CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Moral education has always been a perennial aim of education. The function of schools, it was believed, was not only to make people smart but also to make them good. However, with industrialization, the moral aim of education receded to the background as the demands of capitalist markets centered mainly around the provision of skilled manpower, culturally ready to integrate into labour markets.

The return of moral education to the limelight is attributable to the fact that modern societies increasingly have to deal with disturbing trends both within schools, and in the wider society. Mounting discipline problems culminating in violent outbursts, alarming rates of teenage pregnancy and drug abuse are phenomena often explained by the breakdown of the family or are generally situated in the aftermath of industrialization. Many have also located the dysfunction of the school as one contributing to the degeneration of social mores. Prime among these dysfunctions is the fact that our schools are not adequately providing for one important aspect of child and adolescent development, that is, moral education.

Those who believe that we need to provide for some form of moral education in our curriculum are not a homogeneous group. Amongst them we find, at one extreme, the traditionalist who argues that we should return to the good old ways of teaching values through religious literature or some other relevant material of universal significance. At the other extreme, some argue that, rather than teach values, adults have to model

desirable behaviour and the school's hidden curriculum must be used to help children become morally autonomous adults.

In Mauritius, moral education has, so far, been the concern of confessional schools (those with religious denominations). However, it is undeniable that the interethnic conflicts of February 1999 (Matadeen Report:1999) acted as a catalyst in propelling character education into the limelight by emphasising the need of some form of moral education, an indispensable ingredient, for peaceful cohabitation in a multicultural society. Our renewed interest in character education forms part of a wider educational and political agenda aimed, not only, at revamping our system of education but also at giving a new impulse to a quasi non-existent social policy. The goodwill of the government, no doubt fuelled by the political urgency of a dormant social crisis, has manifested itself through the inclusion of Living Values Programmes in the school curriculum and in many of the teacher training programmes at the Mauritius Institute of Education.

Implicit in these policies is the assumption that all the stakeholders within the school are ready and willing to assume the roles that others are carving out for them. Despite the general agreement that schools are responsible to a certain extent for character education, there seems to be a general vagueness as to what this responsibility consists of and how schools can conceive and implement such a programme formally and informally in a multicultural context. No study has so far been undertaken to investigate the perceptions of stakeholders about moral education in Mauritian secondary schools. The aim of this present study is to fill this gap by describing and developing an understanding of the perceptions of some stakeholders in secondary education about moral education in the context of Mauritius.

This study will provide the groundwork which may assist policy decision makers to take into account the needs and expectations of different stakeholders in relation to moral education in our schools.

1.2 OVERVIEW OF OUR GLOBAL CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

While most social theorists (Burbules and Torres 2000:5) agree that we are living in an age of rapid scientific and technological change, they also do not deny that such changes have varying impacts on different social groups within the same society and across different societies. The existing literature about post industrial and post modern societies (Beck 1995: 127-136) and its effects on social groups and families is growing rapidly in view of the all pervasive effects of globalisation. At the economic level, changing trade patterns and world order have compelled all societies to readjust structurally. The free flow of capital and its rising value as compared to labour has meant increasing inequity across most societies with resultant outbreaks in violence and conflicts. Changes in patterns of production, distribution and consumption worldwide together with the possibilities offered by information and communication technology have meant the adoption of radically new work culture that has impacted on the family.

Changing relations of production have produced in time changing philosophies and outlooks which have permeated all spheres of life - both public and private. In the public sphere, discourse came to be centered on the concept of individual merit and rights with the attendant connotations of individual freedom, which is at the basis of most democratic societies. From the agrarian societies maintained by the collectivity, the building block of post-industrial societies is the person and not the community. Such a transformation meant a radically different political agenda, more

3

sympathetic to the capitalist set up. While the neomarxists have highlighted the sinister agenda of industrialized countries in affirming the supremacy of the capitalist economic system as the only viable economic system and legitimizing the cultural dominance of the West, one cannot ignore the benefits conferred by industrialization in terms of health improvements and better life expectancy. However, as Mac Laren (1995:3) argues the benefits of progress are confined to a few and the cost of such progress is borne by too many.

Economic compulsions represent the driving force of modern societies, to which everything else becomes subservient. Mac Laren (1995:1) opens the discussion in his book "Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture" with this description of postmodern societies:

> *The prevailing referents around which the notion of public citizenry is currently constructed have been steered in the ominous direction of the social logic of production and consumption.*

Maintaining high rates of economic growth is the priority of all industrialized countries - a priority which looks formidable since Pareto efficiency has already been reached making it difficult to push productivity beyond the present levels. As a result people generally have to work harder to keep up with the demands of the workplace.

Increasing dissatisfaction with the present economic set up, disillusionment caused by the crumbling of the welfare state, the disintegration of the family and mounting social unrest in many parts of the world, disruptions in climatic conditions and a general deterioration of the environment, have caused many people to question this very model of development and

governance. The democratic ideal, with its emphasis on individual-"centredness", is frequently scrutinized critically and reformulated to suit the changes and requirements of contemporary societies. There tends to be general agreement among economists themselves, that, together with economic indicators, we need to consider those related to the well being of people and the quality of life. Many political leaders have crafted their campaign around this growing disillusionment and are using slogans that use catch words like family values and democratic values.

The dismal picture projected by the postmodern societies is one where people and their governments are trying to wrestle with often mutually exclusive ends. The conflicts arise at three different levels:

(i)   the need to reconcile dwindling resources with rising expectations
(ii) the need to have a common vision while maintaining one's distinct identity
(iii) the need to consider individual needs in the face of societal requirements.

While many would tend to view these problems as one of resource management, my contention is the core of those conflicts is essentially a moral and philosophical issue related to what we think is right for society and should be done and what kind of life one should lead. But modern societies do not have the moral resources to recognize and analyse the ethical implications of those decisions.

The usual approach to tackling such a variety of social problems arising out of one or more of the conflicts mentioned above, has been piecemeal and has remained within predefined economic parameters. Economic solutions are brought to bear on problems which are non economic in

nature. Indeed economic problems related to the use and distribution of scarce resources stem essentially from a general philosophical and moral position. Decisions are made on the basis of what people value individually and not on what the society desires. This situation has produced highly undesirable outcomes at the level of the family, community and society at large.

Critics (MacLaren 1995:1-87) have identified many reasons for the failure of modern society to respond to the aspirations of people. Chief among these is the growing insensitivity of people towards the needs of others (Noddings 1995: 365), an outcome of our rapidly dehumanizing society. The issue now, however, is to identify the ways in which perspective and outlook can be influenced to embrace a more inclusive interpretation of caring, that, is caring for others.

1.3 CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS

Education appears to be the most appropriate vehicle to help change and build a worldview that is more in line with the aspirations of people in the context of globalisation with its market compulsions, increased cultural contact and accelerated pace of technological change. The school, as the chief agent of social transmission, has a key role to play in perspective building, in equipping the child with the necessary intellectual, emotional, social and moral resources to engage in a common process of valuation and decision taking in a multicultural context (Leming 1994:122-130).

The relationship between education and society is multi–levelled and multifaceted. If education is understood to be the process by which we prepare children to enter adult life and to shoulder the responsibilities that

it entails, then this process becomes one of the core pre-occupations of any society as it sets down the conditions of its survival and success. While it is true that many societies have been very successful in preparing individuals to be professionally, economically and technologically competent to face the increasingly competitive conditions prevalent in industrialized societies, it is nevertheless equally true that most education systems have tended to limit themselves to a very narrow definition of what education is purported to achieve. There are many reasons to explain why emphasis has for long been increasingly laid on the utilitarian aspects of education.

Historically, industrialization and the need for mass literacy and numeracy, has meant that schools, the official and formal institutions responsible, to a large extent, for the educative role, have been confronted with the need to accommodate more students and to equip them, in the shortest time possible, of all the skills required to become functional in a society of mass production and mass consumption. To facilitate their tasks and to make sure that basic requirements are met, national curricula have been elaborated and national examinations established to validate and standardize the work of schools. The efficiency of schools as institutions has been judged on the basis of their ability to reach the targets set out in the national curriculum, and, their excellence assessed in terms of the pass rate at the level of national examinations. As Jarrett (1991:1) describes:

> *Our culture in this "age of information" is dominated by the "input/output" image. Put meat into the machine, it then makes certain noises and puts out sausages. Put money into the bank and your output is more money. Put abysmally ignorant five year olds into schools and in time retrieve the 18 year olds*

full of knowledge. Ah, the critics carp, but it is not so, the output is disappointing…

It is not surprising therefore that the type of education provided by the school became largely and simply a means of reaching the standards, a far cry from the traditional concept of education that considers the holistic development of the individual. Particularly, here, reference is made to the development of social and emotional skills that are the concomitants of a happy life.

Additionally, the economic dictates of industrialized societies based on the notion of maximizing the use of resources and minimizing costs were also applied to the field of education. There emerged the need to quantify the gains from education, a difficult exercise, taking into account the fact that, the benefits of education accrue to both individual and society and are spread over the individual's lifetime. While economists devised various ways to quantify the benefits of education, many of the benefits derived from education, especially those related to emotional and social skills, and other positive dispositions and habits, are still not directly measurable and quantifiable and have thus acquired the status, over time, of being of secondary relevance to all stakeholders in education.

Changes in general philosophy of life and perceptions of success have also had an impact on education. With the adoption of a more materialist philosophy of life and a more monetary definition of success by the first world countries and an aspiration towards the same by the rest of the world (at least the decision makers in the rest of the world), education came to be perceived only as a means to an end and not an end in itself. With the commodification of knowledge and education moving from the sphere of merit to private good, it was not long before schools were

perceived and used as agencies almost totally devoted to the preparation of individuals for entry in the labour market. It is true that emotional and social skills are to some extent developed by the schools but only so far as they enhance and help individuals to integrate and better function in the workplace.

The result of all this has been as Meyer (2001), using Tonnies (1955) distinction between two types of social relationship namely Gemeinshaft (community) and Gesellshaft (association), argues that social arrangements in postmodern societies are more of the second type. She explains:

> *The basis of Gesellshaft association is contractual agreement, whether written or unwritten. People's orientation to one another is not inspired by mutual care, as in gemeinshaft relations, but negociated around shared norms of measurable value, typically in terms of labour costs incurred in producing the goods or services to others.*

Owing to increasing 'marketisation' and commodification of the various aspects of social and private life, the school has tended to take more of the Gesellshaft role rather than the Gemeinshaft one, though, different types of schools will have a social structure embodying relatively different degrees of either. Despite the fact that there has been no empirical research into the nature of social and educational dynamics in schools (Klingele 1994:197-199), the waves of educational reforms that have swept the educational landscape have focused primarily on human resource development preparing children for social relations of the Gesellshaft nature.

Additionally, with multiculturalism, states needed to redefine their educational ideology free from the apparently unnecessary frills of religious or value education, or anything that may be resisted by parents and politicians as a form of indoctrination. Secularisation of public education also led to a change in the status of teachers who are now regarded as technicians whose intervention is confined mainly to the cognitive arena. As Lickona (1991:9) states:

> *Teachers and schools were characterized as places where children were shaped according to certain values and needs of the immediate society. Many teachers responded to this negative charge of "value inculcation" and indoctrination by keeping their moral views and values to themselves. As suggested earlier, they retreated to become technicians passing on information and skills, or so it seemed.*

Noddings (1995:365) argues that the school has been at the receiving end of those changes, adopting a more passive than active role. The school has had to adapt to changes in the society, responding very often in a piecemeal approach to the problems posed. She states:

> *While the schools have responded albeit sluggishly, to technological changes with various additions to the curriculum and narrowly prescribed methodologies of instruction, they have largely ignored massive social changes, when they have responded, they have done so in a piecemeal fashion, addressing isolated bits of problem.*

She further maintains that there is a need for schools to look beyond the level of academic achievement of pupils and the standards being attained

in maths and the sciences. Basing her arguments on the philosophical perspective of an ethics of care, which she believes is the responsibility of the school to help children develop, she makes the case for a re-articulation of educational and social priorities in favour of a school operating more on a *Gemeinshaft* mode. Noddings's contention hits at the problem of establishing aims for education and schooling. Her line of argument is not only in agreement with what educational philosophers and psychologists have been drawing our attention to in the past decade (Ryan and McLean: 1987:3-97) but it is also more coherent with the concept of education propounded by R.S.Peters (1966:23).

