the second language rather than learning new subject content. It is nevertheless noted that most children find it difficult to follow instructions in a foreign language, which may account for their poor academic performance. Some of them do not follow what is being taught not because they are intellectually less able, but due to an artificially created linguistic problem (Mwamwenda 1995:170).

Cummins & Guiora cited in Mwamwenda (1995:170) concur when saying: *According respect to the child's mother tongue in school entails cognitive and affective benefits for the reason that the*

*mother tongue is the very lifeblood of human self-awareness, the carrier of identity, the safe repository of a vast array of affective and cognitive templates making up the total web of personality.*

Another aspect that makes it difficult for children to master the second language is the community in which they grow up as well as their parents. The most important figures in the child's development, community and parents communicate with the child in their mother tongue. This means the child is exposed to the second language mainly during school hours. After school, weekends and during school holidays children have little exposure to the second language. This presents them with problems in mastering the medium of instruction and this may lead to underachievement.

Theories of language development propose that practice is essential for one to learn a language. B.F.Skinner cited in Mwamwenda (1995:165) concurs with the above statement by saying: *Language is learned in the course of human development through association, imitation, practice and reinforcement.*

### **3.3.2 Intergroup relations**

A 'group' refers to a collection of two or more persons who share a common focus of interest and attributes (Hariral 1996:25). Relation derived from the Latin verb '*relatum*' that means to carry, support or to convey something to a favourite person, to communicate with another person and to favour him/her by involving oneself with the other person. Relations, therefore, points to a relationship in which people meet each other (Prinsloo & Du Toit 1998:34).

Harilal (1996:26) points out that in order to facilitate harmonious relationships, people seek out groups, which comprise any number of people who share similar identities, norms, values and expectations. He identifies different groups and some of them are important in the life of an adolescent.

These groups are:

- Peer groups  
Peers are persons of the same age and status, and they are important both as a support group as well as a reference group.

- Reference groups  
Any social unit or model that individuals use as a standard or frame of reference for evaluating themselves and for guiding their own behaviour.
- Social groups  
People who share a feeling of unity, who interact socially and share things such as values and norms.
- Friendship groups  
Closely linked to social group are friendship groups where relationships are formed with others who share similar views.

Prinsloo & Du Plessis (1998:34) find that the relationships within these groups are characterised by the following:

- A relationship of dependence  
Human beings are dependent on fellow human beings.
- A relationship of acceptance  
People want to be accepted by other people.
- A relationship of choice  
The demands of the world make justifiable choices a necessity.
- A relationship of togetherness  
People belong together, listen to or hear together.
- A dialogical relationship  
People's existence depends on addressing others and being addressed by them, and on meeting others and being met by them.

In favour of the above relationship, McWhirter, et al. (1998:86) identify interpersonal skills, which are necessary for competent, responsive, and mutually beneficial relationships. These skills

are the most important skills that an individual should learn. Unfortunately, many adolescents from disrupted families do not master the skills sufficiently, such as laughing, joking, befriending, negotiating and playing with a group. These young people sometimes perceive the world in a distorted way, which leads to miscommunication in interpersonal relationships. They are so distorted that they have few positive social interactions with either peers or adults.

Harry Sullivan cited in Mwamwenda (1995:365) developed an Interpersonal Theory with the understanding that an interpersonal interaction or a person's behaviour is open to direct observation. The major thrust of Sullivan's theory is that: *a person's personality develops as a result of his satisfying his needs in interpersonal interaction*. However, as a person grows his interpersonal interactions multiply, differentiate and become more complex. So, it is significant to trace the socialisation life of an adolescent in these groups:

### 1. Peer groups

During adolescence, children begin to form peer relationships in which there is equality, mutuality and reciprocity between members (Budhal 1998:72). Peer groups provide the opportunity for learning specific skills that may not be available in other social relationships. Peer interaction plays a unique and essential role in developing sociability and attachment, controlling aggression, socialisation of sexuality and gender roles, moral development and developing empathy (Budhal 1998:79). Peers often act as role models for adolescents' behaviour. Male peers may even become important substitute models for boys without fathers. Father-absent girls are also strongly affected by peers during adolescence. Involvement with peers provides powerful opportunities for the formation of the identity (Sutcliffe 1996:114).

According to Harilal (1996:37) peer groups are essential for the following reasons:

- They are the bridges between individuals and the larger society.
- They provide the setting in which individuals meet most of their personal needs.
- They help develop a positive self-concept, which is frequently associated with peer acceptance.

- They encourage co-operation and close relationships of intimacy and mutuality.
- They provide models to be copied.

If adolescents can't find conducive relationships at home, McWhirter, et al. (1998:138) find that they turn to peer groups. But peer pressure can lead to norms of risky behaviour and irresponsibility. The peer group not only provides support, fairly clear norms, and the structure that most adolescents want but also sometimes compels them to conformity. Harilal (1996:40) defines conformity as: *the tendency to change one's behaviours, beliefs, opinions or actions to correspond with the norms expressed by other people because of implicit or explicit social pressure*. During this conformity one's own moral standards are violated and peer groups exert an important influence on the self-concept throughout life, either positively or negatively.

Not all adolescents are accepted by their peers, some are rejected especially those from disrupted families. There are different reasons for being accepted or rejected by peer groups. Budhal (1998:81) finds that: *Popular children are readily accepted by a group and are friendly, more outgoing, more adept at initiating and maintaining social interactions, more enthusiastic and kinder, have moderately high self-esteem and are more co-operative. Rejected children are more targets of teasing, fighting and arguing, act immaturely, are anti-social and disruptive, and display deviant behaviour.*

McWhirter, et al. (1998:87) find adolescents from disrupted families not only have distorted perceptions but also lack the core abilities that make for satisfying social relationships. They identify several core skills that these adolescents lack:

- Developing and maintaining friendship.
- Sharing laughter and jokes with peers.
- Knowing how to join an activity.
- Skilfully ending a conversation, and
- Interacting with a variety of peers and others.

## 2. Reference groups

People of high status serve as good models for adolescents. They become role models of adolescents more frequently than persons of low status. Adolescents like to identify themselves with another person's behaviour, attitudes, and system of values and beliefs. They start to behave exactly like the person being imitated. Through identification with the role model, a person develops a philosophy of life, which guides his/her decision making and overall behaviour (Mwamwenda 1995:205). Harilal (1996:35) concurs that adolescents look for guidance in formulating values, beliefs and styles of behaviour in these groups whose outlooks and behaviours they accept. They identify the following functions of reference groups:

- **Normative function**

They set and enforce standards of conduct and belief.

- **Comparative function**

They serve as a standard against which people assess and appraise themselves and others.

- **Associative function**

People borrow the status of the group and vicariously bask in its reflected glory.

But it is very difficult for adolescents from disrupted families to identify themselves with role models. The reason for this is because these adolescents lack interaction with people and they also mistrust people as a result of their past experiences.

## 3. Social groups

Adolescents seek out social groups, which share things such as values and norms. This is one way of promoting cultural awareness as the members in the group mutually and reciprocally influence each other's feelings, attitudes and actions. Examples of social groups are cliques, teammates, relatives and friends (Harilal 1996:32). Bandura, cited in Mwamwenda (1995:203), in his Social Learning Theory points out that: *Social learning guides a person's behaviour so that it is in accordance with social norms, values and beliefs, thus enabling the person to adjust successfully to society.*

Harilal (1996:32) also identifies the following essential characteristics of social groups:

- a regular and usually sustained interaction between members.
- a sense of common identity.
- shared interests, and
- some patterns for organisation of behaviour on a regular basis.

Adolescents involve themselves with the social group in order to gain a sense of public identity. Public identity is the specific role or roles one plays within social situations (Sutcliffe 1996:47). According to Rice (1992:427) there are some developmental needs that push the adolescents towards a social group. These developmental needs are:

- the need to establish caring, meaningful and satisfying relationships with individuals.
- the need to broaden childhood friendships by getting acquainted with new people of different backgrounds, experiences and ideas.
- the need to find acceptance, belonging, recognition and status in social groups.
- the need to pass from the homosocial interest to heterosocial concerns and friendships.
- the need to learn about, adopt and practise dating patterns and skills that contribute to personal and social development, intelligent mate selection and successful marriage.

Some adolescents from disrupted families have problems interacting with social groups. Their problem is that they cannot communicate their wants and needs without resorting to explosive, impulsive, and ultimately self-defeating behaviour. They have not learned those fundamental social skills that may help them deal more effectively with their dysfunctional parents (McWhirter, et al. (1998:87). They may isolate themselves from the group or the group does not accept them. Lonely or isolated people sometimes have a low self-esteem and may be less willing to take risks in social settings. This could make it harder for them to form relationships, thereby increasing their chances of loneliness (Budhal 1998:65).

#### 4. Friendship groups

For many adolescents, relations with friends are critical interpersonal bridges to psychological growth and social maturity. They offer consensual validation of interests, hopes and fears. They also bolster feelings of self-worth and provide affection and opportunities for intimate disclosure. Adolescents with stable friendships have a stronger self-esteem and are more altruistic than those without friends (Budhal 1998:123). Sutcliffe (1996:115) concurs that friendships contribute to the sense of identity, especially close friendships.

Adolescents are likely to be attracted to and relate to those who are similar to them in terms of attitudes, values or traits. They selectively choose friends who give honest feedback (Harilal 1996:33). Hartup, cited in Budhal (1998:123), argues that having friends amounts to the following developmental imperative:

- Good developmental outcomes depend on having friends and keeping them.
- Friendships furnish the individual with socialization opportunities not easily obtained elsewhere.
- These relationships are important in emotion regulation, self-understanding, and the formation and functioning of subsequent relationships.

Rice (1992:429) lists some of the reasons why some adolescents cannot make friends.

- Some have a poor self-image and feel very vulnerable to criticism. They anticipate rejection and avoid actions that might embarrass them.
- Depressed and emotionally disturbed adolescents have difficulty establishing close relationships.
- Some adolescents are conditioned to mistrust all people and are therefore cynical about relating to them.
- Some feel a lack of support from parents, which makes it harder to make friends.

Conger (1991:300) concludes that adolescents' personality characteristics, cognitive skill and social behaviour affect their chances of being accepted by friends. Adolescents lacking in self-confidence and who tend to react to discomfiture with timidity, nervousness or withdrawal are likely to be neglected by friends. This is true with most adolescents from disrupted families.

### **3.3.3 Cultural diversity**

Rosa (1994:61) quoted The American Heritage Dictionary definition of culture as: *the totality of socially transmitted behaviour patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions and all other products of human work and thought characteristic of a community or population*. Learners of different cultures now attend one school. They are being placed into schools with learners and teachers who look, speak and behave differently than themselves (Ford 1996:78).

According to Irvine (1990:26) cultural misunderstanding between teachers and learners may be expected. These misunderstandings sometimes result in conflict, distrust, hostility and possible school failure. The conflict may be exaggerated by cultural inversion and cultural aversions. Cultural inversion is related to minority learners' perceptions that certain behaviours are characteristics of the majority and hence inappropriate for them. Cultural aversion is the reluctance of teachers to discuss race and race related issues.

Among diversified cultural groups, ethnocentrism is practised. "Ethnocentrism is the tendency to assume that one's culture and way of life are superior to all others" (Harilal 1996:75). Harilal further points out that sometimes ethnocentrism begets racism and prejudice. Other cultures are degraded, and even instructional material reflects only the dominant group's values, attitudes, and viewpoints, thereby presenting a biased perspective. Particularly in the education field, this biasness is evident in history and literature text books. Disadvantaged groups are led to believe that their cultures have had little role in shaping their subcontinent.

Some adolescents are forced by school circumstances to ignore their culture: *Loss of one's culture is a painful experience, it is the loss of oneself. People struggle to retain their culture. Caught in the upheaval of meaning, the newcomer may be confused, upset, frustrated and may easily become aggressive, hostile, or emotionally upset* (Dunn & Griggs 1995:38). This can be aggravated by the fact that most teachers have limited knowledge about cultural and linguistic groups different from their own and know little about the specific values and characteristics of

other groups. They do not provide specific attention to the impact of race, social class and gender on learning (Avery & Walker 1993:27).

Some teachers have the tendency to ignore learners' race and claim that they treat all children the same. They usually mean that their model of the ideal learner is, for example, white and middle-class, and that all learners are treated as if they are or should be both white and middle-class. Such treatment contributes to perceptions of inferiority about other cultures and classes, for example black culture (Marshall 1992:208).

Irvine (1990:55) and Rattansi & Reeder (1992:63) state that teachers often remark that they are consciously unaware of the race of the learners they teach. They believe that the recognition of a person's race is racist. By ignoring learners' most obvious physical characteristics, for example race, these teachers are also disregarding their unique cultural behaviours, beliefs, and perceptions. These are important factors that teachers should incorporate, not eliminate, in their instructional strategies and individualized approaches to learning.

The learners of an ignored cultural group may try to protect their self-esteem by developing ineffective coping styles that alienate them from school and are harmful to academic achievement. Sometimes, they may have a diffused identity, low self-esteem and alienation from both their culture and mainstream. This identity conflict is most likely to develop when the values, attitudes and behaviours espoused in the home and at school are incongruent (Ford 1996:79). The internal conflict they experience results in their inability to adapt to and blend in with people from different racial and cultural backgrounds (Harilal 1996:81).

Dekker & Lemmer (1993:52) concur by saying: *It is naïve to assume that desegregated schooling will automatically improve equality in education by simple equalizing access.* Many people tend to react suspiciously, defensively, even aggressively toward individuals who differ in obvious physical characteristics (Kvaraceus, et al. 1967:9). It is therefore obvious that cultural diversity, sometimes, represents sources of vulnerability to learners. It hinders their ability to function at their full potential and increases their levels of stress which results in a deliberately poor performance in school, rebellion against teachers and shunning any behaviour associated with mainstream society.

### **3.4 SCHOOL FACTORS**

A school is an institution providing education for young people up to the age of about 19 years (Rowntree 1981:265). It is a site where children of school-going age are taught. Such schools can be public or independent (private) and usually run from Grade 1 to Grade 12 (Mothata, Lemmer, Mda & Pretorius 2000:151). It is in this school setting where learners learn new behaviours. Some of these behaviours may be positive or negative, depending on the school environment. *Learning involves the modification of perception and behaviour, which also means that behavioural modifications occur in meeting changed conditions so that obstacles are overcome* (Nemangwele 1998:21).

Teachers play a dominant role in shaping these behaviours either positively or negatively. *Every teacher is responsible directly to God for the welfare of each child placed in his care, so if he looks on silently while a child needing assistance is led to destruction as an adult, he is co-responsible and will have to answer for his actions before God* (Nemangwele 1998:17). In this section the discussion will be focussed on teacher anxiety and overcrowding, mixed ability classes and teacher training.

#### **3.4.1 Teacher anxiety and overcrowding**

The teacher is undoubtedly the most meaningful person in the classroom. But there are some emotional considerations that cause barriers between the teacher and a learner. As Starr (1970:188) states that in the face of many uncertainties, the teacher may feel a desperate need for exercising rigid control within the classroom to ensure that at least the outward appearance of constructive effort is maintained. It is equally unfortunate when teachers, bedeviled by pressures and anxieties, become contemptuous of learners.

According to Pretorius (1998:188) some young, inexperienced teachers want to disguise their uncertainty by excessively strict discipline and behaviour. The learners are too scared to take the initiative in communication. If the learners are anxious and nervous in the presence of a teacher or their fellow learners, their cognitive functioning may be blocked or obstructed.

The more intense the experience of social threat, the stronger the blocking of the cognitive capabilities. In a threatening situation a person takes longer to complete an intellectual task and

he/she will also make more mistakes than in a comparable, non-threatening situation. It is therefore important to understand what happens to learners who are more often confronted with a threatening interpersonal situation than a safe learning space (Pretorius 1998:165).

As far as overcrowding is concerned, most teachers feel ineffective in a large class. They feel helpless when they cannot reach out to all learners as soon as possible. In most South African school, especially black schools, the teacher-learner ratio is still high. The ratio of 1:35 is not yet implemented; in most schools it is still 1:60 and above. According to Du Toit (1994:56) overcrowded classrooms where learners have little contact with teachers, usually produce authoritarian, rigid teaching methods that are based on repetition and regurgitation of facts. The objectives of the lesson are not explained and cognitive skills that will be required to complete the task successfully are not clearly set out.

### **3.4.2 Mixed ability classes**

A mixed ability class, according to Reid, Clunies-Ross, Goacher & Vile (1981:3) is a type of class where learners are grouped in such a way that each class has an equal range of attainment. Learners are selected on the basis of success by the criteria and standards of the school rather than a standard psychometric test of intellectual potential.

The term ‘mixed ability’ grouping is frequently used synonymously with heterogeneous, unstreamed, non-streamed, natural or unselected groups. Just to mention one, unstreaming describes the situation where a year group corresponding to a normal distribution of ability is subdivided into smaller groups, each reflecting the range of ability in the year group (Reid, et al. 1981:5).

This type of grouping has its own problems although many schools use it. It comes with difficulty in organizing and presenting explanations, practices and activities in such a way that all learners accept, understand and respond within the same space of time. Those who will be ready to move on with less explanation and less practice become bored (Bailey & Bridges 1983:48). As Reid, et al. (1981:83) confirm abler learners get frustrated at not being stretched and at not getting attention. They also get bored with waiting for the slower ones, see themselves as neglected and forced to sit when they know the answers. This causes these learners to switch off and give up raising their hands in order to answer.

Slow learners do not concentrate for long, are easily distracted and do not carry over things learned in one lesson to the next. This may be irksome for other learners in the class (Sands & Kerry 1982:103). The effects on the less able is described as soul destroying due to their feelings of inadequacy. The brisk pace necessary to ensure the continued interest of the majority results in the less able soon being left out. The abler learners suffer a lot when the teacher is preoccupied with the less able, saying: *the brighter ones have to get on their own as the teacher has to give two-thirds of his attention to the less able* (Reid et al. 1981:84-85).

Even teachers face different problems as far as the mixed ability class is concerned. They have difficulty providing a variety of resources to suit all levels of ability. They face problems of extending the most able whilst at the same giving enough attention and encouragement to the less able (Davies & Cave 1977:45). Some teachers have a problem on how to grade work in such a way as to maintain standards but avoid demotivating low achievers. Sometimes, the lack of published material suitable for use with a wide range of abilities also causes problems (Reid, et al. 1981:89).

Guskin & Guskin (1970:26) state that teachers need to know about an important strategy or approach for teaching different learners. Employing rigorous review procedures by giving instructional attention in the textbooks compound the problem of underachievers in the mainstream. As Bailey & Bridges (1983:5) put it: *some teachers teach mixed ability groups but do not do mixed ability teaching.*

Mixing different ability children in one class, one size fits all can be identified as a cause of underachievement. Individual attention to diagnose some areas of weakness in different learners is not considered. The underachievers usually suffer a setback because learners' native intellectual ability is not identical.

### **3.4.3 Teacher training**

Teacher training is initial training through a variety of traditional and new routes, induction training, ongoing staff development and appraisal (Shaw 1995:38). During 1980 and 1990 it was possible for teachers with standard eight, now grade ten, or lower to be trained as professionally teachers in South Africa. This happened, especially among black teachers whereby 79 percent were trained with a qualification of standard eight or lower. During that time very few teachers

were graduates from university. But whites were more advanced than blacks. For the whites to be teachers at secondary schools, training was provided by a university only. For primary schools training was provided by college or university with the proviso that they work in close co-operation. Unlike blacks, the white minimum entrance was the senior certificate or standard ten, now grade twelve (Naicker 1996:130,163).

Masitsa (1995:74) identifies problems where more than 70 percent of teachers, especially in secondary schools, had to teach beyond the limits of their training. Most of the teachers were so poorly trained that they were and are still unable to teach more difficult subjects adequately. Thus, it is assumed that the majority of learners exposed to their teaching developed a sense of inadequacy. Some teachers once trained are unable to implement their newly learned behaviours within the school setting, the potential benefits of which are then lost on the learners. Teacher training often concentrates on the ideal teaching setting and operates from a more progressive view of the educational process than what actually occurs in the school. When graduates enter teaching they encounter a more traditional view of the teachers' role (Chapman & Walberg 1992:198).

It is important that teachers once trained, as Rice (1996:38) suggested, *keep abreast of the times in attitude, instructional knowledge, and skills. Teachers need to take advantage of numerous opportunities for professional improvement, participate in educational societies, attend workshops and conferences, take graduate courses, and keep up in their field by reading professional journals, new books and research literature.* Teachers should also be encouraged to involve themselves in compensatory education so as to help poverty-culture children. On the other hand the teacher in a poverty-culture situation must be endowed with special skills, knowledge and understanding, and should therefore be carefully selected and thoroughly trained (Le Roux 1993:72).

Although some teachers try their utmost to be efficient or up to standard, their efforts are impeded by the preservice teacher training. The quality of preservice teacher training in many countries is poor and tends not to be competency based. Pedagogical training is often too theoretical, emphasizing educational psychology rather than teaching skills. The preservice setting is too dissociated from actual school experience. Teaching strategies are discussed but not practised or, even if practised, are not performed under actual classroom conditions (Chapman & Walberg 1992:198).

Another aspect that is taken lightly but causes grave problems in education is admission requirements. In most teacher training colleges, learners who receive a school leaving certificate at standard ten or grade twelve examinations have no problem of getting acceptance. There is no doubt that the low admission requirements enables even the unmotivated and uninterested candidates to enter the profession. Most learners with school leaving certificates who wished to acquire a post secondary education have virtually only one option to follow, to enroll at a college of education whether they plan or are interested to become teachers or not (Masitsa 1995:75).

### **3.5 CONCLUSION**

When children grow up they need a stable and secure home environment. They need love, care, support and encouragement from their parents. When they begin schooling, they need a positive school environment; acceptance, approval, and attention from their teachers and peers. Adolescents who are from a disrupted family cannot be expected to achieve well at school because their needs are not met. If the primary and secondary needs of the adolescents are not met, they cannot concentrate effectively in the classroom. Even if learners are motivated to learn effectively, learning cannot be guaranteed if the needs of the learners are not fulfilled.

Involvement of schools, families and communities is expected in preparing the adolescents to meet the demands of the future. Adolescents need these stakeholders so as to fulfil their intense curiosity, their burning search for knowledge about the nature and condition of the world and existing social and environmental processes around them. But dysfunctional families, poor schools, negative social interactions, and numerous psychological stressors impact negatively on the life, hopes, dreams and academic achievement of these adolescents.

The intrapsychic functioning of most of these adolescents is hampered due to their negative attitudes, emotions, negative self-concept, and lack of self-confidence and self-esteem brought about by uncondusive circumstances they experience at home. Even their interpersonal interaction is not satisfying. Most of them become social isolates, who suffer peer rejection because of their lowered self-esteem and withdrawal from the mainstream.

Learning depends heavily upon how people see themselves. The adolescents from disrupted families find it very difficult to succeed because of their negative self-concept and low self-esteem. Teachers also aggravate matters if they are not competent and lack skills on how to deal

with these adolescents. Because of their own insecurities and anxiety, they end up putting more pressure on these adolescents. Learning under pressure is associated with fear and could lead to serious detrimental effects on their school achievement. *Teachers can become powerful negative motivators simply by the way they relate to learners* (Nemangwele 1998:156).

The literature research on disrupted family life and school climate has laid a foundation for the seriousness of this problem regarding the academic achievement and self-concept of the adolescent. The researcher is now in a position to test this literature review in a practical situation using an identification instrument. A description of the empirical design will be given in Chapter 4.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND PRESENTATION OF DATA\**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the literature study (Chapter 2 and 3) the impact caused by the disrupted family life and school climate on the self-concept of adolescents was highlighted. According to the literature, children that grow up in disrupted families are hampered emotionally, socially and academically. An empirical investigation was undertaken in order to investigate this.

This chapter will describe the empirical design used in this study. The results and interpretations will also be presented.

#### **4.2 RESEARCH METHODS**

This research was based on a quantitative approach and is explanatory in nature. According to Babbie (1988:90) exploratory studies are done for three purposes:

- (a) To testify the researcher's curiosity and desire for a better understanding.
- (b) To test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study.
- (c) To develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent study.

An exploratory-descriptive study was carried out to gain insights into the themes under research. Information in exploratory research can be collected through observation, questionnaires and interviews. For purposes of this research information was obtained through quantitative measures (structured questionnaires)(Husen 1997:16-17).

##### **4.2.1 Procedures followed in the development and testing of the instrument**

This section deals with the method of investigation and procedures followed in the development of the questionnaire (See Appendix A).

### **Step one – Compilation of items**

A literature review enabled the researcher to compile questions suitable for the problem.

### **Step two – Categorizing of items**

The questions compiled above with the help of the literature review were categorized into the following broad areas:

- Family climate
- School climate
- Emotional self-concept
- Social self-concept
- Academic self-concept

### **Step three – Development of the questionnaire**

The draft instrument was developed from the items categorized above. It was decided that the draft instrument would take the form of a self-report instrument. The motivation for using a self-report measure was because it allows anonymity. More candid responses can be obtained when using a self-report measure as opposed to a personal interview (Avery 1992:421). This type of questionnaire was also regarded as the most appropriate for scoring purposes.

The design of the self-report instrument is in line with the Likert scale design, which uses a range of items, or statements to which subjects are required to respond. This is the easiest because respondents are asked to respond by indicating their degree of agreement or disagreement (Babbie 1998:183).

#### **4.2.2 Formulation of items**

It was decided that the self-report instrument be reformatted into a series of short statements. It was also discovered that respondents may have a tendency of misinterpreting questions. As a result some guidelines when formulating the items by Babbie (1998: 148-152) were considered.

These are listed as follows:

- Items must be simple, clear and direct.
- Each statement should contain only one complete thought.
- Double barreled questions should be avoided.
- The use of statements that involve double negatives should be avoided.
- Questions should be relevant.
- Items must be short.
- Items that are ‘vague modifiers’ need to be avoided.
- Respondents must be competent and willing to answer.

#### **4.2.3 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire**

Validity of the questionnaire is a very important aspect of the research. Two aspects of validity were considered, namely content validity and face validity. According to Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1990:434) content validity refers to whether the items are adequate for measuring what they are supposed to measure and whether they constitute a representative sample of the behaviour domain under investigation.

Face validity, on the other hand, refers to the extent to which the questions, on the face thereof, measure the construct it is supposed to measure (for example, family climate, emotional self-concept, et cetera).

Both types of validity are determined by judgement of experts. In this regard the questionnaire was evaluated by experts and according to their judgement the questionnaire has content and face validity.

A questionnaire is reliable to the extent that independent administrations of it or a comparable instrument consistently yields similar results under comparable conditions. The statistical programme which was used to analyse the results of this research, used the Cronbach alpha-coefficient. This is a split-halves method. The reliability of the questionnaire was 0,78 which is acceptable for this kind of questionnaire.

#### **4.2.4 Pilot study**

To test the simplicity of the items, the instrument was given to twenty grade eight learners from L.K.Ntlabathi Secondary School, who were 15 years old. It was discovered that respondents needed guidance as far as language is concerned as they are using English as a second language. Consequently some items were reformulated.

#### **4.2.5 Selection of the schools**

The instrument was applied in a natural school environment in five secondary schools in the Bethlehem area in the Free State. These schools were selected because they were deemed to represent learners from all backgrounds and different environmental upbringing. The researcher was also based in this area and had access to these schools. Thus this was a convenient sampling method.

#### **4.2.6 Selection of participants**

The following procedure was followed:

- The principal and staff were informed about the purpose of the empirical study.
- The guidance teachers in each school were asked to help the researcher facilitate the project.
- The name list of learners in each grade ten class was obtained.
- The names of the respondents were selected randomly using each name list.
- The list of selected names in each school was drawn up.

This procedure was followed to make sure that all grade ten classes in each school were represented and involved. Eventually 200 respondents completed the questionnaire.

#### **4.2.7 Application of the self-assessment instrument**

The guidance teacher arranged for the group of selected learners to meet in one class so that the test instrument could be administered. The researcher was personally involved in the administration of the instrument in order to clarify misunderstanding. The self-assessment instrument was handed to each learner individually and instructions were read out and explained.

Respondents were told to ask for clarity as they are using English as a second language. Most learners completed the test instrument within forty five minutes.

#### **4.2.8 Scoring procedure**

The questions that were set for the self-assessment instrument were based on a three item subscale. The scale represented the following:

- 1 = disagree/no
- 2 = undecided
- 3 = agree/yes

There were 100 questions divided into five positive and negative categories. (These divisions were not indicated on the self-assessment instrument).

### **4.3. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

The raw data were computerized and analysed by an expert. The interpretations were done through the help of the following findings that focus on the listed specific problem statements and their corresponding hypotheses.

#### **4.3.1 Specific problem statements**

(1) Is there a significant difference between boys and girls with regard to:

family climate, school climate, emotional self-concept, social self-concept and academic self-concept?

(2) Is there a significant difference between learners of diverse age groups with regard to:

family climate, school climate, emotional self-concept, social self-concept and academic self-concept?

(3) Is there a significant difference between the emotional self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status?

(4) Is there a significant difference between the social self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status?

- (5) Is there a significant difference between the academic self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status?
- (6) Is there a significant difference between the emotional self-concepts of learners whose fathers are:
- (a) unemployed
  - (b) self-employed
  - (c) gardener/cleaner/laborer
  - (d) government employee
  - (e) deceased or
  - (f) other
- (7) Is there a significant difference between the social self-concepts of learners whose fathers are:
- (a) unemployed
  - (b) self-employed
  - (c) gardener/cleaner/laborer
  - (d) government employee
  - (e) Deceased or
  - (f) other
- (8) Is there a significant difference between the academic self-concepts of learners whose fathers are:
- (a) unemployed
  - (b) self-employed
  - (c) gardener/cleaner/laborer
  - (d) government employee
  - (e) deceased or
  - (f) other
- (9) Is there a significant difference between the academic self-concepts of learners with fathers of diverse levels of education?
- (10) Is there a significant difference between the academic self-concepts of learners with mothers

of diverse levels of education?

- (11) Is there a significant correlation between family climate and academic self-concept?
- (12) Is there a significant correlation between school climate and academic self-concept?
- (13) Is there a significant correlation between the emotional and academic self-concepts of the learners?
- (14) Is there a significant correlation between the family climate and emotional self-concepts of? the learners?

#### **4.3.2 Null-hypotheses**

- H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between boys and girls with regard to:  
family climate, school climate, emotional self-concept, social self-concept and academic self-concept.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the learners of diverse ages with regard to:  
family climate, school climate, emotional self-concept, social self-concept and academic self-concept.
- H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the emotional self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status.
- H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the social self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status.
- H<sub>05</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the academic self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status.
- H<sub>06</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the emotional self-concepts of learners whose fathers are:  
(a) unemployed  
(b) self-employed

- (c) gardener/cleaner/labourer
- (d) government employee
- (e) deceased or
- (f) other

**H<sub>07</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the social self-concepts of learners whose fathers are:

- (a) unemployed
- (b) self-employed
- (c) gardener/cleaner/labourer
- (d) government employee
- (e) deceased or
- (f) other

**H<sub>08</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the academic self-concepts of learners whose fathers are:

- (a) unemployed
- (b) self-employed
- (c) gardener/cleaner/labourer
- (d) government employee
- (e) deceased or
- (f) other

**H<sub>09</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the academic self-concepts of learners with fathers of diverse levels of education.

**H<sub>10</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the academic self-concepts of learners with mothers of diverse levels of education.

**H<sub>11</sub>:** There is no significant correlation between family climate and academic self-concept.

**H<sub>12</sub>:** There is no significant correlation between school climate and academic self-concept.

**H<sub>13</sub>:** There is no significant correlation between emotional and academic self-concepts of learners.

**H<sub>14</sub>:** There is no significant correlation between the family climate and emotional self-concepts of learners.

#### **4.3.3 Statistical techniques**

The following statistical techniques were used to test the null-hypotheses:

- Levene's independent sample t-test for hypothesis 1
- Analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) for hypotheses 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 followed by post hoc tests (Bonferroni) if significant differences are found
- Pearson's correlation for hypotheses 11, 12, 13 and 14.

If the null-hypotheses may not be rejected, certain trends will be indicated.

#### **4.3.4 Biographical details**

Descriptive statistics (focusing on questions 1 to 13) yielded the following biographical detail for the sample.

<b>Sample size</b>	200
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<b>Sex</b>	<b>Number</b>
Boys	89 (44,5%)
Girls	111 (55,5%)

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>
15 years or less	16 (8%)
15 to 18 years	118 (59%)
Over 18 years	66 (33%)

<b>Home language</b>	<b>Number</b>
Sotho	171 (85,5%)
Zulu	29 (14,5%)

<b>Parent's marital status</b>	<b>Number</b>
Married	118 (59%)
Never married	53 (26,5%)
Divorced	14 (7%)
Widowed	12 (6%)
Other	3 (1,5%)

<b>Employment status</b>	<b>Father</b>	<b>Mother</b>
Unemployed	45 (22,5%)	60 (30%)
Self-employed	26 (13%)	19 (9,5%)
Maid/cleaner/laborer	32 (16%)	78 (39%)
Government employee	33 (16,5%)	13 (6,5%)
Deceased	43 (21,5%)	16 (8%)
Other	21 (10,5%)	13 (6,5%)

<b>Parent's educational level</b>	<b>Father</b>	<b>Mother</b>
None	57 (28,5%)	56 (28%)
Grade 1 – 7	52 (26%)	51 (25,5%)
Grade 8 – 9	35 (17,5%)	39 (19,5%)
Grade 10 – 12	38 (19%)	45 (22,5%)
Diploma or degree	18 (9%)	4 (8%)

<b>Type of house lived in</b>	<b>Number</b>
More than 4-roomed house	74 (37%)
4-roomed house	69 (34,5%)
Rented house	21 (10,5%)
Shack	26 (13%)
Other	9 (4,5%)

<b>Respondent's caretaker</b>	<b>Live with</b>	<b>Breadwinner</b>
Mother and father	92 (46%)	63 (31,5%)
Mother only	63 (31,5%)	75 (37,7%)
Father only	7 (3,5%)	26 (13%)
Grandparents	31 (15,5%)	29 (14,5%)
Step-parents	3 (1,5%)	2 (1%)
Other	4 (2%)	5 (2,5%)

<b>Breadwinner's income</b>	<b>Number</b>
Less than R500	108 (54%)
R500 – R999	52 (26%)
R1000 plus	39 (19,5%)

Number of children at home	Number
1 or 3	42 (21%)
3 or 5	114 (57%)
More than 5	43 (21,5%)

#### **4.3.5 The results from testing the null-hypotheses**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant different between boys and girls with regard to:  
 family climate, school climate, emotional self-concept, social self-concept and academic  
 self-concept.