Peters's analysis of the concept of education leads him to the following conclusions:

(i)   our concept of education is dependent on our notion of the educated person

(ii)   though this concept varies from context to context, there exist four crucial elements which are knowledge, skills, cognitive perspective and caring

(iii)   education is essentially a moral endeavour where learners are transformed for the better and where morally acceptable means are used to achieve moral ends.

If the expectations about the role of the schools are framed on the basis of our definition of what education is deemed to achieve, then it is clear from Peters's analysis that schools cannot overlook their moral function without grossly failing in their mission. Education according to Peters (1966:45), involves a valuation process on the part of both those who are deciding about what worthwhile activities would be engaged in, and those who are

at the receiving end and who ultimately decide about the relevance of those activities in their lives. This valuation is not only embedded in the process of curriculum planning but also gets manifested in the organization of the day-to-day activities of the schools, in the pedagogical discourse of teachers, in their approach to knowledge and in the attribution of responsibilities. Children are fated to learn what to value in the light of what is expected of them, what is sanctioned and what is rewarded, what adults do or do not do.

Though expectations about what the schools are supposed to do in the name of education is culturally dependent and contextually determined, it is generally agreed upon, that one of the major tasks of the school is to prepare children to fulfill their roles as responsible citizens and lead fulfilling lives. What the current world picture allows us to see is a dismal picture of increasing poverty, violence in many parts of the world, racism and unhappiness even among those who are materially well off. Apart from the questioning of the model of development, educators have also come to interrogate the model of education that is geared to the 'production' of labour. Noddings (1995:367) sees a moral education project as potentially fundamental to achieve the ends of a more complete and satisfying education. She refutes the argument that moral education is anti-intellectual by claiming, *" A curriculum organized on the themes of care can be as richly intellectual as we and our students want to make it."*

1.4 THE BACKGROUND

The education sector in Mauritius has been undergoing radical changes over the past two years with the implementation of long awaited reforms. The government has increased investment in education substantially and children today have access to better schools and more qualified teachers.

Educational achievement is generally on the rise at the level of both primary and secondary schools. Access to tertiary level is expanding through the possibilities offered through distance education and training by means of Information and Communication Technology. It seems that the education sector is poised to take the country on the path of a second economic miracle.

Yet among the members of society there has been for some years an unsettling feeling that children are not being 'educated' but are being trained to fit in the labour market. This feeling has been kept alive by the frequent reports in the press of problems cropping up in schools and outside schools involving students in incidents of gross misdemeanors, aggressiveness, violence and vandalism towards the members of the general public, their teachers and their peers.

The successive governments have pursued the twin agenda of opening the society to the world in a bid to benefit from the advantages of trade liberalism and tourism. This economic policy has also impacted on the society entailing significant transformations in our patterns of interaction at the micro, meso and macro level. In two decades' times, Mauritius was transformed from a monocrop agricultural economy to one geared towards the manufacturing and services sector. The changing economic patterns have had an influence on the micro-unit of the society - the family. With many women finding employment in both the public and private sector, the extended family which used to function on a traditional mode providing informal education, became nuclear and many of its vital functions as a primary socialisation agency, were handed over to agents of secondary socialisation.

However, this transition from the family to the school has not taken place because the school itself has been called upon to operate within a different context. Its very status as an organization has undergone radical change over the past decade. Schools are today perceived in their very narrow role as an agent of selection and certification and transmitter of knowledge, the organization itself has been bureaucratized as the public sector in education expanded. Changes in the role of schools have been closely related to changes in the perceived aims of education.

In the 1980s Mauritius experienced an economic boom which enabled those who had higher secondary schools certificates and university degrees to move upwards on the social ladder. Many people who were from working class families were able to move within one generation to the middle class. What resulted from this great social mobility was the realisation that education was instrumental to life achievement. Such a perception that is commonly shared today has triggered off a widely held understanding that the major role of education is to allow that social mobility. Other important aspects of education receded in the background as the race for educational achievement was on.

From this narrow definition of education emerged an instrumental perception of schooling which fitted suitably in an economic agenda that sought to measure all human enterprise in terms of cost and benefits. In time, the benefits of education came to be measured in terms of educational achievement and the school viewed itself as a determinant of life achievement.

Interaction with teachers both in the field (in schools) and in teacher training institutions have revealed that many teachers consciously and unconsciously have internalized this perception and limited their

intervention in schools to a purely technical level, that is, the transmission of knowledge. Yet, together with other adults, they reflect on the state of schools today comparing it with the social organization that the school represented previously and the status accorded to teachers. Much of the layman's discourse in that context center on the eroding moral authority of family, teachers and schools, a tendency which is perceived as inevitable in view of the changing social and cultural context.

My own experience as a teacher in secondary schools has highlighted the contradiction between the different claims being made by adults and what I felt were the expectations of the school and teachers generally held by pupils and their parents.

Now that the level of education among parents has increased significantly as a result of economic progress, they have been more articulate in their expectations of the school and able to make more informed choices in the educational scenarios. The success of any reform project depends to a large extent on parental ownership since a successful reform is one that responds to the needs of parents in a rapidly evolving society.

There are clearly two issues at stake when it comes to the expectations of the school in the provision of moral education. What is the common thread across the expectations of various holders and how can the school respond in an effective way to those differing expectations? Parents' points of view, voiced in various forums seem to direct attention towards the moral role of the school. There are, however, contradictions in fulfilling this role. The study proposes to reveal range of expectations and explore the differing voices within that particular group of stakeholders.

In Mauritius, educational reform is expected to bring about changes in the philosophy and organisation of education at all levels. The last reform is based on a document entitled "Ending the Rat-Race" (Ministry of Education 2001). The professed philosophy is that of improving equality of opportunity and preparing our children to face internationally competitive conditions. While the document is explicit about the need to redress the overly competitive and discriminatory nature of our educational system, it is conspicuously silent on a philosophy of education. Much of the reform movement in Mauritius and worldwide suffers from an absence of educational ideas. Ferstermacher (1995:69-72) argues that the loss of educational ideals paves the way for the demise of democratic ideals. He considers that the attainment of the democratic ideal is contingent upon the furtherance of those very ideals through education. Indeed in all official educational reports and plans, there exists, at least, a rhetoric about the ideals to be pursued through the educational endeavour, a rhetoric that did not find any resonance in the implementation phases or the plan. However, this rhetoric which demonstrated an awareness of the need for guiding vision of education, is conspicuously absent from the last official document of the reform (Ministry of Education and Scientific Research 2001)

While most Constitutions worldwide and certainly the Mauritian Constitution, recognise that ignorance and freedom cannot thrive together, they also equally emphasize that education should focus on preparing individuals to accept and uphold the values of a democratic society. On the other hand, democratic education refers in essence to the appreciation and upholding of values, the development of a particular mode of thinking that prepares the individual to govern and be governed.

The relevance of upholding the values that are at the foundation of democratic societies is even more pressing in a multicultural society that is

struggling to cultivate a common identity and national citizenship. Our expectations from education and schooling are revealing of the common principles that bind us together as people of a nation. Indeed, no society can become a nation, unless, the decisions about what is to be achieved in education are not thrashed out. If schools are the official agencies vested with the mandate of preparing our children in terms of knowledge, skills and values for life and living, it is crucial to make those expectations as explicit as possible. The assumptions about the nature of education and the role of schooling are indicative of our shared/different conceptions of life and must be be brought in the public arena if society is to survive.

Though issues related to education in Mauritius have been rife with controversies and often subject to unending debates, it is surprising that none of these issues relate to 'philosophical' or even 'ideological' concerns, rather debates center more often than not, on the engineering questions. It is highly probable that questions of philosophical and ideological nature will entail controversies specially if they start from differing axiomatic positions.

1.5 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The present study aims at describing and analyzing the perceptions of teachers, students, school administrators and parents about the role of schools in providing moral education. The understanding generated will be especially relevant in the present context of educational reforms at the secondary level. The findings of this investigation will help in informing government policy decision making as to the ways in which existing programmes of moral education could be improved and new programmes moral implemented in the secondary schools of Mauritius. The study can also make a significant contribution at the level of teacher education by enabling us to reconsider the role of teachers in the light of the changing

expectations and aspirations of pupils, teachers, administrators and parents and thereby better tailor teacher education programmes to the needs of its clientele and to those of society.

1.5.1 Objectives of the Present Study

Despite the wide disagreement as to the basic philosophy and psychology to be adopted, resources required and whether formal moral education programmes in the form of values/ character education/ civic education should be prepared and taught separately, educators generally agree that the schools should rethink its moral mission (Carr:1991a:4-20) and that teachers should shoulder their moral responsibility.

The case I wish to make here, is that such a decision cannot be taken independently without considering the perceptions and aspirations of the various stakeholders. Indeed the reasons given for putting moral education back on the priority list tells us nothing about what students, teachers and parents expect and what they are ready to do. Reconsidering moral education as part of the school's mission and deciding how we would engage in such a process, demands that we reach a consensus on what we believe to be the role of education, which also implies scrutinizing the philosophy of society. An understanding of what underlies people's interpretation of education and the perceived role of the schools across different families and cultures has to be generated prior to the development of policy regarding moral education in our schools.

The success of any educational policy depends on how far people have ownership of it, how far it represents the aspirations and needs of the various stakeholders and how far it takes into account a common vision.

The Objectives of this study are to:

(i) generate understanding as to the impact of stakeholders' life histories and culture of their perception on the role of education, schools and teachers

(ii) uncover and explain the teachers, parents, administrators and students' understanding and perception of the aims of education and schooling

(iii) develop an understanding of parents, teachers and students interpretation of morality and moral education

(iv) analyse stakeholders' perception of the relevance of moral education and the role of schools in providing moral education

(v) develop guidelines for the implementing a programme of moral education at the secondary level.

1.6. THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The research questions are formulated as follows:

(i) What do the various stakeholders expect from education and schooling?

(ii) How do the educational priorities of various stakeholders compare ?

(iii) In what ways do they think the school is contributing to the realization of educational aims?

(iv) What are their perceptions of the moral education?

(v) What do they consider to be the role of the school in providing moral education?

(vi) What role do the students, teachers, school administrators and parents attribute to teachers in the provision of moral education?

(vii) What influences the perceptions of teachers, students, school administrators and parents with respect to the provision of moral education?

1.6.1 The Motivation of the Research

The government is at the moment implementing the muchawaited educational reform at the various levels of schooling. The basic philosophy of this reform lies in the belief that education is the vehicle of social transformation and reconstruction. The system, which we have inherited from the British colonization period, has, according to various official reports and research findings, created a lopsided system which perpetuates social inequality (Action Plan 1998: 7).

The notion that education can be used to remedy the various social ills engendered by industrialization and the capitalist system is beyond the realm of research. Yet, there is no doubt that the general belief that education serves to bring about desirable change in people is firmly grounded in philosophy. The experience of more developed countries, which emphasized the academic at the expense of other facets of development, has brought to the limelight, increasingly, the need to educate children morally so that they are able to participate effectively in democratic societies. In times of world crisis, manifested in the forms of terrorist acts, child labour, environmental degradation and social degeneration, the priority of the school is not only to educate a competent and efficient workforce but to educate citizens for moral responsibility.