To test this hypothesis, an independent sample t-test was executed. The results are as follows:

**Table 1** T-value and significance of difference between boys and girls with regard to various Variables

Variable	Sex	N	Mean	df	t-value	Significance
<b>Family Climate</b>	Male	89	2.4944			
	Female	111	2.4744	198	0,606	P > 0,05
<b>School Climate</b>	Male	89	2.4295			
	Female	111	2.3673	198	1,989	P < 0,05
<b>Emotional Self-concept</b>	Male	89	2.1559			
	Female	111	2.0920	198	1,509	P > 0,05
<b>Social Self-concept</b>	Male	89	2.2564			
	Female	111	2.2069	198	1,328	P > 0,05
<b>Academic Self-concept</b>	Male	89	2.3880			
	female	111	2.3267	198	1,480	P > 0,05

The above table indicates that the null-hypothesis may be rejected on the 5%-level of significance for school climate. Boys experience the school climate significantly more positively than girls.

However, the null-hypothesis may not be rejected for family climate, emotional self-concept, social self-concept and academic self-concept. There is no significant difference between boys and girls with regard to these variables.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between learners of diverse ages with regard to:  
family climate, school climate, emotional self-concept, social self-concept and academic self-concept.

To test this hypothesis, the one-way ANOVA was administered, followed by the post-hoc Bonferroni test. Tables 2, 3 and 4 depict the results:

**Table 2** Means of different age groups with regard to diverse variables

<b>Variance</b>	<b>Age group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>Family climate</b>	15 years or less	16	2.6181
	15 – 18 years	118	2.4986
	over 18 years	66	2.4232
	<b>Total</b>	200	2.4833
<b>School climate</b>	15 years or less	16	2.5656
	15 – 18 years	118	2.4003
	over 18 years	66	2.3441
	<b>Total</b>	200	2.3950
<b>Emotional self-concept</b>	15 years or less	16	2.3029
	15 – 18 years	118	2.1375
	over 18 years	66	2.0457
	<b>Total</b>	200	2.1204
<b>Social self-concept</b>	15 years or less	16	2.4375
	15 – 18 years	118	2.2290
	over 18 years	66	2.1783
	<b>Total</b>	200	2.2290
<b>Academic self-concept</b>	15 years or less	16	2.5375
	15 – 18 years	118	2.3627
	over 18 years	66	2.2939
	<b>Total</b>	200	2.3540

**Table 3** F-value and significance of difference between learners of diverse ages with regard to various variables

Variable	df	F-value	Significance
<b>Family Climate</b>	2	5.423	P < 0,01
<b>School Climate</b>	2	6.906	P < 0,01
<b>Emotional self-concept</b>	2	5.469	P < 0,01
<b>Social self-concept</b>	2	6.626	P < 0,01
<b>Academic self-concept</b>	2	4.787	P < 0,01

The above table indicates that there are significant differences (on the 1%-level of significance) between the three age groups with regard to family climate, school climate, emotional self-concept, social self-concept and academic self-concept.

Post hoc Bonferroni tests indicate where the significant differences are:

**Table 4** Significance of differences between age groups with regard to various variables

Variable	Age group where there are significant differences	Significance
<b>Family Climate</b>	15 years or less with over 18 years	P < 0,01
<b>School climate</b>	15 years or less with 15 – 18 years 15 years or less with over 18 years	P < 0,05 P < 0,01
<b>Emotional self-concept</b>	15 years or less with over 18 years	P < 0,01
<b>Social self-concept</b>	15 years or less with 15 – 18 years 15 years or less with over 18 years	P < 0,01 P < 0,01
<b>Academic self-concept</b>	15 years or less with over 18 years	P < 0,01

According to Tables 2 and 4:

- Learners of 15 years or less are significantly more positive regarding their view of their family climate than learners of over 18 years.
- Learners of 15 years or less are significantly more positive regarding their view of the school climate than learners older than 15 years.
- Learners of 15 years or less are significantly more positive regarding their emotional self-concepts than learners of over 18 years.
- Learners of 15 years or less are significantly more positive regarding their social self-concepts than learners older than 15 years.
- Learners of 15 years or less are significantly more positive regarding their academic self-concepts than learners older than 18 years.

In summary: Learners of 15 years or less are significantly more positive in their views of family and school climate, as well as in their emotional, social and academic self-concepts than 18 year and older learners.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the emotional self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status.

To test this hypothesis, the one-way ANOVA was administered. Tables 5 and 6 depict the results:

**Table 5** Average emotional self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status

Marital status of parents	N	Mean
		Emotional self-concept
Married	118	2.1623
Never married	53	2.0744
Divorced	14	2.1154
Widowed	12	2.9359
Other	3	2.0513
Total	200	2.1204

**Table 6** F-value and significance of difference of average emotional self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status

df	F-value	Significance
4	2.124	P > 0,05

According to the above table, the null-hypothesis may not be rejected. Thus there is no significant difference between the emotional self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status. However, Table 5 indicates that learners whose parents widowed or married have higher average emotional self-concepts than learners whose parents are divorced or never married.

$H_{04}$ : There is no significant difference between the social self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status.

To test this hypothesis, the one-way ANOVA was administered. Tables 7 and 8 depict the results:

**Table 7** Average social self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status

Marital status of parents	N	Mean Social self-concept
Married	118	2.2562
Never married	53	2.2225
Divorced	14	2.2059
Widowed	12	2.0637
Other	3	2.0392
Total	200	2.229

**Table 8** F-value and significance of difference of average social self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status

df	F-value	Significance
4	1.969	P > 0,05

According to the above table, the null-hypothesis may not be rejected. Thus there is no significant difference between the social self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status.

**H<sub>0s</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the academic self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status.

To test this hypothesis, the one-way ANOVA was administered. Tables 9 and 10 depict the results:

**Table 9** Average academic self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status

Marital status of parents	N	Mean Academic self-concepts
<b>Married</b>	118	2.3684
<b>Never married</b>	53	2.3635
<b>Divorced</b>	14	2.3286
<b>Widowed</b>	12	2.2500
<b>Other</b>	3	2.1556
<b>Total</b>	200	2.354

**Table 10** F-value and significance of average academic self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status

df	F-value	Significance
4	0,837	P > 0,05

According to the above table, the null-hypothesis may not be rejected. Thus there is no significant difference between the social self-concepts of learners with parents of diverse marital status. However, Table 9 shows higher academic self-concepts for learners whose parents are married than for the rest.

**H<sub>06</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the emotional self-concepts of learners whose fathers are:

- (a) unemployed
- (b) self-employed
- (c) gardener/cleaner/labourer
- (d) government employee
- (e) deceased or
- (f) other

To test this hypothesis, the one-way ANOVA was administered. Tables 11 and 12 depict the results

**Table 11** Average emotional self-concepts of learners whose fathers are differently employed

Father's work	N	Mean
		Emotional self-concept
Unemployed	45	2.0811
Self-employed	26	2.1208
Gardener/cleaner/laborer	32	2.1034
Government employee	33	2.2424
Deceased	43	2.0805
Other	21	2.1206
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>2.1204</b>

**Table 12** F-value and significance of difference of average emotional self-concepts of learners whose fathers are differently employed

df	F-value	significance
5	1.446	P > 0,05

According to the above table, the null-hypothesis may not be rejected. Thus there is no significant difference between the average emotional self-concepts of learners whose fathers are:

- (a) unemployed
- (b) self-employed
- (c) gardener/cleaner/laborer
- (d) government employee
- (e) deceased or
- (f) other

However, according to Table 11, learners whose fathers are government employees have the most positive emotional self-concepts. This may be that these fathers experience relative security in their employment.

- $H_{07}$ : There is no significant difference between the social self-concepts of learners whose fathers are:
- (a) unemployed
  - (b) self-employed
  - (c) gardener/cleaner/labourer
  - (d) government employee
  - (e) deceased or
  - (f) other

To test this hypothesis, the one-way ANOVA was administered. Tables 13 and 14 depict the results:

**Table 13** Average social self-concepts of learners whose fathers are differently employed

Father's work	N	Mean Social self-concept
<b>Unemployed</b>	45	2.2209
<b>Self-employed</b>	26	2.2443
<b>Gardener/cleaner/labourer</b>	32	2.2122
<b>Government employee</b>	33	2.3262
<b>Deceased</b>	43	2.1737
<b>Other</b>	21	2.2129
<b>Total</b>	200	2.2290

**Table 14** F-value and significance of difference of average social self-concepts of learners whose fathers are differently employed

df	F-value	significance
5	1.365	P > 0,05

According to Table 14, the null-hypothesis may not be rejected. Thus there is no significant difference between the average social self-concepts of learners whose fathers are:

- (a) unemployed
- (b) self-employed
- (c) gardener/cleaner/laborer
- (d) government employee
- (e) deceased or
- (f) other

However, Table 13 indicates that learners whose fathers are government employees, have the most positive social self-concepts. In contrast, learners whose fathers are deceased, have the lowest social self-concepts.

**H<sub>08</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the academic self-concepts of learners whose fathers are:

- (a) unemployed
- (b) self-employed
- (c) gardener/cleaner/laborer
- (d) government employee
- (e) deceased or
- (f) other

To test this hypothesis, the one-way ANOVA was administered. Tables 15 and 16 depict the results:

**Table 15** Average academic self-concepts of learners whose fathers are differently employed

Father's work	N	Mean Academic self-concept
<b>Unemployed</b>	45	2.3437
<b>Self-employed</b>	26	2.3128
<b>Gardener/cleaner/labourer</b>	32	2.3958
<b>Government employee</b>	33	2.4667
<b>Deceased</b>	43	2.2667
<b>Other</b>	21	2.3651
<b>Total</b>	200	2.3540

**Table 16** F-value and significance of difference of average academic self-concepts of learners whose fathers are differently employed

df	F-value	Significance
5	2.059	P > 0,05

According to Table 16, the null-hypothesis may not be rejected. There is no significant difference between the academic self-concepts of learners whose fathers are differently employed. However, Table 15 shows that learners whose fathers are government employees, have the most positive academic self-concepts and learners whose fathers are deceased have the lowest academic self-concepts.

**H<sub>09</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the academic self-concepts of learners with fathers of diverse levels of education.

To test this hypothesis, the one-way ANOVA was administered. Tables 17 and 18 depict the results:

**Table 17** Average academic self-concepts of learners whose fathers have different levels of Education

Father's level education	N	Mean Academic self-concept
<b>None</b>	57	2.2971
<b>Grade 1 – 7</b>	52	2.3141
<b>Grade 8 – 9</b>	35	2.4057
<b>Grade 10 – 12</b>	38	2.4140
<b>Diploma or degree</b>	18	2.4222
<b>Total</b>	200	2.354

**Table 18** F-value and significance of difference of average academic self-concepts of learners with fathers of diverse levels of education

df	F-value	significance
4	1.732	P > 0,05

According to Table 18, the null-hypothesis may not be rejected. Thus there is no significant difference between the average academic self-concepts of learners whose fathers have diverse levels of education. However, Table 17 clearly indicates that the higher the level of the father's education, the higher the learners' academic self-concepts.

$H_{010}$ : There is no significant difference between the academic self-concepts of learners with mothers of diverse levels of education.

To test this hypothesis, the one-way ANOVA was administered. Tables 19 and 20 depict the results:

**Table 19** Average academic self-concepts of learners whose mothers have different levels of education

Mother's level of education	N	Mean
		Academic self-concept
<b>None</b>	56	2.3417
<b>Grade 1 – 7</b>	51	2.3320
<b>Grade 8 – 9</b>	39	2.3932
<b>Grade 10 – 12</b>	45	2.3244
<b>Diploma or degree</b>	9	2.5333
<b>Total</b>	200	2.3540

**Table 20** F-value and significance of difference of average academic self-concepts of learners with mothers of diverse levels of education

df	F-value	significance
4	1.243	P > 0,05

According to the above table, the null-hypothesis may not be rejected. Thus there is no significant difference between the average academic self-concepts of learners whose mothers have diverse levels of education. However, according to Table 19, if the learners' mothers have a diploma or degree, the learners' academic self-concepts are most positive.

$H_{011}$ : There is no significant correlation between family climate and academic self-concepts.

To test this hypothesis, the Pearson correlation was calculated. The results are in the following table.

**Table 21** Correlation between family climate and academic self-concept

Variables	Correlation	significance
<b>Family climate and Academic self-concept</b>	0.412	P < 0,01

Table 21 indicates that the null-hypothesis may be rejected. There is a significant correlation (on the 1%-level of significance) between family climate and academic self-concept. The correlation is also positive and moderate, indicating that the more positive the family climate, the more positive the academic self-concept, and vice versa.

**H<sub>012</sub>:** There is no significant correlation between school climate and academic self-concept.

To test this hypothesis, the Pearson correlation was calculated. The table illustrates the results.

**Table 22** Correlation between school climate and academic self-concept

Variables	Correlation	Significance
<b>School climate and academic self-concept</b>	0.459	P < 0,01

Table 22 indicates that the null-hypothesis may be rejected. There is a significant correlation (on the 1%-level of significance) between school climate and academic self-concept. The correlation is also positive and moderate, indicating that the more positive the school climate, the more positive the academic self-concept, and vice versa.

**H<sub>013</sub>:** There is no significant correlation between emotional and academic self-concepts of learners.

To test this hypothesis, the Pearson correlation was calculated. The results are in Table 23.

**Table 23** Correlation between emotional and academic self-concept

Variables	Correlation	Significance
Emotional and academic self-concept	0.416	P < 0,01

Table 23 demonstrates that the null-hypothesis may be rejected. There is a significant correlation (on the 1%-level of significance) between emotional self-concept and academic self-concept. The correlation is also positive and moderate, indicating that the more positive the emotional self-concept, the more positive the academic self-concept, and vice versa.

$H_{014}$ : There is no significant correlation between the family climate and emotional self-concepts of learners.

To test this hypothesis, the Pearson correlation was calculated as presented in Table 24.

**Table 24** Correlation between family climate and emotional self-concept

Variables	Correlation	Significance
Family climate and emotional self-concept	0.282	P < 0,01

According to Table 24, the null-hypothesis may be rejected. There is a significant correlation (on the 1%-level of significance) between family climate and emotional self-concept. The correlation is also positive although it is low, indicating that the more positive the family climate, the more positive the emotional self-concept, and vice versa.

#### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

The focus of this chapter has been to highlight the approach, methods and techniques used in the empirical study. The ways dealing with how data was obtained and analyzed were shown. The evaluation and findings pertaining to the test instrument and self-report data were interpreted. The following chapter, Chapter 5, will present conclusions drawn from this study, and recommendations for further research.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

As indicated in Chapter 1, adolescents from disrupted families could be subject to a large number of problems that cause them to underachieve. It was therefore the purpose of this study to determine which factors contributed to the onset and development of these problems.

A literature study was done to identify the factors that contributed to the underachievement of adolescents from disrupted families. Among the factors identified in the literature study are divorce, separation, parental death, spousal and social violence, child abuse, unemployment, teenage pregnancy, father absence, emancipation of the women and school factors.

An empirical investigation was conducted to determine the most important factors affecting the adolescents from disrupted families. It was discovered that being brought up in a disrupted family has a negative effect on the adolescent's academic achievement, social self-concept, and emotional self-concept.

#### **5.2 CONCLUSIONS FROM THE STUDY**

The literature study provided key information concerning the problems faced by adolescents from disrupted families. It also confirmed the hypotheses made by the researcher in chapter 1 (section 1.2.4). This information, obtained from the literature study, was used to develop an item inventory that assisted in the compilation of the self-assessment instrument. This self-assessment instrument was used in the empirical study to confirm the findings of the literature study.

##### **5.2.1 Internal factors contributing to the disruption of the family**

In Chapter 2 (par. 2.1.2) divorce and separation have been identified as factors that cause major stress for the whole family. Parents who are going through a process of divorce and separation become so frustrated that they forget the needs of their children. Because children are not well looked after and guided, they evidence behavioural problems as a form of attention seeking.