This study offers the possibility to revisit the role of the school in the light of the demands of contemporary postmodern society and the changing

perceptions of stakeholders with respect to one important aspect of its roles.

1.6.2 Envisaged Benefits of the Study:

The present research purports to

(i) Generate understanding as to the grounds on which schools should/ should not nowadays cater to the moral education of students of secondary schools

(ii) Provide a foundation based on research to subsequent policy decision making on the introduction of moral education in secondary schools

(iii) Help re-articulate the role of teachers in a changing social context.

(iv) Inform relevant authorities about the currency of existing models of moral education and point to new directions in this field

(v) Create awareness as to the needs and expectations of students from schools with respect to moral education

(vi) Highlight the importance of the school-home and community link in education.

1.7 EXPLORATION AND FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

Education has the merit of being one of the most controversial issues in most societies not only because it necessitates the distribution of resources but also because it significantly determines economic viability and social survival. Among the various questions that confront education, one of the most vexing ones relates to moral education. While in section 2.6.2, we have discussed the absence of educational ideals from programmes of educational reforms despite what seems to be increasing

parental expectations that the school should endorse this function, I will consider here the ways in which the problem will be explored.

The study aims at building a stakeholders' perspective since perceptions of moral education are heavily dependent upon notions of education and of the role of the school. The perceptions of different stakeholders have thus to be understood in the context of this broader outlook and the expectations of the role of teachers within the school and within a particular programme of moral education. What would be of interest here, is an analysis of the shifting patterns of shared responsibility for education of children contemporary society.

In the process of uncovering those different perceptions about education and schooling, what will also be revealed are the assumptions about the nature of morality and moral learning. These proceed fundamentally from the cultural make up of particular individuals. That culture goes a long way in helping to establish the moral standards of a society is widely accepted by anthropologists (Schweder 1991: 6-34). However, what is less known is how far culture and the collective consciousness, manifest themselves in the educative process, particularly in terms of moral education. The basic concepts of education and culture and their interlinkages will be investigated in the light of provision for moral education in the school context.

1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS
1.8.1 Concept of Morality

The concept of morality has been variously defined by philosophers and psychologists but in common terms it can be interpreted to mean a person's or society's view of what is perceived to be the highest good.

Such a view is based on a set of principles, ideas and norms that are used to distinguish between 'right' and 'wrong'. The 'highest good' is often defined as those actions, behaviours, and mindset that contribute to what Aristotle calls *eudaimonia*, that is human flourishing or happiness. Though the notions of what is 'good' and what constitutes happiness has a definite cultural bias, morality generally refers to attitudes and predispositions that foster respect, responsibility, integrity and honesty. Lickona (1996: 93) argue that respect and responsibility are the two core components of morality from which any other principle derives. The term respect includes two aspects, that is respect for oneself and respect for others (their beliefs, opinions and culture). Responsibility involves an acceptance for one's own life and deeds and the commitment to the welfare of society generally through an active participation in the socio- economic, political and cultural activities of the community.

My understanding of morality focuses on the question of *'what kind of person should I be* . In that context it refers explicitly to a human ideal that is committed to practice rather than to abstract rules and principles.

1.8.2 Concept of Moral Education

Moral education refers to the processes through which the relevant knowledge, attitudes, values and skills are transmitted and developed in children. As such, it focuses on the development of the cognitive, social and emotional skills which are necessary for moral thinking, action and feeling. Moral education concerns thus the practices and strategies that socializing agents use to equip children with the resources to address issues about right and wrong in their everyday life. The aim of moral education in the school is thus to help students become autonomous decision makers but, at the same time, to create an attachment to

fundamental values like respect and responsibility (Hamm 1989: 158). Because my understanding of morality is based on the development of persons within a particular social setting, moral education is largely construed as part of the socialization process generally meant to prepare the students for a happy and productive life as a member of the community.

1.9 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The theoretical framework adopted in the present study was that of standpoint epistemology using an interpretive paradigm. This study used the qualitative approach whereby I adopted a discovery orientation and sought to explore the perceptions of various subgroups of the population, not with a view to generalize but to generate understanding. As with any exploratory research, an emergent design gave me enough flexibility to investigate the shared meanings that underlie participants' interactions as well the individual perceptions of the issue at hand.

1.9.1 The Sample

Purposive samples were used focusing on the four categories of stakeholders, namely teachers, students, school administrators and parents.

The sample consisted of:

(i) 30 students of upper secondary schools (Form V and VI)

(ii) 33 teachers of secondary schools

(iii) 9 school administrators of secondary schools

(iv)10 parents of students going to the upper secondary schools (Form V and VI)

For administrators and parents the sample is half the sample size of teachers and students because for parents and administrators, individual semi-structured interviews were used whereas for teachers and students the focus group interview was used (approximately five interviews for each), making it possible to manage a larger sample.

A purposeful sample will be constituted taking into account the balance in terms of gender, ethnicity (General Population, Hindus, Muslims and Chinese) and school type (state, confessional and private), not with a view to compare but in order to have a sample that provides maximum variation in terms of the characteristics of the subgroups.

1.9.2 Data Gathering

The theoretical framework adopted in the present study is that of standpoint epistemology using an interpretive paradigm. Starting from the premise that perceptions about moral education are the product of individual history, religious and cultural affiliation and identity which can create both convergent and divergent perceptions within the school, a combination of focus group and individual semi-structured interviews have been used for the various groups of stakeholders, namely parents, teachers, school administrators and parents. Focus group interviews involved on average seven to eight participants. Not only have focus interviews have been chosen for the quality of the data they produce, but also, because they allowed me to combine the benefits of interviews and participant observation.

1.9.3 Data Analysis

The data collected, which were in the form of interview transcripts, were coded, 'repackaged' and analysed with respect to the themes and issues identified through the literature review. The first set of codes was extensively generated but had, at a second stage, to be reduced to enable a more cogent and coherent analysis that is in line with the objectives set out in the study. The data analysis process occurred concurrently with the data collection because of the exploratory nature of the study.

1.10 Organisation of Chapters

Chapter 2: Education in a Multicultural Society the Mauritian Context

This chapter presents a historical background to the Mauritian society and the development of its education system. It also highlights the major educational issues are of historical and contemporary relevance.

Chapter 3: Theories related to Morality and their Implications for introducing Moral Education at the School Level

The various theories on morality are considered together with their implications for education and the role of the school

Chapter 4: Culture as a Context for Moral Education

This chapter provides an overview of the relevance of culture on perceptions on moral education. It considers in a historical mode the major characteristics of multicultural Mauritius and the way they impact on understanding about moral education.

Chapter 5: The Role of the Schools in Relation to Moral and Social Development

The focus in this chapter in on the transmission, socialisation and developmental role of the school in relation to moral education. The chapter discusses about the various theoretical positions with respect to the above mentioned roles.

Chapter 6: Research Methodology

In this chapter, the conceptual framework, the approach and design of the research is elaborated. Details about the sample, profile of the participants and methodological decisions are explained and justified.

Chapter 7: Data Analysis

The major themes that emerged from the data are analysed with respect to the theoretical framework developed previously, the research objectives and the research questions.

Chapter 8 : Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The chapter synthesizes the findings and issues of the research and outlines its major conclusions. It also presents a set of guidelines for the implementation of a programme of moral education in secondary schools.

1.11 Conclusion

The present research work is undertaken in the specific context of a multicultural state like Mauritius whose history has shaped and influenced perceptions about moral education. We now turn to an analysis of the Mauritian context and the historical events which have shaped perceptions about the role of schools in providing moral education.

CHAPTER 2

EDUCATION IN A MULTI CULTURAL SOCIETY: The Mauritian Context

2.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1.1 Early Settlers

There exists some controversy as to the exact date on which Mauritius was discovered, though it is agreed upon that the Portuguese were the first Europeans to see the Mascarene Islands (Mauritius, Rodrigues and Reunion) after the Arabs. Like them, the Portuguese did not settle on the island but only occasionally stopped over for food and water (Prithipaul 1976:16).

With the decline of the Portuguese empire and the rise of the Dutch, British and French as rivals in maritime trade, Mauritius became prized as the ultimate stopover on the Spice Route. On December 17, 1598, the first Dutch vessels landed in Mauritius marking the beginning of Dutch settlement in Mauritius. They gave to the island its name in honour of Maurice Van Nassau. One notable feature of Dutch colonization relates to the introduction of a sugar industry, which is still one of the major industries of the economy. Dutch colonization was not successful on many fronts, chiefly because of their inability to find an economic agenda for the island. On the 16th July 1658, the Dutch left the island after having killed all the dodo[1] and exploited all the ebony.

The French, who entertained ambitions for the Indian Ocean, followed the Dutch and Captain Dufresne D'Arsel officially took possession of the island in the name of the French East India Company on 27th August, 1721 and

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[1] The dodo was the indigeneous bird of Mauritius.

the island became known as Isle de France but the French only settled in 1721 (Bunwaree 1994:5-6). People of European, non-European and indian descent and slaves were brought from Reunion island initially to colonise Isle de France. A few Chinese also came in the next decade and by that time Mauritius was already a multicultural society.

The island saw major developments under the French, particularly Mahé de Labourdonnais who, not only brought capital to invest in the lands, but also slaves from Mozambique and Madagascar and transformed the island into a successful colony and an important harbour on the Spice route (Prithpaul 1976: 18).

In 1767, the colony came under the control of the French Crown and the prosperity of the island increased under the successive governors and the population of slaves expanded. A Colonial Assembly was created in 1790 after the French Revolution but slaves in Mauritius were not legally liberated as the slaves in France (Prithipaul 1976:28-29). The French planters strongly resisted the Liberation Movement and the Code Noir, which defined the status of the slaves and deprived them of their most basic human rights, was forcefully applied by the Napoleonic code.

2.1.2 The British Period

However, the increasing rivalry between the French and the British for control over the Indian Ocean culminated in the taking over of the island by the British in 1810, against the backdrop of the Napoleonic Wars. The British gathered an armada of 60 vessels and 16,000 troops and promptly attacked the island and did not restore it to the French even after the war because of its strategic position (Selvon 2001:38).

The passage from French to English rulers was a smooth process. The capitulation terms stipulated that the French colonizers were not to be considered as prisoners of war and that all private property should be respected. The laws, customs and religion of the settlers were to be preserved as well as the use of their language. (Ramdoyal 1977: 29)) This stemmed from the British desire to maintain stability and continuity, despite frequent friction between the French and the administrators, especially when official decisions threatened to jeopardize French interests.

Because of increasing pressure, the abolition of slavery became inevitable and the French had to turn to India to find an insatiable source of cheap labour. Indentured labour from India was introduced to carry out the function of the slaves. This was tantamount to a new form of slavery, but with the decline of maritime trade and the expansion of agricultural activities, the labour of indentured workers was of crucial relevance. In time, the Indians became the largest component of the population of the island. Thus, from the beginning of its story till now, economic, political and social life on the island centered around the sugar cane (Bunwaree 1994:27).

2.1.3 The Pre- independence Period

The English had only administrative control over the island and the only definite change that was made related to the establishment of English as the formal language of the government. The French still controlled the economy through the ownership of sugar cane plantations and political fields. In 1831 a Council of Government was established with seven nominated members. This Constitution that functioned without representativeness from the people and an electoral process, lasted for over fifty years. However, with the arrival of Governor Pope Henessy,

amendments were made to the Constitution to provide for 10 elected members, nine appointed members and eight official members. The great restriction for the election, was in terms of the franchise which was determined by income and property thus further strengthening the power of the elite. By the early 19th century, the Creoles and Indians started to become politically active specially since they had come, in time, to constitute the majority of the population. The fear that they might one day seize political power grew among the Franco Mauritians who did not wish to grant them political rights, especially after the coalition between Action Libérale (Liberal Party) and the Indians led by Manilall Doctor[2], a coalition that was, however, short-lived (Bunwaree 1994: 17-18). Indians came to be elected to the Council of Government despite the attempt by the Creole elite to exclude them from politics. A new Indian elite emerged constituted mainly of lawyers, doctors and teachers (Prithipaul 1976:116).

The 1930s and 1940s were periods of intense political activity, historically referred to as the "Revolts of the Lambs", mainly because of the Labour Ordinance passed in 1938. The Great Depression of the 1930s caused severe hardships to the masses and this does explain to a certain extent the riots, strikes and violence that characterized this era, a manifestation of political emancipation spurred by stringent economic conditions (Bunwaree 1994:20-22). It became clear that the demise of the oligarchy was inevitable as the British Empire collapsed in various of its colonies (Selvon 2002:54). The process of Constitutional revision was well under way and culminated in the Constitutional Reform implemented in 1948. 1948 saw not only the historical election of a representative government, but, it also marked the beginning of communalism around which political life became

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[2] A barrister sent by Mahatma Gandhi, after the latter's visit to Mauritius in 1901, to look after the welfare of the Indian immigrants. The Indo Mauritians, with the support of Manilall Doctor fought hard for the upliftment of the educational, social and economic conditions of the Indian labourers. Their efforts culminated in placing in the descendants of immigrants at the forefront of socio-political life in Mauritius.

organized. The Labour Party led by Guy Rozemont and later joined by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam and the Ralliement Mauricien led by the Franco Mauritians, Conservative Creoles and Muslims. But, despite the fact that the Labour Party won fourteen seats out of nineteen, twelve conservatives were elected to the Legislative council. Upon the suggestion of Robert Scott, an electoral Commission was set up to review the electoral system (Selvon 2002:). It recommended universal suffrage and a unique system of best losers to ensure adequate representation of all communities, a system which still prevails to date (Mathur 1991: 57-69).

The election of 1959 was indicative of an increasing split within the Indo-Mauritian communities but the Labour Party still won the elections. Independence was the basic aim of the Labour Party, but fears related to being ruled by a Hindu majority increased among the minorities which sought to oppose it (Bunwaree 1994: 21). During the 1960s communal feelings ran high. Indeed, ethnic politics replaced class politics. The question of evolution of the Mauritian Constitution sharply divided opinions with political tensions frequently threatening to degenerate into ethnic tensions. Riots broke out in January 1968 between the Creoles and the Muslims.The tense political situation was significantly exacerbated by the deterioration in people's living conditions. Peace was restored within weeks and on 12 March, 1968, Mauritius moved quietly towards independence (Selvon 2001:62).

2.1.4 The Post Independence Period

Post-independence period was marked by a degree of relative stability. Gaëtan Duval joined the government and formed a coalition at the request of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. The Franco Mauritians also thought that it was in their interest to work with the Labour Party. Nation building started

through the increased integration of the Mauritian economy into world commerce. To achieve this, it was necessary to improve competitiveness and to diversify the economy. The setting up of the Export Processing zone in 1972 coincided in the early 70s with what is commonly called sugar booms (good harvest coupled with sharp increase in the world price of sugar) which led to high rates of economic growth (Bunwaree 1994:24-27): The state- private sector collaboration displeased an emerging leftist movement whose most prominent leader is the outgoing Prime Minister, Paul Bérenger, [Co-founder of the Movement Militant Mauricien (MMM) in 1969] a party advocating the Marxist formula of direct democracy (Selvon 2002 404-405).

The mid 1970s were economically difficult for Mauritius with rampant poverty and high unemployment rates resulting in massive emigration Bunwaree 1994: 27). The MMM appealed to the workers and young who felt abandoned by political leaders. The popularity of the leaders increased rapidly under brutal physical repression (Selvon 2002:401). Alliances were constantly being made and unmade, but, the coalition government modified the Constitution to obtain a five year electoral mandate, under the pretext of the need for political stability to lay the foundations of economic diversification.

There were strong reactions on the part of the opposition, which accused the government of violating democratic principles and trying to establish a dictatorial regime. The brutal repression of the MMM led to a series of strikes that paralysed the whole economy and the coalition government retaliated by imposing a state of emergency.

In 1974, economic statistics showed signs of positive recovery, with the creation of jobs and a positive balance of payments. However, Mauritius

suffered a serious set back with a devastating cyclone in 1974 which struck the island with winds reaching 172 miles per hour (Selvon 2002:403).

The general elections of 1976 saw the emergence of the MMM as the most powerful political party with 48% of the vote. However, Ramgoolam together with Duval formed the government with Aneerood Jugnauth as the leader of the opposition. In the following years, the MMM significantly improved its position and this coupled with stringent economic conditions and a series of publicized mismanagement, augured the downfall of the Ramgoolam regime. From 1976 to 1979 Mauritian external debt quadrupled and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank insisted on the implementation of a rigorous fiscal and monetary policy coupled with two successive devaluations to enable structural adjustments to take place (Bunwaree 1994:27).

Within the Labour Party and its coalition partners, cracks began to appear with Duval breaking away from the government and the party headed for a resounding defeat in 1982 with the opposition sweeping all the 60 seats in Parliament. However, the new regime started experiencing a serious crisis. Relations between the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance seriously degenerated to the point that Paul Bérenger resigned for a short while. In the meantime, behind the scene, negociations were taking place between Jugnauth, Ramgoolam and Duval to form a new alliance. The MMM suffered a worst ever setback in the 1983 elections with only 22 Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA s) against 48 of the alliance.

The Jugnauth-Duval government revised some of the policy decisions of the previous government in a radical way and adopted an aggressive campaign of attracting investors among the *'tigers'* of South East Asia.

Many investors came to Mauritius following the crisis concerning the future of Hong Kong as a colony. In the 1980s Mauritius is said to have undergone an economic miracle with inflation under control at 1.8 % and growth rate reaching 8.9% (Bunwaree 1994:72-128). However, this new found economic stability did not mean the end of shifting political alliances. The downfall of the communist regime worldwide also meant the end of class-based politics, generated by Action Libérale and Manilall Doctor as Mauritius irreversibly became a free market. Communal identity regained importance and class struggle was relegated to the background.

In the mid 1980s, the government suffered from a series of internal crises caused by allegations of corruption and drug trafficking. Mauritians went to poll in 1987 and the Labour Party- Movement Socialiste Militant (MSM) – Parti Mauricien Social Democrat (PMSD) was elected against all odds. But shortly after, the PMSD resigned from the government and many parliamentarians concentrated on building a communal movement. As the wedge between Jugnauth and Duval widened, the former negotiated an alliance with the MMM which took the country by storm in July 1990 since Jugnauth was still governing with the Labour Party (Bunwaree 1994: 30). This sudden alliance created much confusion with the MMM playing the role of the opposition while being in alliance with the government.

With the death of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, who is hailed, even today, as the Father of the nation, his son, Navin Ramgoolam returned from the United Kingdom) to take over the political leadership of the Party and campaigned against the constitutional change. But the Labour party was politically weak and suffered a defeat in the 1991 elections. Soon after the Bill for transforming Mauritius into a Republic was passed (Selvon 2002:419).

During the first half of the 1990s, serious flaws in the law and order system became apparent. On the political front, serious cracks were once more observed in the coalition and factions within the MMM shook the coalition. In the 1990s, despite the fact that the economic situation had eased off, the consequence of the pragmatic diplomacy adopted on the international stage, the situation did not improve. Severe clashes occurred between the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition over electoral and parliamentary procedures.

In the course of time, it became was apparent that the Prime Minister was making an attempt to communally divide the country for electoral purpose (Bunwaree 1994:28). The country again became split into religious and communal factions. It did not take long for the government to fall under internal tensions caused by increasingly public disagreement between the two party leaders.

In the second half of the 1990s, as the poverty of the working class residing in the "Cités Ouvrières"[3] of Port-Louis increased, popular frustration escalated. Social tension was further enhanced by the perception that a few ethnic groups had succeeded in climbing the social ladder and that a large majority of the Creole community (people of African and mixed origin) had been by and large, left out of the process of economic development. This phenomenon has been termed as the "Malaise Creole". [4]These covert social conflicts culminated in the February 1999[5] riots where the Creoles populating the deprived areas around the country revolted against the symbols of capitalism and governance by

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[3] These are cheap housing facilities provided by the government to people of working class. These accommodations provide very basic housing service and are usually concentrated in disadvantaged regions on the outskirts of large towns.
[4] It refers to the general feeling among the Creoles that they have not received their fair share of the fruits of economic development

destroying public and private property. The Hindus, who constitute the majority, felt targeted and the reactions were swift and destructive. (Matadeen Report 1999)[6]. Both the police and the government were unable to cope with the situation but volunteers took part in a major effort on the ground to put a stop to it.

These riots lasted for only a few days but had a significant effect on Mauritians. They inflicted fresh wounds in a society trying to reconcile the apparent conflict of diversity and national identity. These riots served to further to undermine the government and Jugnauth rode once again in power after having stuck yet another deal with the MMM and won a crushing victory. The government embarked on an ambitious project of restructuring completely the economy banking heavily on information and Communication Technology as the new pillar creating thousands of jobs. However, the current government has also pledged to combat poverty and bring about electoral reforms to consolidate democracy.

2.2 MAURITIAN IDENTITY AS EMBEDDED IN CULTURE AND RELIGION

There are at present five components of the Mauritian population: the Hindu accounting for a little less than 50% of the population; the Christians (comprising of the creole from African origin, people from mixed origin, and the Franco Mauritian) 30%; the Muslims 14% and the Chinese 6%. The integration of the various components of the Mauritian society was not achieved through decolonization because the struggle for independence produced a political, social and cultural set up based on religious and ethnic lines. The notion of "Mauritianess" remains an unfulfilled dream

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[5] These were communal riots which broke out after the death of seggae singer Kaya in prison. They lasted for a week.
[6] .The Matadeen report published in 1999 is the official report on the February 1999 riots.

despite the use of a unifying language, that is, Creole. Much has been written about the impossibility of a Mauritian culture because of a historical denial of its literature, arts and history (Bunwaree1994: 171). The concept of 'Mauritianity' has remained highly cosmetic. Efforts at generating more profound and genuine patriotic feelings have met against the insurmountable walls of communalism generated specially during election time where ethnic and religious-based tactics are used.

In Mauritius, culture, and religion are inextricably linked (Alber 1990:5-32). Each religion has, in majority, followers from a specific ethnic group and is therefore perceived as being representative of it. The relationship between religion and culture is two-fold: on the one hand, religion serves to give a certain 'legitimacy' to culture and, on the other hand, culture is the flesh on the bones of religion. It is in religion that culture takes its source and it is in culture that religion acquires its shared meaning; religious practices are not a matter of personal choices but are to be collectively appropriated. By supporting a particular set of values, religion also moulds attitudes, beliefs and aspirations by favouring a certain perception of reality over others and through culture these, take form and are rendered more concrete.

This dialogical relationship between culture and religion is certainly not unique to the Mauritian context (Alber: 1990: 5-32), but, here religion lends a static dimension to culture fossilizing it in a time capsule and preventing the creation of discursive identities. Religion creates and maintains those narratives that support a collective consciousness. By claiming to speak for culture, religion prevents the subjective negotiation of identity. Religion thus becomes a barrier on the cultural frontier preventing the emancipation of the individual both privately and publicly by colouring individual experiences and by encouraging as Mac Laren (1995: 145-171) calls it "fully closed narrative of the self."