These behavioural problems can be seen in anger, shock, despair, emptiness, restlessness and possessive behaviour. Regression in their schoolwork, withdrawal from other people and aggression characterize their life.

Parental death as discussed in Chapter 2 (par. 2.1.3) has also been found arousing negative emotions in adolescents. This is because the surviving parent spends most of the time absorbed in their own grief thereby neglecting their children. The children are affected by their parent's behaviour. Most of them blame themselves for the death of the parent. If life becomes so difficult they ask themselves why the dead parent has left them. They wish that if they died with their parent it would be better. Their life is characterized by suicidal thoughts, anger, sadness, depression, poor concentration, withdrawal and sorrow.

In Chapter 2 (par. 2.1.4) spousal violence has been identified as another factor that creates problems for the entire family. This is a factor that leads to divorce and separation, but some parents do not resort to divorce and separation or for the sake of children. They persevere for their families' well-being and stability. Some persevere because they can not afford to bring up children on their own, have nowhere to go, are unemployed or have financial restraints. But this exposure to violence become so traumatic for adolescents and affects their level of becoming. Adolescents may start to show deviant behaviour, delinquency and maladjustment.

Emancipation of women dealt with in Chapter 2 (par. 2.1.5) also found causing turbulence in the children's world. This is problematic because it prevents children and their mothers from bonding and also creates emotional and psychological vacuums. Most children do not get enough time to be with their mothers to share their experiences, achievements and disappointments outside the home. This is because most mothers get home exhausted, irritable and may start neglecting other home duties. The children are unhappy about this and internalize it as rejection, insensitivity and abandonment.

Father absence, discussed in Chapter 2 (par. 2.1.6), also found as bringing instability to the home. Most families perceive the father as the protector of the family. But once the father leaves the home the whole family starts to feel insecure, unstable and unsafe. It also affects or lowers the economic standing of the whole family because most fathers are the main earners in the home and some mothers earn very little and cannot afford to support family alone. Both boys and girls are

affected by this situation, although not in the same manner. Their educational achievements are impeded because one parent family may provide limited intellectual stimulation.

In Chapter 2 (par. 2.1.7) child abuse is also identified as another factor that destroys the family bond. High rates of maltreatment through physical, emotional and sexual abuse are reported daily. Most abuse is caused by family members or close relatives. Different problems may cause child abuse like poverty, occupational problems, immorality and emotional problems. If parents are emotionally and physically devastated themselves, they may consciously and unconsciously hurt or abuse their children. Children who are exposed to abuse show behaviour difficulties such as self-destructive behaviour, excessive aggression, non-compliance, passion disposition, hostility, sullenness, pathological fear, low self-esteem, social detachment, depression, shyness and lack of socialization.

Drug abuse, as indicated in Chapter 2 (par. 2.1.8), sometimes stems from child abuse. If the conditions are unbearable at home adolescents are likely to use drugs. They use drugs as a response to stress, misfortune and hardships. Some are encouraged by their peers who promise that it will relax and help them cope with negative life experiences. Most of them start to use drugs as a scapegoat for their problems.

Alcoholism, as discussed in Chapter 2 (par. 2.1.9), is another factor that can be associated with drug abuse. Alcoholism is known as the most common drug affecting people worldwide because of its easily availability. Children are mostly affected by alcoholic parents due to family conflict, arguments, emotional neglect and isolation. They feel embarrassed by the behaviour of their alcoholic parents. This causes depression, temper tantrums, disruptive classroom behaviour, poor academic performance, withdrawal, loneliness, rebelliousness, insecurity and a defensive attitude.

Teenage pregnancy, as dealt with in Chapter 2 (par. 2.1.10), is another factor that causes unpredictability in most adolescents' lives. These pregnant adolescents feel different from their peers. They feel ashamed of having illegitimate children and are rejected by the members of the society. The malicious attitudes, emotions and insinuations they experience from society, home and school cause psychological distress, developmental dislocations and critical disruptions in their life. This situation may cause a serious disruption in the whole family.

In Chapter 2 (par. 2.1.11) polygamy is also identified as one of the factors that plays a major part in the disruption of the family. Although polygamy is legalized in some areas, it is a threat to those involved. It means diminished wealth, conflict and also engenders jealousy. The members of the polygamous family, especially adolescents, find themselves caught up in the middle of everyday's quarrel and bitter confrontations between co-wives.

It is stated in Chapter 2 (par. 2.1.12) that the existence and influence of the extended family have disappeared, leaving the nuclear family isolated and lacking role models. This has left parents in a stressful situation of raising children on their own while being committed in their work place. Parents are now forced to leave children under the care of a stranger or someone whose background they do not know. Children are affected by this upbringing because they lack encouragement from their parents who have less contact with children as a result of other commitments.

Unemployment is identified in Chapter 2 (par. 2.1.13) as another factor that causes instability in the family. Economic insufficiency affects all the members of the family and lessen the individual's confidence in society. It also leads to short temper, child abuse, violence, divorce and separation.

### **5.2.2 External factors contributing to the disruption of the family**

In Chapter 2 (par .2.2.1) it is discussed that parent's social class, for example, parental education, income, occupation, attitude and living space are major influences upon academic achievement of children. Middle class or educated parents are likely to encourage and motivate their children to do well at school while poorly educated and economically deprived parents fail to provide their children with the necessary conditions that are important in school achievement.

It is mentioned in Chapter 2 (par. 2.2.2) that social and political violence have shaped the living conditions of South Africa. Many people died leaving most children orphaned. These children were often witnesses when their families or parents died in horror. Some of them are still suffering from depression, school problems, excessive quarrelling, and flashbacks, sleep problems and insecurity.

In Chapter 2 (par. 2.2.3) it is confirmed that economic changes are affecting both rural and urban communities. The rural communities are facing a crisis in service delivery due to their income that is below the poverty level and unemployment. The urban communities are characterized by people who are unemployed, poorly paid, ill-housed, under-educated or uneducated. The large number of underemployed citizens forces some families to live in inferior housing, which exposes children to ill-health. Some of these children dropout of school and search for jobs. But they become unemployed as the economy cannot expand rapidly enough to absorb so many youth.

Demographic changes, as mentioned in Chapter 2 (par. 2.2.4), is another factor that brings undesirable conditions for many families. Over-urbanisation and over-population make living conditions in the cities unbearable. The government fails to provide for the too-rapid growth of the cities. This results in the growth of huge slums, shanty towns and shacks. People living under these conditions lack water, sanitation, electricity and sewerage. The family's unlawful settlement in these areas causes human misery and children are exposed to crime and immoral activities.

In Chapter 2 (par. 2.2.5) change in value systems and future perspective are found as causing a gap between children, parents and the society at large. Children are becoming frustrated, depressed and violent because it is impossible to fulfill their future plans and live up to their standard. A weak economy, which results in unemployment, is stressful to youth who want to earn respect in society through secure jobs.

### **5.2.3 Factors related to self-concept formation and underachievement**

It was stated in the literature research (Chapter3) that underachievement and poor self-concept formation cannot only be caused by problems from the family but others can emanate outside the family. Other factors that contribute to underachievement and the school climate were identified as intrapsychic, interpersonal and school factors. Intrapsychic factors are those factors that come from within the learner and are not influenced by the outside world. Interpersonal factors are those factors that comes from outside or the relationship between people a learner makes contact with. School factors are those factors that learner come across with at school.

Under intrapsychic factors discussed in Chapter 3 (par. 3.2) achievement motivation, self-concept, cognitive style and study habits and attitude were identified as having an impact on the learner's achievement. If the learner is not motivated intrinsically due to different factors, it will

be impossible for that learner to achieve. Learners need to have inner motivation to reach personal adequacy, self-actualization and to become functional and competent.

In Chapter 3 (par. 3.2.1 & 3.2.2) it is stated that a strategy to achievement is a positive self-concept. Learners, who have a negative self-concept, are characterized by an inferiority complex. They see themselves as incapable of achieving excellency and thereby act in self-defeating ways and have low self-esteem. Those who have a positive self-concept have high self-esteem, think positively about themselves, and feel good about themselves, their abilities and their surroundings. These learners are likely to obtain good results and achieve decency and excellency.

It is also mentioned in Chapter 3 (par. 3.2.3 & 3.2.4) that better cognitive style can be achieved by those learners who possess intrinsic motivation and a positive self-concept. This is because these learners have goal-directed behaviour, which is needed in cognitive development. The learner's effective study habits and positive attitudes towards learning determine their level of interest in learning. If learners have a positive attitude to a task, they strive for a positive and high performance. But if they perceive themselves as incapable or have a negative attitude, they will not attempt any task positively.

Under interpersonal factors, discussed in Chapter 3 (par. 3.3 & 3.3.1) social milieu, linguistic development, intergroup relations and cultural diversity were perceived as having an impact on underachievement. Society is significant in the life of learners, in a way that a child who is able to socialize and interact with people has a superior complex. If learners have accumulated positive social experiences and positive social influences, they become mature enough to be responsible, to realize their true potential and achieve decency in society. This positive involvement with society leads to achievement and sound linguistic development. Through society the learner learns to master language, which will enable him/her to socialize fruitfully with others.

It is stated in Chapter 3 (par. 3.3.2) that society also introduces the adolescents to intergroup relations. That is where they meet peer groups, reference groups, social groups and friendship groups. This gives them exposure to the relationship of dependence, acceptance, choice, togetherness and dialogue. These groups are also essential because they provide the setting in which individuals meet most of their personal needs. Groups assist in developing a positive self-concept and encourage co-operation. They provide models to be copied; they set and enforce

standards of conduct and belief; they serve as standard against which adolescents assess and appraise themselves; they sustain interaction between members and bring sense of common identity. They provide shared interests; they give some patterns for organization of behaviour on a regular basis; they furnish adolescents with socialization opportunities and determine the range of people to interact with and with whom it is possible to make friends.

It is the society and social relations as discussed in Chapter 3 (par. 3.3.3) that predispose the adolescents to ethnocentrism. In a diversified society the dominant group may impose its cultural beliefs, values and norms upon minority groups. In most multicultural schools, this exertion of power causes the adolescents to be confused, upset, frustrated, aggressive and hostile towards the school system, teachers and one another. This leads to an unconducive learning environment and ineffective teaching.

Under school factors, discussed in Chapter 3 (par. 3.4 & 3.4.1), teacher anxiety and overcrowding, mixed ability classes and inadequate teacher training are identified as having impact on underachievement. If teachers are bedeviled by pressures and anxiety they tend to practise rigid control in the classroom. This hinders the initiative of learners and also blocks their cognitive functioning. But sometimes teachers exercise strict discipline because of the conditions under which they are teaching. One of these conditions is overcrowding. They feel ineffective and helpless when they fail to reach out to all learners due to large numbers in class. But learners are the ones who suffer the consequences of high failure at the end.

It is stated in Chapter 3 (par. 3.4.2) that another condition that causes strict discipline is the mixed ability class. This grouping mixes slow learners and high achievers in the same classroom, the same instructional material and same pace of learning although they differ in their achievement. Teachers also become frustrated because they fail to organize and present explanations, practices and activities in such a way that all learners understand at the same time and pace. High achievers get bored waiting for the slow learners to absorb information while slow learners are discouraged by their inadequacy in front of the high achievers.

Most teachers, as mentioned in Chapter 3 (par. 3.4.3), fail to apply their strategy or approach in a mixed ability setting because of their training. Some teachers are so poorly trained that learners who are exposed to their teaching become underachievers. Those teachers find it difficult to keep

up with the traditional view of the teachers' role and are the ones who resort to excessive strict discipline and anxiety.

#### **5.2.4 Interpretations of the empirical investigation**

It is stated in Chapter 4 page 87 that learners of 15 years or younger are significantly more positive in their views of family and school climate, as well as in their emotional, social and academic self-concepts than 18 year and older learners.

Tables were drawn in order to show the results from testing the null hypothesis. Most of them depicted the following differences. Table 5 indicated that learners whose parents widowed or married have higher average emotional self-concept than learners whose parents are divorced or never married. Table 7 showed that the social self-concept of learners whose parents are married have higher social self-concept than learners whose parents are divorced or widowed. Table 9 showed higher academic self-concept for learners whose parents are married than for the rest. But this was not based on statistics as there was no statistically significant difference but there was a trend that one could see.

According to Tables 11, 13 and 15 learners whose fathers are government employees have the most positive emotional, social and academic self-concept. This may be that those fathers experience relative security in their employment. But learners whose fathers are deceased have the lowest social, emotional and academic self-concept. Tables 17 and 19 indicated clearly that the higher the level of the parent's education, the higher the learners' academic self-concept. This also was a trend as there was no statistically significant difference.

According to Tables 21, 22, 23 and 24 learners who are exposed to positive family and school climate have more positive academic, social and emotional self-concept. This means the more positive the family and school climate, the more positive the academic, social and emotional self-concept.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are made:

- Further investigation to include more respondents in order to be able to generalize the findings.
- Teacher education should focus on the inclusion of strategies for teachers to cope, identify and help children from disrupted families.
- Church leaders should be sensitized to also focus on the problems experienced by adolescents from disrupted families.
- Community leaders should also be sensitized in order to be able to deal with the problems of adolescents fruitfully.
- Parent education should be initiated to give parents skills to help their children cope with family problems.
- Single parents and guardians should be provided with essential knowledge and skills that will help them cope with the situation.
- Support groups for adolescents and parents should also be initiated in poor communities.
- Peer – counsellors should be selected in a school setting to help these adolescents express their problems and fears.

#### **5.4 CONCLUSIONS**

The focus of this chapter has been to summarise everything dealt with in the four previous chapters. Chapter 1 provided an introductory orientation, clarification of terms and outline of the whole dissertation. Chapter 2 provided an exposition of relevant literature concerning factors contributing to the disruption of the family in contemporary South Africa. Chapter 3 dealt with a literature survey covering factors outside the family situation that are related to underachievement and self-concept formation. The empirical research, the gathering of data and analysis of the results of the empirical investigation were discussed in Chapter 4. Conclusions and recommendations are presented in this chapter (Chapter 5).

Adolescents from disrupted families often experience problems regarding a positive self-concept formation. They may feel different from their peers because of their circumstances and therefore need special help or assistance in order to form a positive self-concept and motivation to achieve academically.

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## QUESTIONNAIRE

Hi, there! This is not a test but a questionnaire for which you have all the answers.

Consider the following before you start :

1. There are no wrong or right answers.
2. Complete all questions accurately and truthfully.
3. You will remain anonymous as no identification is required.
4. All the information will be kept strictly confidential.

Write the correct number in the square.