Religion has functioned, not strictly in the form of a "narrative accrual", but as a filter that assigns meanings to present experience to ensure historical continuity. Considering the alliance between religion and politics, one cannot but be aware of the more sinister design of making religion one of those grand narratives that provides totalizing accounts of the human experience. Yet, there is more to it that meets the eye.

There are many reasons to explain why religion has come to be the preferred way of reading and creating narratives. Historically, the tumult of the near pre and post independent years generated widespread political and social insecurity as to the position and power of each ethnic group. It was important, at that time to define and categorize the stakeholders in order to enable negotiation between groups for the success of the independence movement. The country of origin was used as the basis for categorizing people and with the massive conversion of creoles to Christianity, ethnicity slowly gave way to religion as the principle for distinguishing people. The 1972 population census still defined people as Hindus, Muslims, Chinese and General Population, the last mentioned refers to basically Creoles and people of mixed origin who are of Christian faith.

That religious identity came to define the self is, not only, to be understood in the light of historical experiences, but also, as a reaction to the insecurities created by the rapid industrial development which took place over the last 20 years. The proximity of cultures and friction that are bound to occur in plural societies are exacerbated in the context of capitalist societies where as Honneth (Bunwaree 1994: 157) propounds, "*employment determines individuals biographically and shapes them in a way characteristic for the particular labor situation.*"

Religion becomes, thus, a means of maintaining a sense of self, a way of repudiating the consumer narrative by replacing it with constancy of religion.

The heavy dependence of Mauritian culture on religion can also be analysed historically. According to writers such as Memmi (Bunwaree 1994:159), colonial policies are often aimed at destroying indigeneous cultures and building new social structures in order to colonise the mind. In Mauritius, the French colonists deprived the slaves of their cultural heritage and they were subject to heavy proselytisation by Christian missionaries. The population of a mixed origin also strongly identifies with the European culture.

In addition to this, the schooling system has reinforced this spirit of difference and segregation. Under the disguise of meritocracy and merit, it has for over three decades perpetuated an elitist system which does not lay enough emphasis on its own history and literature. Indeed Mauritian children learn in a foreign language, English, which is officially the medium of instruction.

The system of education in Mauritius illustrates the fact that with decolonization, Mauritians have not been able to build a culture of their own. Indeed, the culture that is emulated is largely western in nature. Bunwaree (1994:156) terms this reliance on foreign language "cultural dependence". Basing her analysis on Altbach (1977:161), she argues that language becomes a mechanism for social stratification because command over European languages is a passport to academic and ultimately, life achievement. That the education system has failed to develop a common culture is of a lesser evil, when compared to the social reproduction that it engenders. For many decades after independence, the

education system has acted as a selective mechanism creating an intellectual elite and reinforcing the hold of an emerging bourgeoisie over the mass.

2.3 THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN MAURITIUS

Some thirty years after its independence the system of education in Mauritius is undergoing significant changes. The system was largely inherited from the French and the British. Though there exists very little literature on education during colonial times in Mauritius, it tends to support the idea that there are both significant differences and continuities between our education today and the one that prevailed during the colonial times.

The first foundations of Mauritian education appeared with French Governor d'Entrecasteaux who recommended the founding of a school in the colony (Ramdoyal 1977: 89). But its creation was delayed with the news of the French Revolution and the widespread fear among the French colonists that education if provided to all, would help emancipate the common man. The ideas of the Revolution such as equality traveled to Mauritius but due to the extreme conservatism and reactionary tendencies of the white colonists, nothing much was achieved.

It was not before 1790 that education became a matter of concern for the colonial assembly. The basic purpose of education was to provide moral and political education to citizens. However, due to the inability of the government to raise funds, the financial help of the private sector was sought. The National College therefore was set up and functioned on the lines of a secondary school though basic literacy and numeracy was also taught. This college was, however, short-lived due to precarious economic and health conditions and it was only Plan Lakanal that recommended the

setting up of Ecole Centrale and the provision of primary education for the rest of the population. However as Prithipaul (1976: 77) states there was no need for primary education to be extended to the masses since the majority were slaves working in the fields. Instead, only the elite had access to education.

Education Centrale was managed on the lines of Catholic education and priests were employed as teachers leading to a strong religious bias in education. Despite the fact that educational ideas were imported from France, it remained largely oblivious to revolutionary ideas of the French revolution and was heavily influenced by the Church. The services of the Ecole Centrale were extended to the whites of other colonies and admission to it was extremely difficult. This institution did maintain its stronghold by actively restricting the creation of other secondary schools (Ramdoyal 1977:31). Apart from Ecole Centrale, a secondary school catering to the needs of the coloured population was allowed but there was a great disparity which enhanced the elitist nature of the education system. Blacks, coloured people and women were severely discriminated against.

With the coming into power of Napoleon, the management of education in the colony was placed under the Prefect and Ecole Centrale came to be known as the Lycée. The Lycée became famous in the colonies and its premises extended to accommodate the increase in demand. Under Decaen, schools for girls were also set up but the curriculum aimed at making them more fit for the social and family role rather than providing them with academic knowledge. Although much improvement has been achieved in the current system, the disparities between boys and girls education are still glaring (Bunwaree:1995:9-11).

With the island coming upon British rule in 1810 significant changes were brought about. Once again the specificity of the Mauritian context was not taken into account. Prithipaul (1976:103) states:

Racial prejudice was overtly maintained in these schools. In one school the admission of one coloured child resulted in an enrolment drop of approximately 50%. Besides this desire for segregation, there was a desire to maintain a socio cultural identity in the school which was based on the French heritage.

The system remained highly elitist and access to Ecole Centrale, renamed Royal College was limited to the white colonists. In 1817 however, a scholarship system was introduced and is still prevalent today. The institution maintained its high status and was considered to be the equivalent of English grammar schools. Simultaneously private initiatives as well as government policy worked towards providing for education for the masses (Ramdoyal 1977: 36). Reverend Lebrun started a school for the coloured people and the middle class. Entry to the Royal College was opened to the coloured people in 1829 when the colour bar was lifted in the face of much opposition on the part of the white colons who made desperate discriminatory attempts (Selvon 2002:200). Many of them removed their sons and set up private colleges.

Missionary activities also had repercussions on education after the abolition of slavery in 1835. The British Parliament also voted for a sum to be devoted to the rehabilitation of slaves and a number of missionaries arrived in Mauritius thereafter. The Lady Mico Charity was founded to administer this inititiative, but in 1845 the Parliament withdrew its support for this charity.   The missionaries and the government opened various

schools but despite these efforts access to education remained limited (Ramdoyal 1977: 59-61).

In time conflicts emerged between the Anglican and Catholic Church and the government sought to restore its control over educational policy. Both parties wanted to maintain a stronghold on education (Ramdoyal 1977: 73). The Catholic Church maintained very close ties with the white community and became interested in education basically because it feared that the English, who were promoting mass education, would win the masses on their side.

The arrival of indentured labour from India posed an additional problem in linguistic terms. Governor Higginson favoured the idea of separate schools for the Indians while the Parliamentary Committee wanted the immigrant population to quickly integrate with the local population. As Bunwaree (1994: 89) propounds, this argument did not emerge from a genuine concern to create a sense of citizenship within the various components of the population. Rather, it emerged from the dictates of a plantation economy that required social cohesion. Access was thus made open to Indian children but since schooling was not mandatory, attendance by Indian children, who were forced to work on the plantation was limited. Because child labour suited the interest of the plantocracy and ensured the survival of the sugar industry, Indian children continued to be discriminated against by both the whites and the missionaries. As Ramdoyal (1977:90) states,

> *One can reasonably assume that the ruling classes were not*
> *in a great hurry to promote the education of the lower classes,*
> *since their privileges rested on the subservience of the latter.*

Another interesting development that had and still has an impact on Mauritian education, is the system of Grant in Aid [7]instituted through the 1857 Ordinance. In 1869, there were 59 such schools with a school population of more than five thousand students. The system of Grant in Aid enabled mass education because it was cheaper to run aided schools rather than government ones. The Catholic Church, which was influential, benefited from the greater share of the governments funds devoted to education and its control over the curriculum, which was basically religious, ensured that it became an important pressure group (Ramahrai, 2002: 20). Indeed the system of Grant in Aid, which survives till date, has also led individuals who had an interest in education to construct colleges and benefited from the Grant in Aid. But these educational institutions are basically profit oriented, and, most of them have poor infrastructure and do not provide quality education. These are now called private schools, but, the terms "private school" does not carry the same connotation as in England. The World Bank document (1991) states:*"Quality problems tend to be more acute among private schools".*

State secondary schools, confessional and private schools form part of the public school system and prepare candidates for the examinations carried out by the University of Cambridge. Other private schools exist catering for both primary and secondary level. These follow the French system or prepare students for the International Baccalaureate Examinations. These schools are privately owned and do not fall under the purview of the government. Only the rich and influential have access to such schools.

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[7] The Grant In Aid system was a response to the realization that the government had to actively promote the provision of educational facilities. Grants in Aid were first offered to denominational schools and relieved the government of its responsibility of providing for the increased number of primary school pupils. The system of payment by results (under this system grants allocated became dependent on the pass rates produced) was later extended to Grant- in Aid schools.

The 1857 Ordinance Act (Ramdoyal 1977:91), has, therefore, shaped to a large extent our education system till today. The system of Grant in Aid has allowed the government to reduce government expenditure in education, because cost per student was lower when allocated to private schools. But this has been achieved at the cost of a perversion of the process of education. One of the criteria for allocation of the grant was the results obtained by students of any particular school at the level of the School Certificate (SC) and Higher School Certificate (HSC) and the number of students enrolled. This led to a situation where emphasis was laid on performance at SC and HSC because such performance determined the financial support to be received by the school.

2.4 THE EMERGENCE OF CLASS-BASED POLITICS AND ITS IMPACT ON EDUCATION

The education system, however, did not remain unaffected by the political changes that swept over the island at the turn of the century especially, when political power was transferred from whites to non-whites. The Indians realized the importance of education to help them emerge from their extreme poverty and the Labour Law passed on 1908 helped a large number of children to have access to education. Much of this change in favour of the masses has been the outcome of the private visit in 1901 of Mahatma Gandhi and the subsequent battle led by Manilall Doctor for nearly a decade.

The publication of the Ward report in 1941 influenced the Education Act which took into account its recommendations and the Governor was thereby empowered to take decisions as pertain to the regulations concerning teacher training, staffing and examinations and the whole structure of education. All aspects were reviewed and the organisation of

education made more professionally accountable. This Act was followed by the 1944 Ordinance which brought about further reforms in the system.

Among the most important reforms was the introduction of a common standard six examinations, which is still prevalent today and the inclusion of the teaching of religious faiths other than Catholicism in the primary schools. The government was intent on improving the literacy rate and ensuring universal and compulsory education. A double shift system was introduced to cope with the increase in enrolment and the government incurred heavy costs trying to implement the Ordinance. Meade (1968 :207) criticised the decision of the government arguing that the government did not have an overall education plan and that secondary education was neglected. It seems that quality was sacrificed for quantity which resulted in an unbalanced system of education that still prevails today. The language issue was and still is a crucial issue in education.

With the rapid expansion of the education system, a more appropriate administrative structure was required. A ministerial system was set up and a Minister of Education appointed in accordance with the 1957 Ordinance. The entire administration was established on British lines (Chinappah 1983:35), with powers and responsibilities clearly allocated and coordinated through a central body. This system has survived till today.

Indeed, from a historical and sociological point of view, the evolution of the education system would support the idea that colonizers sought to protect their interest at all costs and to perpetuate their economic stronghold on the colony (Bunwaree 1994:93). This domination was achieved by controlling education, but, as political awareness started to grow, so did an interest in education. Political leaders became committed to the idea of promoting literacy. At the time of independence, the system of education in

Mauritius was aligned to the British one, that is, a 6+5+2 system with six years of primary schooling sanctioned by a rigorous national examination that determined entry into the secondary school cycle. Access to state secondary schools and good confessional schools depends upon student ranking in the Certificate of Primary Examinations (CPE). Those who are ranked in the first 2000 (both boys and girls) get access to better schools and constitute the elite. In time, this system has produced a very competitive set up whereby parents, students and teachers focus solely on performance at the expense of other areas of development.

No emphasis is placed on the emotional, spiritual, physical or moral development of children. The issue of moral education is completely sidetracked and political and economic concerns overshadow the broader consideration of integral development, of which moral development is an important part.

Schools which succeed in getting the highest number of students ranked in the top 2000 are categorised as the 'star' schools and teachers working in those schools as 'star teachers'. These teachers by nature of their posting in the star schools attract many clients for private tuition. While the pass rate for the CPE has hovered around 60-65% over the past decade nationally, the pass mark across school fluctuates widely region-wise and type-wise. This wide disparity across schools is also obvious at the level of secondary schools. The completion of the five years of secondary schools leads to the School Certificate or "O" level examinations. The last years of secondary schooling lead to the Higher School Certificate or A level Examinations.

2.5 EDUCATION IN MAURITIUS

2.5.1 The Mauritian Education System

In the post independence years, the government of Mauritius took an active interest in education for both economic and political reasons. The country needed to be geared up for integrating into the global economy by developing an education system that would respond to the needs of a market economy. As early as 1971, frequent mention was made of the need for technical education and mass education. Education was made free in 1977, but the fact that it was not compulsory proved to be a limiting factor and further reinforced the inequalities present in society. Furthermore, the heavy academic bias promoted by the colonial method was maintained and there developed a culture whereby academic achievement was equivalent to a secure job in the public service. People of Indian origin, conscious of the importance of education had been sending their children abroad to England, France and India for further studies, since the 1950s. In time, this section of the Indian population came to occupy the important and high profile posts in government administration and constitutes to-day the intelligensia of the island. Some Creole from the middle and upper classes, together with the Franco Mauritians, were educated in Britain or in France and occupy important posts in the private sector together with the Chinese and the Muslim. The Creoles of African descent, however, have been largely neglected in the process remaining confined to the *'Cités ouvrières'* and today constitute the working class.

Though the government since independence has remained committed to promoting equality of opportunity, the system, as it exists today, tends to reproduce the inequalities that persist in society. Failures and low achievement at the level of the three major exams namely the CPE, SC

and HSC is very common for children of the working class whereas children from the middle and upper classes have a better academic trajectory. Indeed with a curriculum that remains strongly academic, achievement becomes tributary to linguistic ability, itself dependent on the cultural capital of the child. The Lalit Document on education in Mauritius (1990) considers the major cause for failure of the education sytem as being a " prejudiced and Colonial language policy". Rhetorical discourse about equality of opportunity in education, cultural development and mauricianisation of education have permeated all plans on education. Yet, in the face of financial stringency and economic compulsions, successive governments have had to aim for cost effectiveness especially in the 1980s.

In the 1990s, the Master Plan on education was presented as a revolutionary one, as it sought to restructure the system of education to better meet the needs and aspirations of the country. The economic configurations were changing as the country needed semi skilled and literate labour and the high drop–out rate that characterised primary schooling could no longer be sustained. In brief, the major change advocated was the introduction of a nine year schooling system after which children could be chanelled into academic or technical/vocational streams. But the plan is conspicuously silent on the issue of language policy, the development of a Mauritian culture and an acceptable value education programme. One of the major problems plaguing the system, which arises out of the intensely competitive and elitist nature of the system, private tuition was also not addressed.

The 1998 Action Plan proposed a major overhauling of the system by presenting the idea of middle schools and regionalisation, in an attempt to ease out a system that has grown extremely competitive at all levels.

Unlike the preceding plans, the Action Plan spelt out clearly the philosophy of the government for education and adopted a child-centered approach to education. It also addressed the issue of preprimary education and the social and cultural integration of children from all backgrounds. Prevocational education was also lengthily discussed and the creation of prevocational schools advocated for CPE failures. However, this plan was not implemented because it met with strong resistance from within the government itself.

2.5.2 Educational Reform

The budget on education has increased from Rs. 4.2 billion in 2000-2001 to Rs 5.8 billion in 2003-2004, a rise of 16% of the national budget. (Budget Speech, Ministry of Finance : 2003).

The education policy of the previous government was based on a document titled "Ending the Rat Race" (Ministry of Education and Scientific Research: 2001) which draws heavily on the Action Plan. The philosophy of the government's educational policy still today aims at providing for equality of opportunity and to use education as a vehicle for promoting social equity and integration. This is no small task since the education system inherited from the colonizers led to the development of a highly elitist culture. An important aspect of this culture is the myth of the star schools at both primary and secondary level.

Star schools are the ones that 'produce' the highest pass rates at the level of the three major examinations, namely the Certificate of Primary Education, School Certificate and Higher School Certificate. Since these schools are few in number, and located mainly in urban and suburban areas, demand for access is far superior to the number of seats available

creating an extremely competitive situation. Many official reports on the state of education in Mauritius (Action Plan 1998:12) have deplored the fact that this intense competition has had detrimental effects on children and adolescents (in terms of time spent on private tuition)[8] and it also leads to a very narrow understanding of what education is and what it should achieve.

The crux of the Reform plan was the abolition of the Certificate of Primary Education Examinations which was the mechanism through which students ending their primary cycle were allocated to secondary schools. The government proposed and has implemented since 2002 a system of grading that, as it argued, allowed for more flexibility. Previously, the first 2000 boys and girls got enrolled in the best secondary schools mostly government and confessional Catholic schools. The remaining 10000 (with an average pass rate of 60% yearly) have to seek admission to a private school subsidized by the government through the system of Grant-in-Aid. The reform aimed at a three-pronged approach to lessen the bottleneck situation created by the lack of good secondary schools. The government had, in the first instance, engaged in the construction of forty new secondary schools (Action Plan: Ministry of Education and Scientific Research: 2000), to ease off access in the secondary sector. It is now estimated that over 6000 students have access to a government secondary schools and an additional 3,300 students, who have not obtained the Certificate of Primary Education, have been enrolled in the prevocational stream of those schools. Additionally, ranking, as a mechanism of selection, has been abolished and admission to school is made on a regional basis. The country is now divided into four zones with

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[8] The concept of private tuition takes on a very special meaning in the Mauritian context. It refers to the widespread phenomena of children going to private tutors, very often to their own schoolteachers in the primary schools, and paying a fee for an additional private , but not individual coaching. The number of

the relevant administrative structure and respective Directorates to oversee the management of those zones.

The success of the reform is therefore contingent upon, not only on the abolition of ranking, but also the creation of Form Six schools. The HSC examinations are crucial to all those aspiring to tertiary education and very often determine life chances for students. The need to have secondary schools especially catering for Form VI, rests on the assumption that not all children can opt for a career requiring high academic qualifications. The separation of the secondary schools into Form V and Form VI schools enables resources and expertise to be more appropriately channeled and lessens the cut–throat competition by diversifying the alternatives (towards the technical and vocational) fields offered to students at Form VI level.

The government has also implemented some changes at the level of the curriculum by introducing new subjects that aim at catering for the all-round development of the child. The curriculum now includes information technology, citizenship education, art, history/geography, science, and health and physical education. Additionally, the government has launched the literacy and numeracy campaign to help improve the basic skills of Mauritian children.

The general policy is to modernize the system and provide an education that caters for the economic conditions and responds to the aspirations of the society for more equal opportunities.

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children attending private tuition at a time can be as high as 80 in one class! Private tuition has become a highly lucrative business for many teachers and is actively encouraged by the highly competitive system.

2.5.3 Current Problems in Education

The implementation of the plan for reform has been rife with difficulties of varied nature. It signified reshuffling the administrative set up, reviewing the technicalities of assessment, overcoming a very general resistance to change, convincing the stakeholders of the benefits to be derived and addressing issues that have demanded our attention for over three decades.

While it is true that practical and political barriers make the process of educational reform a difficult one, the reform has also not been able to address or has only addressed in a superficial manner, some fundamental issues.

2.5.3.1 Relationship between the Church and the State

The involvement of the Church in the sector of education dates back to colonial times when it responded to the work of Reverend Jean Lebrun, who was actively working towards the setting up of free primary schools to educate the poor. Because of the fear that the Anglican Church would succeed in converting coloured people to the Anglican Church, the Catholic Church opened primary schools in Port Louis, Rose-Hill and Curepipe in 1859. Until 1968, the Catholic Church had monopoly status in education when the government constructed new primary and secondary schools and introduced free education as from 1977.

The Catholic Church maintained its privileges in terms of recruitment of both teachers and students with the verdict of the Supreme court in 1987 which contests the 1978 judgment of the Solicitor General to consider teachers of Catholic schools as civil servants, paid out of state funds and

the institutionalization of 50% reserved seats in 1993. The Catholic Church has always been perceived as the privileged partner of the Ministry of Education and, its collaboration, as essential for the success of reform. There are many reasons to explain this privileged treatment. The Catholic Church is the spiritual guide of the Creoles in Mauritius and proposes to be the official representative of that particular ethnic group. The political power of the Church, vehicled through the sermons of its priests, is deemed to be a force to reckon with by many politicians. The ethnic, emotional and religious sensibilities have to be managed very carefully because the political survival of any government is dependent on how far they are perceived to be fair to the various ethnic groups. Since no ethnic group makes up for more than 50% of the population, ethnic politics have been and still are very much prevalent. In the light of this influence and the pressure exerted by the Church to maintain its privilege, the present government proposed a Memorandum of Understanding to the Church, which was signed on June 11, 2002. This Memorandum of Understanding has been criticized as it seeks to legitimize the historical, albeit discriminatory, rights of the Church.

However, the verdict of the Supreme Court in November 2002 and the Privy Council in 2003 declaring that the reservation of 50% seats in a Catholic school as anti- constitutional has forced the Church to revise its position with respect to the Reform. There has been strong pressure exerted via the press and actions in the Supreme Court and the Privy Council by the representatives of socio- cultural and religious organizations, claiming to represent Hindu and Muslims communities, to redress a historical injustice. It is argued that the system of grants was institutionalized according to the 1856 Ordinance for *"promoting elementary education among the poorer classes."*

Ramahrai (2002: 78) draws attention to the elitist character of the Catholic schools which have been reserved for a long time for the white colonizers. With this new legal configuration, the Church and the State are working out a new agreement as the Church has, after decades of resistance, decided to be a partner in the Reform. Emphasis is to be laid on providing access to the poorer sections of society. The negotiation is no longer purely bilateral, but also, multilateral because the relationship between the State and the Church has weakened since the socio-cultural organizations of other religious faiths, have exerted political pressure on the government through the media to force decisions on the part of the government.

2.5.3.2 Moral and Religious Education within a Multicultural and Secular Context

The historical evolution of religious teaching in Mauritius is closely associated with the involvement of the Catholic Church in education. When the British authorities took over the administration of the island in 1815, they wished to minimize friction with the plantocracy at that time and the Anglican and Catholic Church co-existed peacefully. When the British started building primary schools for the masses, they introduced the Conscience clause in 1877 which stipulated that Catholic religious education would not be imposed on children of a different faith (Ramdoyal 1977:90). However, under the pressure exerted by the Church this clause was abolished in 1882, but reintroduced in 1889 whilst allowing Christian students to receive religious education on the school premises. The Education Ordinance of 1944 introduces the concept of Education Authority, an agency of religious denomination administering one or more primary and secondary schools. The Ordinance confirmed that:

All government schools and all aided primary schools shall be opened to pupils of any race or religion; moral training shall be provided, and facilities shall be given for the provision of denominational religious instruction by persons approved by the Director, provided that pupils shall not be compelled to attend such denominational religious instruction against the wish of their parents or guardians.