1.	Sex	Male = 1 Female = 2	
2.	Age	15 years or less = 1 Between 15 – 18 = 2 Over 18 years = 3	
3.	Home language	Sotho = 1 Zulu = 2 English = 3 Other = 4	
4.	Parent's marital Status	Married = 1 Never married = 2 Divorced = 3 Widowed = 4 Other = 5	
5.	Father's work	Unemployed = 1 Self-employed = 2 Gardener/Cleaner/Labourer = 3 Government employee = 4 Deceased = 5 Other = 6	
6.	Mother's work	Unemployed = 1 Self-employed = 2 Maid/Cleaner/Labourer = 3 Government employee = 4	

		Deceased = 5 Other = 6	
7.	Father's education	None = 1 Grade 1-Grade 7 = 2 Grade 8-Grade 9 = 3 Grade 10-Grade 12 = 4 Diploma or Degree = 5	
8.	Mother's education	None = 1 Grade 1-Grade 7 = 2 Grade 8-Grade 9 = 3 Grade 10-Grade 12 = 4 Diploma or Degree = 5	
9.	Type of house we live in	More than 4 roomed house = 1 Four-roomed house = 2 Rented house = 3 Shack = 4 Other = 5	
10.	Person/s you live with	Mother and father = 1 Mother only = 2 Father only = 3 Grandparent/s = 4 Step-parent/s = 5 Other = 6	
11.	Family's breadwinner	Mother and father = 1 Mother only = 2 Father only = 3 Grandparent/s = 4 Step-parent/s = 5 Other = 6	
12.	Breadwinner's income	Less than R500 = 1 R500-R999 = 2 R1000 plus = 3	
13.	Number of children at home	1 or 2 = 1 3 to 5 = 2 More than 5 = 3	

**Put a cross in the appropriate number in the square.**

**The numbers have the following meanings:**

**3 = Agree/Yes**

**2 = Undecided**

**1 = Disagree/No**

<b>Agree/Yes (3)</b>	<b>Undecided (2)</b>	<b>Disagree/No (1)</b>
14. I feel great to be at school.		3 2 1
15. I make friends easily.		3 2 1
16. I do my homework well.		3 2 1
17. My parents expect me to do well at school.		3 2 1
18. I work well at school.		3 2 1
19. I feel out of place with other people.		3 2 1
20. I understand most of the subjects taught at school.		3 2 1
21. My parents encourage me to do well at school.		3 2 1
22. My school offers stimulating activities.		3 2 1
23. I find most of the subjects difficult.		3 2 1
24. I have a good relationship with my friends.		3 2 1
25. My parents believe I can do well at school.		3 2 1
26. I prefer to be alone.		3 2 1
27. I am easily hurt when a friend makes a negative personal comment about me.		3 2 1
28. In general, the teachers allow me to give my views.		3 2 1
29. My family members disturb me while I am studying.		3 2 1
30. I am unable to excel in school.		3 2 1
31. I admire my friends.		3 2 1
32. My parents are supportive.		3 2 1
33. I like to participate in group discussions.		3 2 1
34. I am encouraged to ask questions in class.		3 2 1
35. My parents are worried when I come home late from school unexpectedly.		3 2 1
36. When I am really upset it takes me a long time to calm down.		3 2 1
37. I can pass my examination well.		3 2 1
38. I feel uncomfortable in a group of peers.		3 2 1
39. I find it difficult to control my emotions.		3 2 1

Agree/Yes (3)	Undecided (2)	Disagree/No (1)
40. I am discouraged from asking questions in class.	3 2 1	
41. My parents get upset when I fail at school.	3 2 1	
42. My life experiences are mostly pleasant.	3 2 1	
43. I am exposed to positive male or female role models.	3 2 1	
44. If I work hard, I can do well in my examinations.	3 2 1	
45. My parents help me with homework exercises.	3 2 1	
46. There is a 'we' spirit in our class.	3 2 1	
47. Criticism helps me to improve myself.	3 2 1	
48. My peers respect me.	3 2 1	
49. I do well at school.	3 2 1	
50. My parents request me to show them what I do at school.	3 2 1	
51. I think time spent studying school subjects is wasted.	3 2 1	
52. My life experiences are mostly unpleasant.	3 2 1	
53. I am actively involved in social activities.	3 2 1	
54. Exams are difficult.	3 2 1	
55. I feel that things are too much for me.	3 2 1	
56. We learn many useful facts at school.	3 2 1	
57. My parents encourage me with regard to my schoolwork.	3 2 1	
58. I enjoy most of the lessons/subjects.	3 2 1	
59. My parents give me too much freedom.	3 2 1	
60. We learn boring things at school.	3 2 1	
61. I feel negative about my future.	3 2 1	
62. I feel I am rejected by peers.	3 2 1	
63. I generally fail my examinations.	3 2 1	
64. My peers recognise me as important.	3 2 1	
65. I am satisfied with whom I am.	3 2 1	
66. School is useless for our daily lives.	3 2 1	
67. My parents stop me from doing things which negatively affect my schoolwork.	3 2 1	
68. I will never understand most of the subjects.	3 2 1	
69. We learn important things at school.	3 2 1	
70. My parents teach me right from wrong.	3 2 1	
71. I have difficulty establishing close relationships.	3 2 1	
72. I am academically successful.	3 2 1	
73. My father is a good example to me.	3 2 1	
74. My teachers discourage discussions/debates during their lessons.	3 2 1	

Agree/Yes (3)	Undecided (2)	Disagree/No (1)
75. My teachers get impatient when I ask for help.	3	2 1
76. My mother is a good example to me.	3	2 1
77. My teachers encourage us to work in groups.	3	2 1
78. My home is boring.	3	2 1
79. My teachers encourage us to share ideas in a lesson.	3	2 1
80. I feel positive about my future.	3	2 1
81. I mistrust other people.	3	2 1
82. When I fail a test, I lose confidence.	3	2 1
83. My parents are indifferent to my feelings.	3	2 1
84. My teachers discourage boys and girls from working together.	3	2 1
85. My friends ignore me.	3	2 1
86. The teachers ask a lot of probing questions during our lessons.	3	2 1
87. There are interesting things to do at home.	3	2 1
88. I wish I were different.	3	2 1
89. My mother prefers me to do household chores instead of studying.	3	2 1
90. I fail most of my class-tests.	3	2 1
91. I easily lose friends.	3	2 1
92. I struggle with mood-swings.	3	2 1
93. School can help us improve our living conditions.	3	2 1
94. My father scolds me for no apparent reason.	3	2 1
95. I hate to perform demonstrations in class.	3	2 1
96. My parents often fight with one another in front of me.	3	2 1
97. My friends think I am boring.	3	2 1
98. I struggle to make my own decisions.	3	2 1
99. My teachers give us time to report our group's findings.	3	2 1
100. My father spends little time with me.	3	2 1

**SUMMARY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE INDICATING**  
**EACH VARIABLE**

Item number	Variable	Scoring Direction
<u>29,35,59,78,83,89,94,96,100</u>	<u>Family climate</u>	-ve
<u>17,21,25,32,41,45,50,57,67,70,73,76,87</u>	<u>Family climate</u>	+ve
<u>40,51,60,66,74,75,84</u>	<u>School climate</u>	-ve
<u>14,18,22,28,34,46,56,69,77,79,86,93,99</u>	<u>School climate</u>	+ve
<u>27,36,39,52,55,61,88,92,98</u>	<u>Emotional Self-concept</u>	-ve
<u>42,47,65,80</u>	<u>Emotional Self-concept</u>	+ve
<u>19,26,38,62,71,81,85,91,97</u>	<u>Social Self-concept</u>	-ve
<u>15,24,31,33,43,48,53,64</u>	<u>Social Self-concept</u>	+ve
<u>23,30,54,63,68,82,90,95</u>	<u>Academic Self-concept</u>	-ve
<u>16,20,37,44,49,58,72</u>	<u>Academic Self-concept</u>	+ve

Positive statements : 42

Negative statements : 45

87

Box 2652  
Bethlehem  
9700  
17 July 2000

The District Manager  
Bethlehem District Office  
Private Bag x26  
Bethlehem

Dear Sir/Madam

Permission to conduct research in schools

I am currently registered with the University of South Africa doing a Master of Education (Med) under the topic – The impact of disrupted family life on the academic achievement of adolescents.

In order to fulfil the requirements of this degree I have to conduct research in different schools so as to obtain empirical data. I would like to get permission to conduct this research in five secondary schools in your district. The secondary schools identified are as follows:

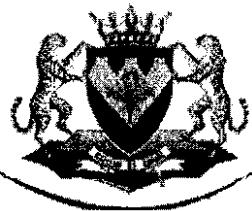
Ntsu , Tiisetso , Thabo-Thokoza , Bethlehem Comprehensive and L.K.Ntlabathi.

All students taking part in this research will remain anonymous as no identification is required. All the information obtained will be strictly kept confidential.

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully  
V.G.Gasa (Ms)

# FREE STATE PROVINCE



quiries : M J W Tshabalala

Tel. : 058- 3035614

ference no. :

Fax. : 058-3037419

Bethlehem District Office

**01 August 2000**

s V G Gasa  
O Box 2652  
ETHLEHEM  
'00

ear Mam

## **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS**

ermission is granted to conduct research under the following conditions:

- You are not going to temper the smooth running of your and the school where you are going to conduct research.
- You arrange with your Principal to use your free periods.
- You arrange with the later schools in advance to avoid any form of disruption and submit your program to your Principal.

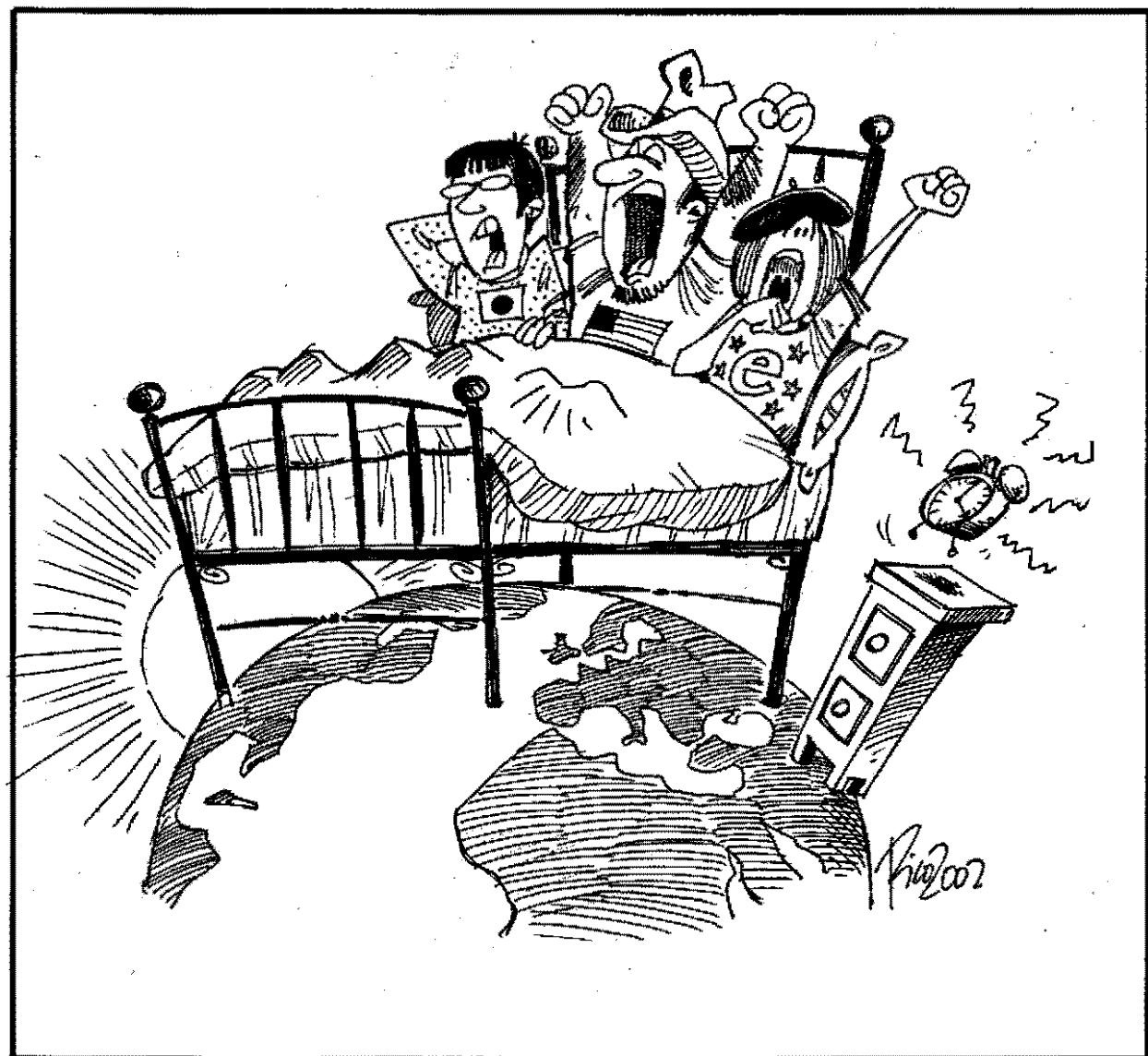
hope you find this in order.

anks

  
J W TSHABALALA  
ETING DISTRICT MANAGER

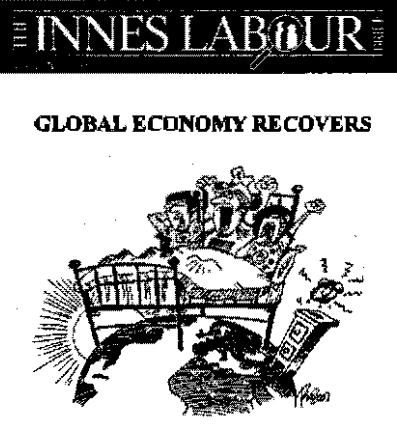


# GLOBAL ECONOMY RECOVERS



0001803168

*Europe and even Japan are finally showing signs of economic recovery.*



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# THE DUNCAN INNES REVIEW

## THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY BEGINS

DUNCAN INNES' REVIEW is the publication of The Innes Labour Brief and Working Families in Economic and Social Science at the University of the West Indies.

At last there seems to be good news on the economic front, both globally and domestically.

In the past few issues of *The Innes Labour Brief* I have argued that a global economic recovery was imminent: in February I said there was a 60:40 chance of recovery and in April I raised that to a 70:30 chance.

I would now raise the odds again, this time to 80:20 in favour of a global economic recovery. In fact, I believe that from a purely economic point of view it is now virtually certain that a global economic recovery has commenced. The reason I still allow for a possible 20 per cent downside is due to geopolitical factors. There is still so much political uncertainty and instability in the world that one has to allow for a possible flare-up somewhere that could send world economies into a tailspin again.

### Global growth

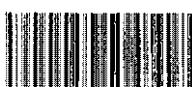
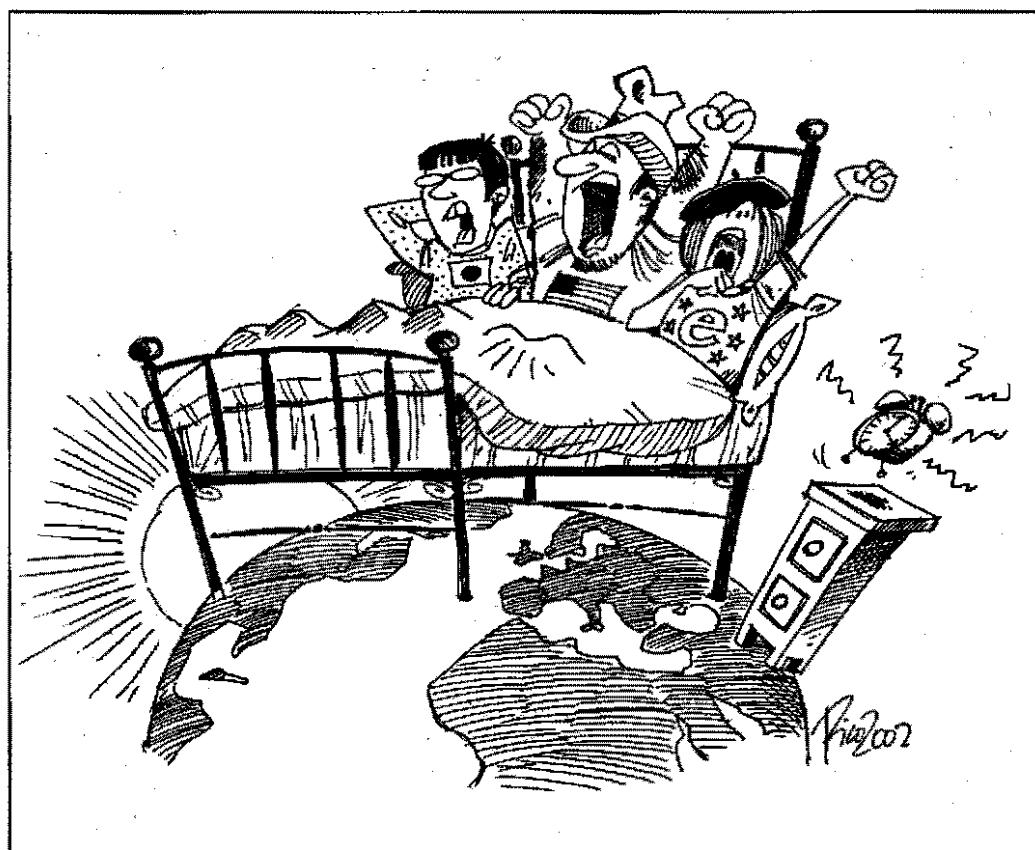
So far this year the economic turnaround in the USA has been quite impressive. GDP growth in the first quarter was a very strong 5.6 per cent. Although estimates are that second quarter US growth will be slower at about 3 per cent, this is still sufficient to ensure that the growth trend is intact. While consumer confidence, which remained strong throughout most of last year, continues to be the mainstay of the US economy, it is now receiving support from an improvement in manufacturing.

Even more important from a long-term point of view is that there are signs of a recovery in investment spending. Orders for durable goods in the US rose for the fifth month in a row in April - by a very healthy three per cent. This rise covered a range of heavy industry goods such as metals, machinery, electronic and electrical equipment, motor vehicles and communication equipment.

Although there may still be setbacks and although the US financial markets are likely to remain weak for a while yet, the US economic recovery is now underway. The weakness in the US dollar is likely to persist for some time still, but this will help to promote US exports, which in turn will be good for that country's growth. The only really significant negative factor is the huge US current account deficit, which stands at four per cent of GDP and is putting downward pressure on the dollar. This in turn is inhibiting investment in the US. As a result, the US recovery is likely to be choppy and will take some time to reach maturity.

Buoyed by the growth trend in the US, the European economy is showing signs of steady, if modest, recovery. Positive growth is now taking place in Europe's three largest economies – Germany, Britain and France – while most of the smaller European economies are also growing. In addition, inflation remains subdued for the moment (at 2 per cent in the Eurozone), allowing room for further growth before the European Central Bank starts raising interest rates again.

And just to round off the good news, even the Japanese economy - which spent most of last year in recession - is now showing signs of having bottomed out. Having just recorded its first quarter of positive growth since plunging into recession early last year, the Japanese economy seems to be setting out on a cyclical upswing which, although sluggish, could last through to 2004 at least.



What is particularly encouraging is that the world's three largest centres of economic power are all recovering more or less simultaneously, which should reinforce the upward trend by promoting the exchange of goods and capital between them. Although global growth this year will probably be sluggish and financial markets are likely to remain volatile for a while yet (especially on the downside), the pace of economic growth is likely to pick up next year.

As mentioned earlier, the only potential danger that I can see at the moment is the possibility of a major political catastrophe that throws the world into turmoil once more. In this regard, potential danger points include the possibility of another terrorist attack on the US, the outbreak of war between India and Pakistan, a major upheaval in the Middle East and a US military attack on Iraq or Iran. Although I don't think any of the above is likely to materialise in the near future, the potential threat cannot be ruled out.

### **Implications for South Africa**

The implications of the above factors are all positive for South Africa, especially towards the latter part of this year and into next year.

Positive growth in the global economy will translate into higher commodity prices later this year, which is good news for South Africa's resources sector. Manufacturing should also surge next year as it meets the expanding demands of the domestic resources sector and, especially, the rising import demand from the developed economies. This in turn will fuel South Africa's services sector, including tourism. Even the threat of global political instability carries benefits for South Africa in that it leads to a rising gold price, which further promotes the country's exports.

Already South Africa has recorded growth rates of 2.5 per cent in the fourth quarter of last year and 2.2 per cent in the first quarter of this year, putting the economy on track for a modest recovery. Unfortunately, two factors are likely to ensure that, despite the positive impact of global growth, South Africa's recovery will remain modest this year.

### **Impediments to growth**

The first problem is the high inflation rate caused primarily by the collapse of the rand last year. Although the rand has recovered somewhat, it is still about 30 per cent weaker against a basket of currencies than it was this time last year. The threat of rising inflation seems to be unsettling Reserve Bank governor Tito Mboweni somewhat and the signs are that interest rates will rise by another one per cent in June (on top of two earlier increases), pushing the prime rate to 16 per cent. This must act as a brake on economic growth, particularly if Mboweni keeps interest rates high for some time yet, as seems likely.

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**The SA economy is set to grow as the global economy recovers.**

The second inhibiting factor for domestic economic growth is the shortage of skilled labour in South Africa. This shortage will intensify as growth accelerates, curbing the economy's potential. In this regard, it is unfortunate that the ANC made such a mess of the recently passed Immigration Bill. While one understands the government's political need to protect jobs for South Africans, that should be balanced against the need to promote economic growth. And since there is a shortage of indigenous skills in South Africa at the moment, there clearly is a need to allow foreign skills into the country. While the levy system that was originally proposed in the version of the Immigration Bill that was presented to parliament was not perfect, it was a lot better than the bureaucratic mess that was finally passed.

**A shortage of skilled labour could stifle growth.**

Under the new Bill the government (probably the department of trade and industry) will have to establish work permit quotas on an annual basis for all the various categories of skills in the country and then evaluate individuals who apply to fit those categories. Can you imagine how long these bureaucratic processes will take? But what worries me most about this policy is that it resembles closely the provisions of the notorious Job Reservation Act that various apartheid governments used to protect white skills. Not only did this pernicious piece of apartheid legislation not work in the long term, it also inhibited South Africa's economic growth for decades by restricting the supply of skilled labour. The new Immigration Bill is likely to have precisely the same effects.

Unfortunately, despite the positive developments outlined earlier, the overall likelihood is that at best South Africa will only experience modest economic growth this year and, what is worse, there will be no real job creation. In fact, it seems inevitable that job losses are likely to continue during the course of 2002 – despite the economic recovery. □

## NEPAD IN THE NEWS

Thabo Mbeki's 'brainchild', the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad), is in the news again. This time its backers are seeking support from business delegates attending the World Economic Forum meeting in Durban and then from the G8 group of world leaders.

In the past I have made my views on Nepad clear: it is too ambitious and vague a dream to have any real chance of success and, certainly, it is short on the concrete and practical detail that would be needed to help it succeed. Despite the positive public comments that Nepad continues to attract, nothing I have heard recently leads me to change this view.

For Nepad to have any real chance of success it will have to put in place at least the following:

- An effective mechanism to ensure that peer pressure can be applied to those African countries that do not adhere to Nepad's stated commitments to democracy, the rule of law, protection of human rights and an end to corruption. Despite having been around in one form or another for some years now, for some reason Nepad's backers have still not addressed this vital issue. Attempts by South Africa's political leadership to fudge this commitment by suggesting that an "African" interpretation of these terms may be applied simply will not wash with the developed world.
- Concrete proposals for economically viable projects that businesses can participate in. Again, despite having been talked about for years, no such projects seem to have been tabled yet.
- Ensure that the original objectives of Nepad – that it is a partnership process – are adhered to. There are clear signs, such as recent requests from Nepad's leadership for the developed countries to pour US\$64 billion annually into investment and aid into Africa, that Nepad is reverting to the old 'begging bowl' approach, but in a different guise.
- And, finally, do whatever is necessary to distance Nepad from Zimbabwe. One should not underestimate the extent to which Africa's ongoing tolerance of Mugabe's misdeeds continues to undermine Nepad. (Lybia's involvement in Nepad is also problematical.)

Given the diplomatic effort that president Mbeki has put into promoting Nepad globally (at great cost to South African taxpayers), it will be a pity if it fails. But unless the four points outlined above are addressed quickly, the best that we can probably expect from Nepad is that developed countries will shift some of their *existing* aid money into Nepad programmes when they finally materialise. While this may be good for appearances, it will not involve the injection of *new* money into Africa. □

## OPPOSITION IN TATTERS

When last I wrote about the bust-up of the Democratic Alliance (DA) in November last year (*The Innes Labour Brief*, volume 13 number 3) I indicated that the only long-term political winner would be the ANC. I wrote then that the New National Party (NNP) was heading for political oblivion as the ANC would use its newfound alliance with the NNP ultimately to win control of the Western Cape for itself. I also said that the DA would become weaker and faced "a dismal future". The end result of all this would inevitably mean "a weakening of the opposition".

Well, it didn't take very long.

The allegations by German fugitive Jurgen Harksen have done incalculable damage to the public image of the DA. Perhaps the one thing that the DA under Tony Leon's leadership had going for it until recently was that it seemed to be a party with integrity. Its remorseless attacks on the corruption, nepotism and lack of transparency within the ANC, which gave it some credibility among voters, could only succeed if the party itself was seen to be squeaky clean. And then along came Harksen's allegations against former finance MEC Leon Markowitz and former premier Gerald Morkel – and bang went the DA's clean image. And even if some of these allegations are subsequently disproved, the DA will still not easily recover from the pounding it has just received. Mud sticks.

However, the demise of the DA will not help to resurrect the NNP, though it may prolong its political decline a bit. Unfortunately for NNP leader Marthinus van Schalkwyk, the much-discussed cabinet post that president Mbeki was supposed to offer him in return for abandoning the DA never materialised and, following Peter Marais' fall from grace (again), van Schalkwyk has now assumed the premiership of the Western Cape. This effectively cuts him off from national politics, suggesting that the NNP knows it is no longer a national political force.

But the key question is whether the NNP can hold onto power in the Western Cape beyond the 2004 election. My view is that the ANC will use the alliance to win over NNP supporters between now and 2004 and that they will secure political control of the province in that election. That will leave the NNP without an effective power base, which will be another nail in its political coffin.

As I have argued before, the formation of the DA was a mistake. The strategists within the old Democratic Party (DP) were lured into an alliance that offered them short-term advantages, but would be disastrous over the longer term. Effectively, it cut them off from forging alliances with the black political parties that offered the only passport to building a mass base throughout the country.

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**The DA has suffered a major setback which will ultimately benefit the ANC.**

Now some of these black parties are desperately trying to find ways of working together and pooling their resources to become more effective in opposition. The PAC spent some time courting other ultra-leftwing parties such as Azapo and the Socialist Party of Azania but that didn't work, so now it is talking to Bantu Holomisa and the United Democratic Movement (UDM). However, Nelson Mandela is also talking to Holomisa, suggesting the UDM ally itself to the ANC. On the other hand, Mangosuthu Buthelezi and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) are getting increasingly irritated with their relationship with the ANC, so they may also be open to talks with other opposition parties.

All this fluidity basically reinforces the view that South Africa's black political opposition is currently virtually impotent. With about five per cent of the national vote between them, even if the UDM, PAC, Azapo and the Socialist Party of Azania were to get together, they would still command only a minuscule proportion of the popular vote. While the addition of the IFP would give them more muscle, the ideological differences between these five parties would be so big that it is difficult to imagine them agreeing on anything at all.



***The battle between the DA and NNP and the ineffectiveness of the Black opposition leaves the ANC gloating.***

So with the black political opposition looking increasingly ineffectual and the white and coloured parties (the DA and NNP) at each other's throats, is it any wonder that the ANC is gloating? Whatever political mistakes the ANC may make over HIV/AIDS, Zimbabwe, the arms deal or anything else, there is simply no political party in the country at the moment that is strong enough to challenge them effectively.

**South Africa may not  
be a one-party state,  
but it does not have an  
effective opposition.**

South Africa may not be a one-party state, but it certainly does not have an effective opposition.

The inevitable result of this is that the ANC is likely to become even more arrogant and authoritarian in its style of government as time passes. At the moment the only serious potential challenge to its leadership would have to come from within its own ranks, probably involving a break-away by Cosatu and perhaps the SACP. But such an eventuality is not even on the horizon yet. □

# SHARING IN PROFITS

In the last issue of *The Innes Labour Brief* (volume 13 number 5) we carried an article by Johann Maree and Shane Godfrey which examined a worker participation scheme at Sea Harvest ("Cutting costs and improving revenue"). One of the issues the authors raised in that article was whether or not the company's employees benefited financially from the scheme. Their conclusion was that, despite the existence of an employee share ownership scheme, workers did not in fact benefit financially from the participative scheme. In fact, they were worse off overall.

I recently came across a small business that is also structured along worker participation lines, but which seems to address the question of financial participation and remuneration rather more successfully.

The business is a tree-felling operation, which is owner-managed and currently employs five workers. Three years ago the employees, who received basic wages that were slightly above the industry norm, said that they wanted more money. The response of the owner-manager (I will call him Jim) was that he could not pay them more unless the business improved financially.

## Setting up the scheme

However, rather than leaving it there, Jim took it upon himself to devise a scheme that he hoped might provide a win-win solution for both his employees and himself. Basically, what he did first was to work out how much money he needed to make per week to cover his costs, including his salary, his employees wages, as well as all other fixed and running costs. He then offered his employees a 40 per cent share in all the profits earned over and above that, retaining 60 per cent of the profits for himself. In terms of the scheme the five employees would share their 40 per cent of the profits equally among themselves.

Jim then discussed the scheme with his employees, who agreed to it. The scheme guarantees the employees their basic weekly wage, so even if there is no work or it rains and they cannot work, they still receive their basic wage. Jim goes out and quotes for work and then shares the information with them, including how much he has quoted for the job and what the work entails. The employees then organise and supervise the implementation of the work on site themselves. The results have been spectacularly successful.

## Positive outcomes

On average, last year the profit-sharing bonus they received enabled Jim's

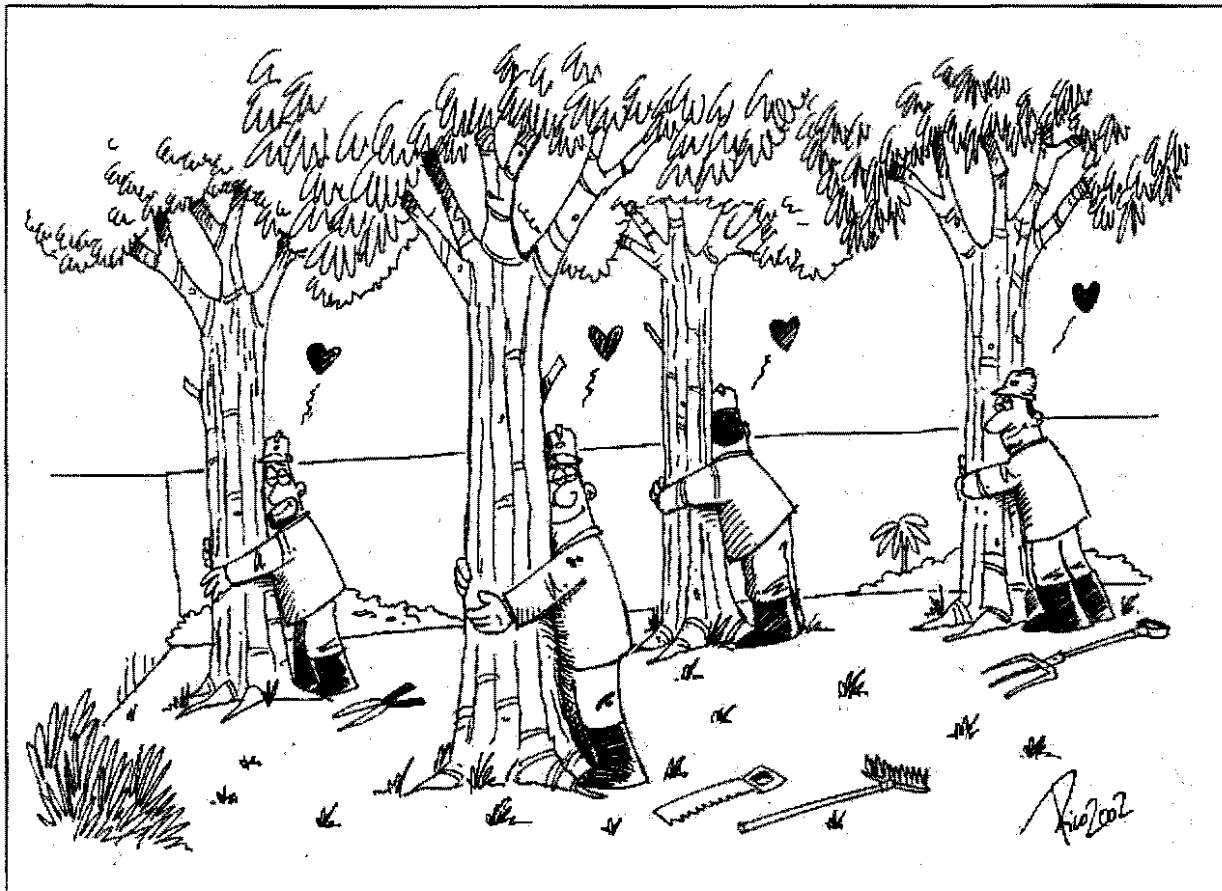
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**The profit-sharing scheme aims at a win-win solution for all parties.**

workers to double their weekly wages and, in good weeks, to treble them. Since the scheme has been in existence, there has never been a week in which the workers did not earn more than their basic wage. According to the workers, the scheme enables them to earn more money than they have ever earned before.

Clearly, the profit-sharing scheme has incentivised Jim's employees to improve their productivity. But how has this improvement been achieved?

According to Jim, the scheme has played a major role in improving the work ethic of his employees to the extent that the business now functions more as a team rather than being management driven. As mentioned earlier, the workers organise the work on site themselves and have developed a sense of ownership around their tasks, which includes taking responsibility for and pride in their work. (Jim describes how each worker regards the tree that he works on as being 'my tree'.)



***Workers take pride in their work and have developed a sense of ownership for 'their' trees.***

Team spirit is also high and includes Jim as part of the team. So if he under-quotes on a job by mistake or if a customer is particularly demanding, the rest of the team will work extra hard to compensate. And if one of the team is careless and damages equipment, such as a chain saw, the costs get deducted from the profit-sharing bonus. Thus Jim carries 60 per cent of the replacement cost and the employees share the remaining 40 per cent among themselves.

Since the scheme was introduced, punctuality and absenteeism have never been problems. In fact, team members often come to work when they are ill and are reluctant to go home when Jim suggests that they are too ill to work.

Jim's employees work a five-day, flexi-time week. They can go home early if a job has been completed, but understand that sometimes they need to work late if a job takes longer than expected. In general, though, they work fewer hours per week than their competitors' employees, who often work ten-hour days in return for the same basic wage that Jim's employees receive. Thus because of their higher productivity Jim's team usually work fewer hours than their competitors, and because of the profit-sharing bonus they receive more remuneration.

## Evaluation

The bold initiative outlined above seems to work very well both for Jim and for his employees. Through the profit-sharing scheme Jim has been able to grow his business and has been released from much of the tedious supervision that he had to deal with before the scheme was introduced, while his employees have been empowered in the work place and improved their earnings substantially.

Perhaps this case study offers lessons that other businesses, including larger ones, can benefit from. Although a small owner-managed business obviously functions under different conditions from larger ones, I see no reason why the principles applied in Jim's business cannot be applied within larger organisations as well. Such principles include the following:

- Agree a basis with employees for sharing the financial gains of the business over and above a particular target, based on their improved performance;
- Ensure that the process is perceived to be fair and transparent;
- Enable employees to participate in decision-making regarding the organisation of their work; and
- Ensure equal treatment of all members of the team.