Much of the religious instruction given in the pre-independence period was confined to Catholic religious education. For the Hindu and the Moslems, the existence of Baitkas[9] and Madrassahs[10], though operating outside the formal structure made a significant contribution to the education of the Indian immigrants by helping preserve Indian religion and culture (Ramahrai 2002:59).

In the post independence years, the Laying the Foundations Report (Richard:1979) established the concept of moral education as distinct from religious education. Richard introduced the idea of secular moral education. He states that:

It is felt that there might be a place for moral education as distinct from religious education which would look at moral issues facing our society from a secular angle and that religious socialization as such be left to the family. (Richard 1979:57)

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[9] These are traditional vernacular schools where students learn not only hindi but also about the hindu religion and culture.

[10] These are religious schools run by the Muslim religious authorities where children learn about the Qyran and Arabic as well as the Muslim culture.

Religious education had for a long time been tantamount to Catholic religious education only and in order to be fair to children of other religious faiths, oriental languages were introduced as providing some equivalent teaching. This confusion between religious and language education was further reinforced when the report "We have all been children"(1979:82) stipulates that *" Whilst one child is given tuition in his own religion the other should be able to have a similar form of tuition in a similar area".*

Language is, here, defined as the most important vector of culture and religion. Contrary to English and French, which are perceived in their purely linguistic function, an oriental language is perceived more in its socio-linguistic function, as a means of perpetuating the traditional culture and as a symbol of religious faith.

However, this confusion between the learning of languages and moral education has been maintained and was reinforced with the Richard report titled "Moral Values and Work in Education in Mauritius"(1979) which made the introduction of Civic Education a possible alternative to moral education. Richard recognized that the 1944 Ordinance safeguards the right of children to have access to religious teaching. The Richard report saw social studies as the subject through which such values as respect for others, interdependence, respect of law and tolerance could be transmitted. Richard's (1979:19) distinction between moral education and religious education and their relationship to secularism is not quite clear cut. Secularism does, in no way, preclude a recognition of the religious rights of the citizens to learn about their own religion and the religion of others, but it does not admit to such teaching within the public sphere of school.

Richard (1979:20) further contends that:

> *The secular character of most schools places them at a disadvantage in respect of moral education while the combination of moral and religious education all along the secondary school course in denominational schools kills two birds with one stone.*

Clearly, there is no reason for the secular education and moral education to be mutually exclusive, except if moral education is considered as a derivative of religious teachings. While it is true that all religions support fundamental moral principles such as freedom, justice, and beneficience, morality cannot be limited to the confines of religious teachings. Richard seemed to support a very traditional and conservative view of moral education, according to a narrow Aristotlelian approach, with emphasis on "inculcation of values". He tried, however, to move beyond the bounds of children learning about only their own religion, but rather learning about a variety of religions and their teachings with a view to spiritual development rather than adoption of religious dogmas.

2.5.3.3 The Language Problem

Mauritius is a nation of immigrants and each ethnic group possesses their own ancestral language. When the Indians arrived in Mauritius, Creole was the lingua franca of the island and since there was no official language policy, they were expected to integrate and assimilate the Creole culture. The first controversy arose when Governor Higginson and subsequently, Governor Hayre proposed that the children of immigrants be educated in their vernacular language. French had already become a compulsory subject in the primary schools as from 1890 and English was made the

official language as soon as the British took control of the island (Bunwaree 1994:108). Much of the language policy of the British colonizers and the French oligarchy was a matter of strategic planning and consensus and this has given birth to the bilingual nature of Mauritius.

The French plantocracy was firmly opposed to the idea and pressured the British administration not to pursue this idea. But an official decision could not be postponed for long given the demographic changes occurring. In 1854, the Indian immigrants made up 63% of the population and were increasingly becoming a political force to be reckoned with. The visit of Manilall Doctor and Mahatma Gandhi at the beginning of the 20th century inspired the Indians to pay more attention to the education of their children. In 1935, Hindi was introduced and the 1940s saw a struggle on the part of Indians for the official recognition of their ancestral language. Tirvassen (2002: 142) emphasizes the political importance of oriental languages and argues that despite the fact that these languages are no longer used functionally, they retain a symbolic significance regarding their origin, religion and culture. As the first Prime Minister of Mauritius, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam (Tirvassen 2002:142) stated:

> *The Indians of this island must be taught their languages, and that properly and effectively, because that is the only way in which they can preserve their culture, and also because they have not the least intention of being denationalised in the process of time.*

Because of the prevalence, even in the post independence era, of ethnic based politics, the issue of oriental languages has acquired special significance for both politicians and the population. The Education

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Ordinance of 1960 was amended to give an official status to oriental languages.

The official status of oriental languages is closely linked to their relevance to the selection process that marks the end of the primary school cycle. In 1984, a first commission was set up to investigate the possibility of including oriental languages in the ranking process but real changes were proposed with the Dulloo Report in 1993. The recommendations of this report was to take into account four of the highest scores out of five including oriental language. The proposal met strong resistance from Catholic parents who put the case before the Supreme Court. The stand of the government to support this recommendation cost it the elections in 1995 (Ramahrai 2002: 118). With the education reform, the decision has been taken is to select four of the highest scores out of six subjects.

The importance of an oriental language as a cultural transmitter is both real and perceived. For the Muslims, the learning of urdu helps children to understand the Quran. But for the Indians, their ancestral language is no longer useful in a functional way. Their attachment is to its symbolic and political significance rather than functional value. Politically their struggle to make the status of the oriental language official, is a way to assert their political and demographic power.

2.6 CONCLUSION

The history of Mauritian education is closely linked to the socio-political reality of the island. Because education is one of the pillars of the welfare state and, concurrently perceived, as a means of social mobility operating on the basis of meritocracy, educational change has, in the course of time, become a highly controversial issue.

Historically, moral education, has been linked with religious education and, even though, it has not been directly addressed in the most recent proposals for reform, it is an issue that underpins implicitly much of what the Mauritian society is trying to achieve through education.

The first official report to address implicitly the issue of multicultural education is the Richard Report. While it recognizes the necessity to include as an aim of education, intercultural understanding, it does not specify the means through which this education is to take place. The report simply states that social studies as a subject caters for multicultural education at the primary level. The brunt of the responsibility to educate children in the understanding of individual responsibility in a multicultural society and to acquire an appreciation and acceptance of the dignity of all human beings, is entirely left to the discretion of teachers. However, teachers have not received adequate training to be able to use the pedagogical approaches required to develop a multicultural outlook in their practice. What is interesting in the report is the assumption that moral education takes place through some form of multicultural education (though an additive approach is advocated). Richard (1979) argued that the school cannot ignore this mandate and that the multicultural set up of the school makes it an ideal situation to teach fundamental values.

There is presently a renewed concern about introducing some form of multicultural education at the primary level via the curriculum for citizenship education. Yet both multicultural and citizenship education have strong moral overtones which have to be explicitly articulated in terms of a programme. In the next chapter various perspectives of morality and the neeed to provide moral education at all school levels will be highlighted.

CHAPTER 3

THEORIES RELATED TO MORALITY AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR INTRODUCING MORAL EDUCATION AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The first section of this chapter looks at the theories related to morality from three foundational perspectives. The implications for moral education and role of schools are then discussed.

3.2 PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS

3.2.1 Morality and Ethics

The term 'morality' can be used descriptively to refer to a code of conduct put forward by a society, group or individual and, normatively, to refer to a code of conduct that, given specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational persons (Aspin 2000 :16).

It has long been a commonplace in the debate about the definition of morality, that moral terms are used in many different ways at different times and by different people. The search for a definition, therefore, is not a search for the one true definition which expresses all that anyone has ever meant by the term or the "true" meaning of the term. On the contrary, as Darwall (1997) highlights, the search has been for the best definition, the definition that will express the most important or the most useful of the various meanings that moral terms have in ordinary speech. In common terms, **morality** is the day-to-day practice of a group or individual's view of what is perceived to be the highest 'good'. The definition of 'good' is variable across groups and societies. Cultural, religious, gender, and even

generational differences function as lenses through which reality is filtered. They prevail in defining the vision of what is 'good' behaviour.

Ethics is the systematic philosophical study of morality and names a field of inquiry while *morality* names the object of that inquiry (Aspin 2000:21). Thus, we need to offer a definition of morality so we know what, exactly, is being studied in ethics. Broadly speaking, ethics can be divided into two major parts. One part of ethics deals with the origins and justification of our moral intuitions and is called Normative Ethics. The term 'normative' broadly means 'action guiding'. Thus, Normative Ethics is that part of ethical theory which tells us what we ought to do (this is what most people think of when they think of ethics).

The second major part of ethical theory does not deal with how to live the moral life. Thus, it is generally labeled 'Non-Normative' as it gives us no guidance. Non-Normative Ethics deals with the nature of moral language (generally labeled 'Metaethics') and the objectivity of the codes articulated under the normative side of ethical theory (Aspin 2000:22)

3.2.2 Aristotle and Virtue Ethics

In Aristotle's ethics the central question is *"What kind of person should I be?"* The focus is on character, rather than on the nature of actions, on virtues and vices, rather than on rule. Aristotle's virtues are character traits which promote *eudaimonia*, human flourishing, his vices are weaknesses of character which impede human flourishing.

Aristotle (Carr 1991:42-60) contrary to Plato and many later, post-Cartesian philosophers, proposes a non-dualist philosophical anthropology: man is not made up of two separable parts. For Aristotle the

human experience is holistic: the cognitive capacities function within a wider context of human experience which cannot be described or explained independently of a complex of social, practical, historical, cultural, and affective features. Aristotle describes morality as a matter of deliberation within frameworks of value which are received rather than constructed by the individual moral agent: we do not make up our maxims, we inherit them. (How we inherit them is a matter of 'reconstruction' rather than *ab initio* invention.) We do not create values as an *ab initio* procedure. The prevailing values, themselves, provide the context and the limit of the moral experience and the concomitant responsibility. In contrast to Socrates, Aristotle advocates an understanding of moral life which is irremediably rooted in particularities; his concern is how we should live. Morality is, in the first instance, what people do, not the rules, principles, or procedures they follow (Carr 1991:46).

3.2.3 The Deontological Approach

Kantian, or deontological ethics, presents duty as the most fundamental moral motivation. A moral action is good to the extent that it involves a person's doing, or trying to do, his or her duty. On this account a virtuous character is someone who has a disposition to do his or her duty.

We ought always to act for the sake of duty, that is, because it is the right thing to do. How do we know our duty? Our duty is to act in such a way that the maxim or principle behind our act can be willed as a universal law. It must be universalizable; this is the Categorical imperative (categorical because unconditional, an imperative because obligatory). The Categorical imperative is distinct from the hypothetical imperative, which states some course of action that is dependent on the satisfaction of desires. However, categorical imperatives are not contingent upon particular human desires.

In Kant's moral philosophy, natural feelings, passions, and emotion cannot be regarded as an enduring basis for moral action. Categorical imperatives are not dependent on contexts or feelings. They command absolutely and " *all men at all times and in all places.*" (Carr 1991:81). Duty is always supposed to prevail over inclination: what one ought to do is superior to what one wants to do. This priority dichotomises duty and inclination, reason and emotion. Kant urges us to follow the path of duty and reason even where this is contrary to our inclinations (especially where this path is contrary to our inclinations).