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**The study provides  
lessons for larger  
businesses as well.**

And perhaps, most important of all, even in a large business, keep the scheme simple so that employees can, where possible, draw a connection between their improved performance in the workplace and the additional remuneration they receive. If it works in the example cited here, why should it not work elsewhere? □

### SEA HARVEST CASE STUDY – A COMMENT

In our previous edition we published a case study entitled "Cutting costs and increasing revenue: A case study in worker participation" by Johann Maree and Shane Godfrey of UCT..

In the case study reference was made to "InvoCom" as a structured approach to employee involvement and communication with the aim of involving employees in performance and productivity improvement. The research done at Sea Harvest indicated that the InvoComs hugely contributed to the increase in labour productivity. INVOCOM is a trademark of O.I.M. Africa (Pty) Ltd) - a fact that was unfortunately omitted in the article that was published. The O.I.M. Group is an International Business Development and Leadership consultancy - specialists, since 1974, in the changing of mind-sets to resolve conflict and to improve performance to achieve maximum success in all circumstances.

O.I.M. facilitated most of the process to resolve management / labour conflict, to improve labour relations and ultimately labour productivity at Sea Harvest. In the light of some of the conclusions of the research, O.I.M. would like to put on record that its clients are advised to implement methods such as gainsharing, to ensure that not only shareholders gain through productivity improvements, but that employees also "share in the fruits" of their effort. "Sharing in the fruits of success" is a vital element of the O.I.M. approach to sustainable productivity improvement and to ultimately contribute to broadly-based prosperity.

More information about O.I.M.'s holistic approach to productivity and performance improvement can be obtained from Tjaart Minnaar (Tel 083 675 0587 or e-mail [info@oimgroup.com](mailto:info@oimgroup.com)). □

# HIV/AIDS AND THE WORKPLACE

LINDSEY HENWOOD

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Until recently the impact of HIV and AIDS on the workplace was regarded primarily as a "public health problem" affecting mainly 'high-risk' professions which dealt with contaminated blood. However, at the World Economic Forum in 1997, South Africa's then president Nelson Mandela clearly discredited this notion, by declaring that "AIDS kills those on whom society relies to grow the crops, work in the mines and factories, run the schools and hospitals and govern nations and countries".

Since then a view has arisen which regards the workplace as "a microcosm of the national picture" (Arnott 1996) in that the social and economic implications of HIV/AIDS at company level will mirror those seen nationally. If this hypothesis is correct, then the repercussions for South African workplaces will be both vast and severe.

Recent research has shown that this assumption is already becoming a reality. Companies are currently faced with the daunting prospect that 20 to 30 per cent of their workforces could be HIV positive and that by 2010 almost one quarter (22, 5 per cent) of South Africa's entire workforce will be HIV positive. Current estimates reinforce this by suggesting that 30 per cent of employees in the mining industry, 20 per cent in the manufacturing industry and between 3 and 5 per cent of white-collar workers are already HIV positive.

The South African Business Council against AIDS was recently launched in an attempt to assist employers to respond to the disease and to develop an understanding of how to cope with this unprecedented threat. This illustrates the fact that employers are being "forced into the uncomfortable realisation that HIV/AIDS poses a strategic business challenge of critical importance". (Strugnell 2000)

These challenges lie in the obvious areas of increased absenteeism, as workers take time off due to ill health or to care for their families and to attend funerals; heightened recruitment and training costs due to more frequent staff turnover; possible loss of skilled workers; diminished productivity; and finally, a drain on employee benefits.

All of these factors are in one way or another measurable, and most big industries have

done the sombre calculations of the costs involved. Recent forecasts suggest that the net financial impact of these factors on the organisation will be a "reduction in profits of over 20 per cent in the coming ten years". (Strugnell 2000)

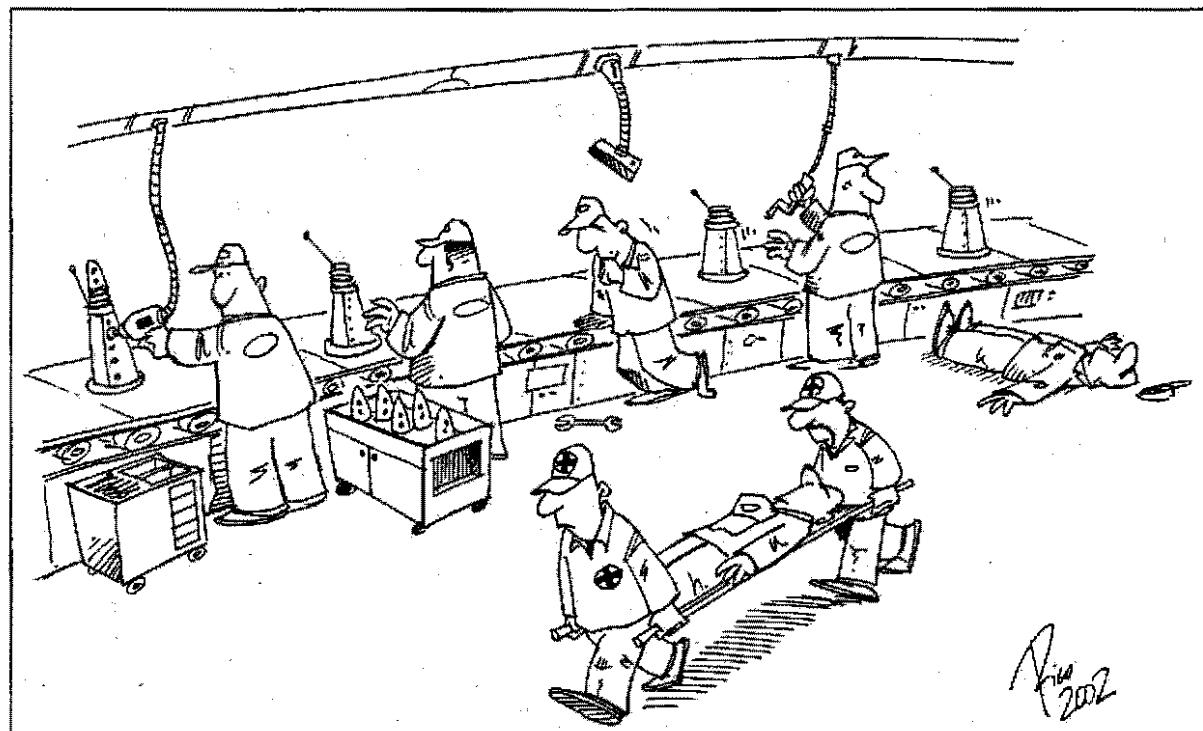
In the following sections we will examine some of the issues which pose significant challenges for South African workplaces.

## Productivity

Two of the most obvious factors that will impact negatively on productivity are increased absenteeism and turnover linked to HIV/AIDS, both of which represent serious costs for business.

The highest HIV infection rates in South Africa occur among people between the ages of 20 and 49. HIV/AIDS-related sickness and death among this section of the economically active population will more than likely impact negatively on productivity levels within the workplace and on the competitiveness of the South African economy as a whole. Businesses most at risk are those that are most vulnerable to intermittent absenteeism, such as mining companies.

HIV/AIDS also leads to an increase in staff turnover as infected employees eventually become too sick to carry on working and are forced to leave the organisation. Staff turnover represents a major threat to employers as it represents lost knowledge, skills and experience.



*Infected employees eventually become too sick to work.*

Research elsewhere in Africa has shown that high staff turnover, even among unskilled workers, can hamper productivity as adults who pass away could have built up an average of fifteen years working experience. (Bisseker 1997) For this reason, countries such as Malawi and Zimbabwe have been known to train more than one person at a time so as to ensure that at least one will be able to fulfil the requirements of that job.

Once workers leave the organisation, increased time and money is then needed to train and develop new recruits, which understandably leads to a reduction in productivity levels throughout the organisation.

The Department of Labour's Code of Good Practice on Key Aspects of HIV/AIDS and Employment stipulates that management should attempt to employ methods, such as job transfers, in an attempt to accommodate employees with AIDS. This provision is an attempt to allow employees to remain gainfully employed in a productive and comfortable manner for as long as possible. However, this approach has certain implications in that the scope of the job may not always allow for it and also there may well be cost implications for the employer.

Sadly, the underlying fact is that employees with AIDS will eventually become too ill to carry on functioning productively, and will therefore have to stop working completely.

### **Impact on skills**

Recent research conducted by ING Barings concluded that by the year 2010 South Africa's supply of skilled labour will be reduced by 21 per cent, and that the highly skilled labour force will diminish by 12 per cent. (Chothia 2000) In another study, the same group concluded that almost 9 per cent of the highly skilled labour force and about 19 per cent of skilled workers are expected to be HIV-positive by 2015. (Anderson 1999)

The sector most likely to be adversely affected is the mining industry followed closely by the transportation industry. Studies conducted show that by 2005 almost 27 per cent of all mineworkers, and about 22 per cent of all transport and storage workers will die of AIDS. (Bissiker 1997)

These findings have dramatic implications for business in that South Africa already suffers from a serious skills shortage. HIV/AIDS enhances this problem.

Other factors magnifying this problem are that South Africa has a more developed economy - and is therefore more dependent on skilled labour - than other countries within the Southern African region, whose skills base is extremely small. Therefore losses in skilled and professional staff could seriously hamper business operations in South Africa and cause economic growth to slow. (Whiteside and Sunter 2000)

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**Employees with AIDS  
will eventually have  
to stop working.**

Research has found that as the disease depletes the labour force, especially when the skilled labour force is affected, the potential for economic growth is reduced by 2,5 per cent every year.

Although some commentators argue that the likely effect of the epidemic on skill losses will not be immediately apparent owing to the incubation period of HIV and to the large pool of unemployed labour, either way AIDS deaths will ultimately occur in the working population. This represents a significant loss of investment in skills development along with remuneration and replacement costs for the organisation.

For this reason some companies are reconsidering their reliance on skilled labour by implementing strategies such as increased mechanisation or multiskilling, whereby understudies are trained in several areas of business.

### The urban and rural epidemic

Migration is the large-scale movement of people between countries and from rural areas to the cities and towns. The constant moving and mixing of populations is often related to employment or to the need to find work to survive.

**Migrant labour was the driving force for the spread of HIV/AIDS in South Africa.**

Many believe that the roots of South Africa's HIV/AIDS epidemic lie in the legacy of the migrant labour system, which brought together tens of thousands of men from countries where HIV prevalence was much greater than local rates. Labour, mainly comprising black males, migrated to the urban areas to work in white-owned factories and mines and to live in single-sex hostels where conditions were poor and often over-crowded.

Legislation prevented migrant labourers from bringing their families to live with them, which created a culture of urban and rural wives as well as prostitution. According to Whiteside and Sunter, "The pattern of men moving away from their families for long periods, living in crowded and alien conditions with little power over their lives, created the ideal situation for the spread of all sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)". During this time health services were limited, which meant many diseases and especially STDs went untreated.

The results of the first large-scale epidemiological study into HIV prevalence in South Africa confirm that migrant labour acted as the driving force for the HIV epidemic by multiplying a health problem that thrived on social disruption (as it did for the tuberculosis epidemic, which is currently amongst the highest in the world). (London et al 1999)

It is of particular concern that migrant labour remains a feature of formal sector employment and that nearly half the workforce of South Africa's gold mines comes from the neighbouring countries of Lesotho, Botswana and Mozambique. (UNDP 1998)

As a result of the migrant labour system, there does not appear to be much difference in the impact the epidemic has across urban and rural areas in South Africa - which is in stark contrast to certain North African countries where rural areas generally have a lower prevalence rate than urban areas. (Whiteside and Sunter 2000) Undoubtedly, the specific feature of migrant labour has enhanced the spread of HIV throughout the country.

Good transport infrastructure in South Africa has also played a role in spreading the disease. Mark Heywood argues that an improvement in communications and trade has created additional vulnerability to HIV infection among many workers and their families. A classic example of this is the construction of new roads, such as the "Maputo corridor", which will soon make it possible for goods to be carried by truck from Namibia on the west coast to Maputo on the east coast. (Heywood 2000)

In summary, HIV and migration do influence one another in that migration makes it harder to combat HIV transmission. Migrants are often alone and far from their families, which places them in a position where they are more likely to sell sex or pay for it, either as a form of income or for pleasure.

### **The role of workplace policies and programmes**

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#### **Business must play a leadership role in the fight against AIDS.**

For many, the uncertainty raised by the debate about whether HIV causes AIDS is an immense setback in the fight against AIDS. President Mbeki's intervention in this debate has created a gap which business needs to fill by exercising a leadership role.

Part of businesses' leadership role is to develop and implement creative and holistic policies and programmes which address the needs of all stakeholders, so that the notion of HIV and AIDS can be incorporated into all aspects of organisational life. (Horner-Long and Ortlepp 1996)

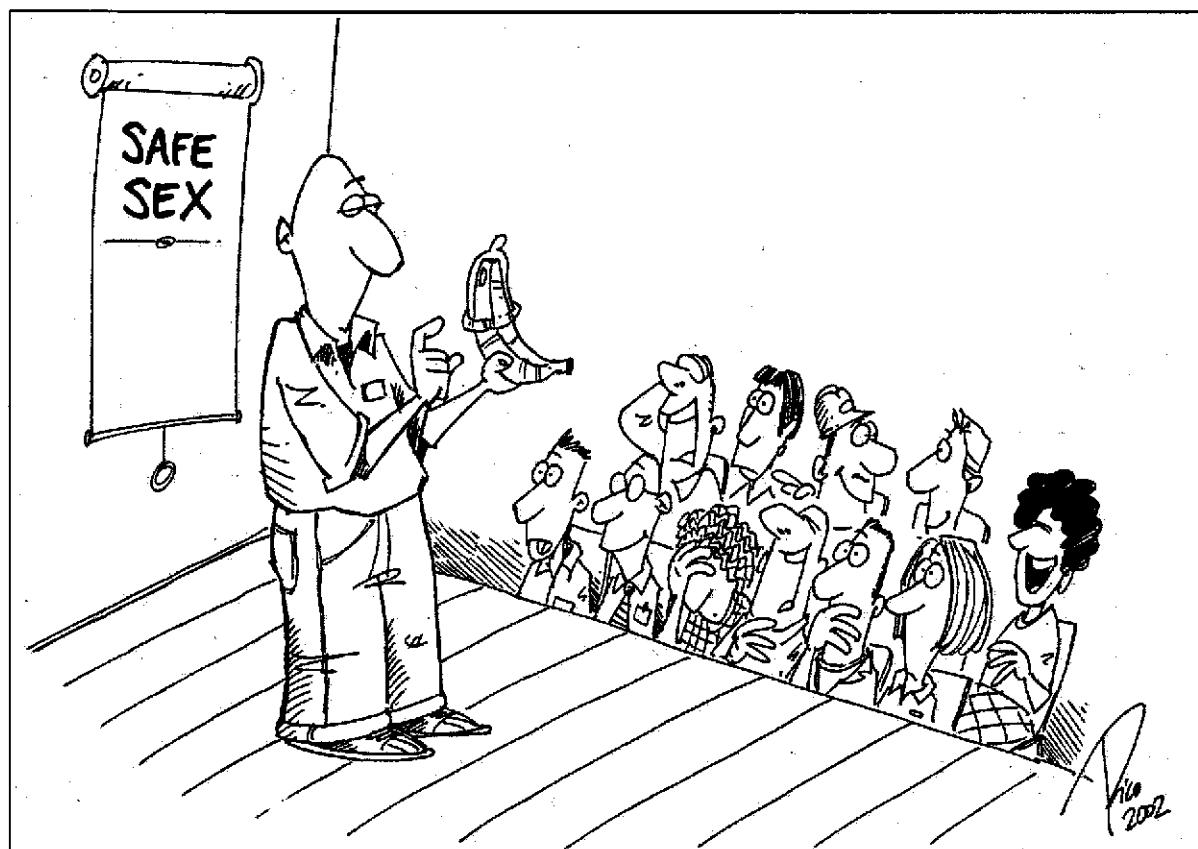
The "Code of Good Practice on Key Aspects of HIV/AIDS and Employment" was recently appended to the Employment Equity Act. The Code's primary objective is to provide implementation guidelines for employers and employees so as to ensure that those employees with HIV or AIDS are not unfairly discriminated against. These provisions encompass:

- The promotion of a non-discriminatory work environment. No employee or job applicant may be unfairly discriminated against on the basis of his or her HIV status. This provision is extended to include discrimination regarding the allocation of employee benefits, remuneration, and training and performance evaluations.
- The prohibition of HIV testing and disclosure of HIV status. Testing may only occur if the Labour Court authorises it.
- Provisions to deal with dismissals relating to HIV status.

The Code has a secondary objective of providing guidelines on the management of HIV/AIDS in the workplace. These guidelines include:

- The employer's duty to provide a safe working environment. This encompasses minimising the risk of occupational exposure and providing training initiatives.
- The introduction of measures to prevent the spread of HIV in the workplace.
- The procedures to manage occupationally acquired HIV and the compensation thereof (as laid out in the *Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Disease Act*).
- The development of strategies to diminish the impact of HIV/AIDS on the workplace.
- Methods of assisting those with HIV/AIDS so that they may continue to work productively and comfortably for as long as possible.

This Code provides a framework within which employers can develop and build their own AIDS policies to meet the specific needs of their particular workforces. It should be utilised as a foundation upon which their own ideas and needs should be constructed.



**HIV/AIDS education should include teaching safe sex.**

In this regard, a company's policy needs to outline the employer's position on providing HIV/AIDS education that could be used to reduce the stigma surrounding the epidemic in the workplace. This could include programmes that encompass the teaching of safe sex and the benefits of mutually faithful relationships, which in turn could help to reduce the number of new HIV infections. However, such programmes should only be introduced into an atmosphere of trust. Also of importance is the fact that organisations need to ensure that their employees understand and are knowledgeable about HIV and AIDS. Only when the workforce is fully 'AIDS literate' will people begin to "understand the rationale behind company policy, the provisions of the legislation and the projections for the future of the business and the country". (Crewe 2000) This in turn will significantly reduce the potential for labour disputes and unrest about AIDS.

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### **HIV/AIDS programmes are an essential part of running the business**

Once HIV/AIDS policies and programmes have been drafted, it is vitally important that they are viewed as an essential part of the running of the business. By integrating them into the organisation's strategy, they will translate into a competitive advantage as they will assist with managing the epidemic and in mitigating some of its negative consequences in the business.

Although such policies and programmes may represent a short-term cost for the organisation, in the long run they will be cost effective. "Failure to develop a timely and integrated response to AIDS could not only damage company performance but result in workplace conflict and even costly lawsuits". (Bisseker 1997)

Furthermore, business will also need to address issues that are not directly referred to within the Code, such as increased work disruption, diminishing employee morale and increasing absenteeism.

Problems can arise if employers believe that the existence of a good AIDS policy will automatically result in a good intervention. But as Mary Crewe argues, "A good AIDS policy is the hallmark of many businesses and institutions, but it in itself does not mean that anything happens apart from generating a warm feeling of satisfaction in the boardroom". An example of this is the fact that South Africa had an excellent national AIDS plan in existence when the first democratic government took office in 1994 and yet the country still has one of the fastest growing epidemics in the world. This clearly illustrates the point that an excellent HIV/AIDS policy is meaningless unless there is an excellent programme to implement it.

### **The role of trade unions**

As trade unions play such an influential role in the workplace, it is necessary to examine the role that they are currently playing in terms of HIV and AIDS.

The appearance of HIV/AIDS has obliged trade unions to respond on behalf of their members and in many cases they have played a positive role in fighting the disease, including co-operating with management. In the mining industry, unions have formed joint AIDS committees with management and, on the whole, are helpful and cooperative partners in the workplace.

Trade unions have also made significant progress in defining their roles and in commencing implementation of the HIV/AIDS and STD Strategic Plan for South Africa 2000-2005.

In many instances trade unions have taken on the role of educating employees about their rights and protecting them from discrimination within the workplace. However, many argue that these strategies have been spontaneous in nature, almost like a grassroots response to government and employers' actions, and that unions have not done as much in this sphere as they could or should have done.

Also problematical is the perception that presently HIV/AIDS does not seem to feature as an issue of great importance in union activities and the belief that unions regard the AIDS problem as just another issue to be bargained over. (Alfred 2001)

An extreme view held by some employers is that trade unions may be restricting workplace progress regarding the epidemic by their firm stance on issues such as voluntary testing and disclosure of HIV status. Many employers feel that identifying employees with HIV will enable them to develop and implement interventions to curb the further spread of the virus in the workplace. By opposing such identification, unions might be hampering workplace progress.

Clearly, South African trade unions have the potential to play an indispensable role in informing and educating employees about HIV and AIDS in the workplace. □

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# INDUSTRIAL ACTION SURVEY

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## **Summary of 2000**

A recent strike report by NMG-Levy Consultants and Actuaries showed that the number of man days lost to strikes rose from 500 000 in 2000 to 1.25 million in 2001. However, both these figures are still well below the 3.1 million in 1999 and the 2.3 million in 1998. The report also said that the sectors worst affected by strikes in 2001 were the automotive and metal manufacturing sectors. The most active unions were the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) and the National Union of Mineworkers (Num), both of whom are affiliates of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu).

## **Forecasts for this year: Shifting strike patterns**

Labour analysts, economists and trade unions have warned that employers should brace themselves for more industrial action during 2002 as retrenchments loom amid the subdued economic situation and as privatisation initiatives strengthen.

In the past, man days lost due to strike action have mainly been triggered by wage issues, but with new labour laws about to be promulgated, strike action is likely to be triggered by other issues as well.

Amendments to the Labour Relations Act (LRA), in particular section 189 which deals with labour gaining the right to strike against retrenchments, might see the number of man days lost increase significantly in the public sector if government presses ahead with its restructuring proposals. Government's plans to continue with the privatisation of state assets may also fuel more protests, such as those seen last year.

Strike action over wage disputes in the private sector is likely to be limited this year because of the signing of three-to five-year wage agreements between trade unions and employers last year. However, disputes may occur where these agreements are subject to union demands for re-negotiation in response to the current high inflation rate.

A second amendment to the LRA will give temporary workers the same rights as permanent workers, which means that they will also have the right to strike. This might in turn cause industrial action to escalate this year.

### **Amendments to the Labour Relations Act: Employees faced with retrenchment may go on strike**

Workers threatened with retrenchment, in companies employing more than 50 workers, have been given the right to call a protected strike in terms of the amendments to the Labour Relations Act (LRA) passed by Parliament in March.

In terms of the 1995 Act, strikes over retrenchments were effectively outlawed because all dismissal disputes had to be adjudicated by either arbitration or the Labour Court.

The new amendments compel employers to give 30 days notice of retrenchments to those employees with more than one year of service. The amendments also give workers employed by another firm not embarking on retrenchments the right to engage in a secondary strike. This may be a setback for the privatisation process as it could lead to a wave of sympathy strike actions.

Furthermore, unions representing the majority of the employees being consulted about the retrenchments may insist on a facilitator from the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) to become involved. As a result, employers would have to wait 60 days after giving written notice of the proposed retrenchment before giving notice of termination.

Patrick Craven, Cosatu's spokesperson, described the amendments as a major victory for workers. This view was echoed by Nigel Woodroffe from the law firm Shepstone and Wylie who stated that "the concept of the right to strike over a retrenchment dispute flies against all our labour jurisprudence and is a fundamental shift in thinking by the drafters".

### **Case Study 1 – Strike over medical aid**

Close to 1 000 workers affiliated to the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) downed tools at the Rustenburg Base Metal refinery, a wholly owned subsidiary of Anglo American Platinum (Angloplat), in protest against the proposed introduction of a new medical aid scheme.

Management of the world's largest platinum producer intended to transfer employees from the current *Good Hope Medical Aid Scheme* and to implement the new *Anglo Platinum (Amplats) Health Scheme* by the first of April. However, both Numsa and Num (the National Union of

Mineworkers) strongly opposed this move, saying that workers would strike until a negotiated settlement was reached.

An Angloplat spokesman said the company was participating in ongoing negotiations with the unions, and was "baffled" by their decision to embark upon an unprotected and illegal strike. He then went on to state that management firmly believed that employees were in a better position financially as a result of the introduction of the new medical aid scheme.

However, workers were angry that the company had unilaterally introduced the new medical aid scheme without consultation, and felt that the new scheme was less favourable, as it offers limited benefits. Some of the limitations of the new scheme include:

- The majority of the scheme's white medical doctors do not reside where the workers are staying.
- The new scheme does not take cognisance of geographical areas of workers.
- The scheme does not cover the worker's parents.

The company subsequently applied for an urgent court interdict in an attempt to avert the looming strike. Shortly after this, Numsa declared a formal dispute and the unions served the company with notices to strike, which they felt would give the company time to reciprocate before a legal strike was initiated.

Both Numsa and Num then met with management in an attempt to resolve the medical aid dispute that had led to an illegal strike the previous week. Num's spokesperson, Abraham Yende, felt confident that the unions had followed the correct legal procedure, and stated that they could now go on a legal strike if talks with management failed.

Unfortunately, the talks were unsuccessful and about 300 Numsa and Num workers downed tools for the second time in two weeks.

Management at Rustenburg Base Metal refinery indicated that they still regarded the strike as illegal, and suggested that workers return to work while all parties go for mediation. However, both unions rejected the idea, saying that the only thing that would persuade its members to go back to work was a return to the *Good Hope Medical Aid Scheme* and a promise of negotiations with management.

The company applied for another court interdict against the striking workers, but the high-court judge said he could not rule until he had heard from the unions.

While waiting for the outcome of the court hearing, Numsa announced that the strike would spread to Anglo Platinum's precious metal refinery, with workers there embarking on a sympathy strike. The union's spokesperson, Dumisa Ntuli went on to assert that the mediation process announced by the company was a waste of time and that workers were determined to bring production to a standstill. However, Angloplat spokesperson, Mike Mtakati, denied this arguing that the company's

operations had not been affected and that their production output was still normal.

Soon after this, a ruling by the Johannesburg labour court put an end to the two-week strike. The court ordered Angloplat to allow workers to return to *Good Hope*, the company's former externally run medical aid scheme. Workers returned to work, but according to Num, the dispute is far from over.

The union decided not to oppose the interdict, but to rather start legal preparations for broader industrial action over medical aid benefits to take place later at all Angloplat operations in the Rustenburg area.

## **Case study 2 – Dispute over retirement fund at Nissan**

About 3000 workers at Nissan's Rosslyn plant embarked on a wildcat strike over the distribution of a massive R 24.5 million surplus in three of the company's retirement funds.

In response to the strike, the motor manufacturer successfully applied to the Labour Court for an urgent interim interdict.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) made it clear that the decision to embark on the strike was taken by the workers at the plant, and not by the union.

During 2000, an agreement was reached between Nissan South Africa and Numsa, which clearly stated that the company would contribute an additional R12 million from its share of the surplus to current employees belonging to the fund. This transaction was expected to add value to the fund by providing better benefits in terms of employee retirements, retrenchments and dismissals.

However, the dispute arose when employees insisted on obtaining the R12 million from the fund immediately.

Numsa met with the employees in an attempt to explain the ramifications of continuing with an illegal and unprotected strike. Following these talks, all the striking workers subsequently returned to work, although they still maintain that the dispute over funds in the company's retirement fund is far from over.

## **Case Study 3 – Nationwide strike by Chubb guards**

More than 400 guards at Chubb Protective Services in Boksburg joined their colleagues in a nationwide strike – claiming that their company was exploiting them. The dispute centered on wage issues, but the security

personnel also claimed that the Company does not offer any form of advancement for black workers.

The recent merger of Chubb and BBR security further compounds the dispute, as workers feel that the merger has soured working relationships and has brought about harassment, victimisation, racism and unfair dismissals of employees.

According to the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (Satawu), more than 1 500 of its members participated in the countrywide strike, which resulted in long customer queues in banks in and around central Johannesburg.

The strike was also marred by incidents of intimidation, violence and damage to property, forcing Chubb Protective Services to seek an interdict against the union.

- Soon after the interdict was awarded to the company, Chubb Protective Services and Satawu reached an agreement, which put an end to the week-long strike and security workers' grievances about the company's pay cycle. □

# SUMMARY OF RECENT STRIKES

**1/2/02**

## Shares fall as Northam strike knocks profit

- Shares in Northam Platinum fell by more than 6 per cent after the empowerment mining group said (at the release of its interim results) that a strike at its mines had cost it R180 million.
- Anglo Platinum (Angloplat) and Myelaphanda (Tokyo Sexwale's company) jointly hold 45 per cent of Northam, the smallest of the country's listed platinum producers.
- The 5-week long strike brought operations to a standstill and cost the mine employees R20 million in lost wages. Half yearly profits fell by 44 per cent.

**8/1/02**

## Dispute threatens urban services

- Disruption in municipal services will occur if an impasse between the city of Johannesburg council and its employees is not resolved.
- The row has been simmering for months and centres on a disagreement over the pension fund.
- The city of Johannesburg council is determined to move all employees onto a fund, known as the *Jo'burg Retirement Fund*. However, the South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) is not at all happy with the proposed move as it will mean "a considerable loss of benefits for members" (Dale Forbes, collective bargaining officer for Samwu).
- Areas of principle loss include the loss of a 13<sup>th</sup> cheque for pensioners; greater risk for members, as benefits would not be guaranteed by the fund; and scrapping of the right of members to buy additional pensionable years.
- Acting city manager Roland Hunter said that there are many reasons why the city needed to rationalise the pension fund issue.

**18/1/02**

**Mineworkers Union Solidarity (MWU) declares a dispute with Iscor over "unfair dismissals" at Vanderbijlpark mill**

→ The MWU claims that the steel producer unfairly dismissed 1 100 workers in pursuit of greater profits. Dirk Herman, the MWU Solidarity spokesman, stated that the company is retrenching staff in order to "improve profits".

**22/2/02**

**Privatise and we strike: Samwu (Cape Town)**

→ Samwu will consider mass action if the unity executive committee presses ahead with plans to privatise some essential services. □

# THE DUNCAN INNES REVIEW

## THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY BEGINS

At last there seems to be good news on the economic front, both globally and domestically. It now seems virtually certain that a global economic recovery has commenced. What is particularly encouraging is that the USA, Europe and even Japan are all recovering more or less simultaneously, which should reinforce the upward trend. Although global growth this year will probably be sluggish and financial markets are likely to remain volatile for a while yet, the pace of economic growth is likely to pick up next year. My only concern is that a politically-inspired flare-up somewhere could send world economies into a tailspin again.

While a global economic recovery is positive for South Africa, two factors are likely to ensure that South Africa's recovery will remain modest this year. They are the prospects of higher interest rates and, further down the line, bottle-necks caused by the shortage of skilled labour in South Africa, a problem which the new Immigration Bill fails to address adequately.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) has recently received positive media comment as its backers seek support from international business and political leaders. However, my own view is that Nepad is too ambitious and vague to have any real chance of success and, certainly, it is short on the concrete and practical detail that would be needed to help it succeed.

On the political front, the recent allegations by German fugitive Jurgen Harksen that he gave money to the Democratic Alliance (DA) and certain of its leaders have done incalculable damage to the public image of the DA. However, the demise of the DA will not help to resurrect the NNP. The ANC clearly intends to use its new alliance with the NNP to secure political control of the Western Cape, which would leave the NNP without an effective power base in the country. Meanwhile, some black opposition parties are desperately trying to find ways of working together to become more effective in opposition. However, with only about five per cent of the national vote between them, even if the UDM, PAC, Azapo and the Socialist Party of Azania were to get together, they would still command only a minuscule proportion of the popular vote. So with the black political opposition looking increasingly ineffectual and the DA and NNP at each other's throats, is it any wonder that the ANC is gloating? South Africa may not be a one-party state, but it certainly does not have an effective opposition.

Finally, in the last issue of *The Innes Labour Brief* we carried an article which examined a worker participation scheme at Sea Harvest. The article concluded that, despite the existence of an employee share scheme in the company, workers did not benefit financially from the participative scheme. I recently came across a small business that is also structured along worker participation lines, but which seems to address the question of financial participation and remuneration rather more successfully through a profit-sharing scheme for its employees. In this case, the owner-manager has been able to grow his business and has been released from much of the tedious supervision that he had to deal with before the scheme was introduced, while his employees have been empowered in the work place and improved their earnings substantially. Perhaps this case study offers lessons that other businesses, including larger ones, can benefit from. □

# HIV/AIDS AND THE WORKPLACE

**Lindsey Henwood**

The workplace is beginning to mirror the social and economic manifestations of HIV/AIDS at a national level. Companies are increasingly being confronted by the frightening reality that the epidemic is rife among their employees and that this is producing a host of managerial challenges.

Increased absenteeism, due to increasing sick leave or leave to care for family and to attend funerals, along with sharp increases in staff turnover, negatively impact on productivity, which in turn, has detrimental implications for a company's performance and hence profitability levels.

South Africa's pool of skilled labour will be further eroded as the epidemic knows no boundaries and will affect both the skilled and the unskilled population. Employers will be forced to consider the viability of increasing the size of their workforce, as has occurred in other African countries, in an attempt to compensate for the growing numbers of deaths. Other strategies might include multiskilling or a move away from manual labour.

Migrant labour plays a huge role in the spread of the HIV virus. The continuation of migrant labour in various forms poses major challenges in combating the disease in South Africa while, ironically, South Africa's well developed transport infrastructure also facilitates the spread of the disease.

Instead of sitting back and allowing HIV/AIDS to wreak its destruction on the workplace, companies need to fight back with proactive and holistic workplace policies and programmes. In this regard, the "Code of Good Practice on Key Aspects of HIV/AIDS and Employment" provides a useful framework for developing company-specific strategies to combat the disease.

Trade unions should also be included in the battle and should be encouraged to play an instrumental and positive role in the workplace, especially in collaboration with management. □