3.2.4 The Utilitarian Position

There are three major aspects of the utilitarian position, consequentialism, welfarism, and sum-maximization (Elias 1989:56). The goodness or badness of an action is determined entirely by the consequences of that action.

The main objective of utilitarianism is to explain the nature of ethics and morality. Utilitarianism is an ethical theory which is based upon utility, or doing that which produces the greatest happiness. According to a utilitarian, the morality of an act is found just if the consequence produces the greatest overall utility for everyone. However, if the greatest possible utility is not produced, the action is then morally wrong. This view says that a person should act in such a way so as to produce the greatest overall happiness and pleasure for everyone, who may be directly or indirectly, affected by the action (Puka 1999: 134). Therefore, a utilitarian would require that for every action, the corresponding consequences for every action, should be thoroughly weighed and alternatives proposed before deciding whether or not to perform such an action.

Consequentialist theories, of which the utilitarian position is one, are sometimes called *teleological* theories, from the Greek word *telos*, or end, since the end result of the action is the sole determining factor of its morality. Utilitarianism has no universal set of rules on to which morality is based; therefore proponents of this school of thought judge each situation individually (Elias 1989: 56). Correct moral conduct is determined solely by analyzing an action's consequences.   Utilitarianism relies on the consequences of an action, has no set universal law as each action is assessed on an individual basis,and morality is based on the results of the assessment

3.3 ETHICAL THEORIES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR MORAL EDUCATION

3.3.1 The Goal or Purpose of education

For Aristotle the goal of education is identical with the goal of man. Obviously all forms of education are explicitly or implicitly directed towards a human ideal. But Aristotle considers that education is essential for the complete self-realization of man. Ethics and education merge one into the other. Virtuous activities are what constitute happiness. There are two categories of virtue: intellectual and moral. Intellectual virtue, in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time) while moral virtue comes about as a result of habit. None of the moral virtues arises in us by nature. Aristotle concludes: 'It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather *all* the difference.'(Sinclair et al 1996:1-6). The point could not be more tersely made. Three things make men good and virtuous: nature, habit and rationality. Therefore, nature, habit and the rational principle must be brought into harmony with one another; for man is often led by reason to

act contrary to habit and nature, if reason persuades him that he ought to do so. Education is the cornerstone of Aristotelian ethics. The virtues, wisdom and happiness are acquired through education. The art of living is something to be learned. Aristotle's ethics are based on such concepts as happiness, the mean, leisure and wisdom, which we also encounter in his theory of education. The concept of the mean does not only apply to the ends of education, it is also an instrumentality, a pedagogical imperative. *"We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts."* (Sinclair et al:1996:1-6). It is through habit or active learning that natural dispositions develop. But education through habit is not limited to the learning of arts and techniques and the development of moral attitudes, but also concerns scientific education.

For Aristotle, then, education is not something to which the pupil must passively submit. On the contrary, it is action that counts. Here too, the theory of education faithfully reflects the main lines of Aristotelian philosophy as a whole. Education through habit is connected with three notions which should be mentioned: imitation, experience and memory. But imitation is also an essential source of learning and education as Darwall (1997) explains:

> *Imitation is a distinctive feature of man from his childhood: imitation separates him from the animals and it is through imitation that he acquires his earliest knowledge.Without a good example there can be no good imitation and that is true in all areas.*

But a good example is needed if imitation is to serve the cause of moral education. Some virtues and types of knowledge can only be acquired through experience.

Many proponents of character education today advocate an approach grounded in the virtue ethics (Carr & Steutel 1999:252). Basing themselves on the concept of 'habit', proponents of character education emphasize action as the measure of one's goodness. Though there are notable exceptions, for many who take this perspective, action is judged 'good' (virtuous) in terms of a moral heritage that has been handed down through in schooling, by families, in the larger public ethos, and by various other institutions in the culture. Character education advocates such as William Bennett (1988:37) and Edward Wynne (1988:424) see a moral consensus lying deep in Western culture, a consensus that defines the ideal character and good citizen. Discipline, exposure to good examples, and 'moral literacy' (knowledge of the moral tradition) are the foci of the moral pedagogy propounded by Bennett (1988:39); Wynne (1988:425) advocates supervised practice in such character-building activities as peer tutoring, caring for younger children, and taking part in group projects and competitions. Many who advocate this type of moral instruction, do so from a belief that the young should not have to discover *de novo* how to act or what it means to be good or do good. Children are dependent beings, and it is the moral responsibility of a culture and its institutions to teach them how to act properly and to conform to certain standards of what is good, fair, and right. Character educationists have emphasized:

(i)   the purposive inculcation of time-honored virtues
(ii)   attention to students' motives or their inner moral lives
(iii)   students' understanding about moral questions.

Kantian ethics has formed the basis of the moral perspective of subsequent philosophers and psychologists among which Piaget and Kohlberg. However, the implications for education are relevant and interesting. Indeed Kant argues that human beings should use their reason

to determine what is morally good. In judging the moral worth of an action, Kant privileges consideration of reason over emotion. According to Kant, actions motivated by compassion would not count as moral, even if they had beneficial consequences *"The moral person would ultimately be able to develop a logically consistent system based on maxims".* (Infield 1963:199).

Kant's postulates seems to echo much of the cognitive developmentalism perspective especially that of Kohlberg (1975: 670-677). With a Kantian conception of mature autonomous moral agents (together with a Piagetian developmental psychology) to guide their work, cognitive developmentalists focus on human beings as moral agents and on the ways in which they reason about right action. The autonomous moral agent reasons at a principled level as opposed to developmentally prior egocentric or conventional levels. The singular 'moral point of view', which all fully mature agents can discern through correct reasoning has to do with certain universal principles of justice: the equality of human rights and respect for the dignity of human beings as ends in themselves. Kant's categorical imperative stands at the summit of Kohlberg's hierarchy of moral reasoning. So, the aim of moral education is to advance students' level of moral reasoning, helping them to function at the highest level of which they are developmentally capable.

3.3.2 Deweyan Perspective on Moral Education

Dewey (1897) is critical of the separation of theory and practice, of knowing and doing by most of the philosophical tradition, and the separation of morals from the rest of practice. His understanding of moral theory is based on his general philosophy that lays more emphasis on the practical aspects of morality rather than focus on the search for

overarching principles or an overriding truth. Dewey's approach, though not entirely consequentialist, favours a case to case approach to guide decision making. As Mac Donald (2001:2) points out:

> *The correct role of principles, rules and other moral maxims is as instruments for either understanding the situation better or helping resolve a problem perceived in it. Legitimate principles embody past experience; the appeal to extra-temporal, immutable principles and ends are without support.*

His moral theory is akin to his pragmatic philosophy. For Dewey the search for general rule is futile because each moral dilemma is rooted in a unique situation that requires fresh understanding and moral evaluation. This moral evaluation is scientific in nature requiring problem solving skills identical to those used in scientific reasoning The best way then to cater for moral training, is to give children the opportunity to handle moral situations. His interpretation of moral education is, therefore, intricately connected with his understanding of the role of the school, as can be gauged by his famous declaration on education:

> *I believe that the moral education centers upon this conception of the school as a mode of social life, that the best and deepest moral training is precisely that which one gets through having to enter into proper relations with others in a unity of work and thought. The present educational systems, so far as they destroy or neglect this unity, render it difficult or impossible to get any genuine, regular moral training.*
> (Dewey 1897:77-80)

Dewey's (1916:113) concept of moral education is an offshoot of his general philosophy in the sense that is closely linked to his idea of community life of the school and the democratic processes of decision making within the school; what is moral for Dewey is necessarily social. The social processes involved in school and their ethical conduct ensures that children engage in experiences of participatory democracy and learn about 'moral rules'.

There are two aspects of morality involved in education and school. Firstly, since education is an initiation into the 'social consciousness of the race', this initiation has to be carried out in a morally acceptable way, giving full recognition to the child's powers as an individual. As Noddings (1998:103) states:

> *For Dewey, ways and means and ends and outcomes form a whole. We cannot use dictatorial means to educate democratic citizens; we cannot expect students to master skills if the skills are taught outside the domain of application; we cannot effectively teach children who are organic wholes as though they are mere collections of attributes or faculties.*

Dewey identifies a strong psychological basis on which the foundations of education can be built. For him the manner of education and its processes are as important as its content. However, this process has to unfold in a socio- moral context. What Noddings (1998:105) refers to the moral trinity of the school relates to:

  (i)   the school as a community
  (ii)   the manner in which learning is carried out
  (iii)   the school curriculum

Dewey attributes a strong moral responsibility to the school because, among all agencies of socialization, the school provides opportunities for continued communication and inquiry. His approach is both grounded on psychological principles because he sees an intimate connection between the moral, the intellectual, and social context as illustrated in the following statement.

> *We get no moral ideals, no moral standards for school life excepting as we so interpret in social terms. To understand what the school is actually doing, to discover defects in its practice, and to form plans for its progress means to have a clear conception of what society requires and of the relation of the school to these requirements (Dewey 1897:61).*

Dewey also enunciates some reservations about character education programmes which he perceives as being isolated attempts to instill values in children that may remain unconnected to their social environment. He argues, rather, for the development of habits of social conception and imagination.

Dewey's contribution to an understanding of the moral underpinnings of the educative endeavour lies in the recognition that all actions and decisions have moral connotations and more so, in the school context.

3.4 CURRENT PHILOSOPHICAL POSITIONS ON MORAL EDUCATION

Two theories have traditionally dominated the moral education landscape in philosophy of education: Aristotle (Verbeke 1990:85-104) and Dewey (Noddings 1995: 365-367). Discussion about the content and the process of moral education has been informed by these philosophical positions.

While one may tend to argue that Aristotlelian ethics have underpinned the widely embraced character education approach, and that Dewey's concept of moral thinking would support the cognitive developmentalist approach, the demarcation is not so clear cut and the link not so direct. Neither does Aristotle reject the rational and scientific elements of moral thinking nor does Dewey ignore the concept of desire and feelings.

What an exposition of these philosophers has convincingly and successfully demonstrated to us is the undisputed role of teachers and schools as moral educators. Their argument is similar to that of later philosophers like Peters (1966:25), that education as a term and as activity has important moral implications that cannot be overlooked or dismissed. Peters (1966) and later Hirst (1974: 102-111) use Kant (1964) as a starting point for building their case for moral education. They argue that the term education itself has undeniable moral connotations whether it is interpreted as a product or as a process. Implicit in Hirst's notion of education as initiation into the intellectual, cultural and spiritual traditions of a society, is the idea that initiation in the moral traditions of a society is one important aspect of education.

3.5 PSYCHOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THE CONCEPT OF MORAL EDUCATION

3.5.1.1 Piaget's Theory

The first major work in this area is that of cognitive developmentalist, Jean Piaget (Nucci 1997:87-127). One of the core assumptions of his theory on moral development is dependent on the cognitive maturity of the child, because distinguishing between matters of right and wrong requires proper judgement. This 'proper judgement' is a direct outcome of the level of children's reasoning. Piaget's theory (1932) has been based on his

observation of children at play and their understandings of the notions of rules, fairness and justice. He concludes that morality is also a developmental process, with two critical stages, which he terms heteronomous and autonomous. The heteronomous stage is characterised by a strict adherence to rules and obedience to authority. Actions are judged according to the consequences they produce and not the intention behind the action. Four concepts underlie heteronomous thinking (Nucci:1997:87-127) . They are:

(i)   Egocentrism (projection of one's thought and feelings upon others)

(ii)   Moral realism (valuing the law for its own sake)

(iii)   Immanent justice (punishment automatically follows on wrongdoing)

(iv)   The power relations between adults and children (natural authority is handed down from above)

Such an orientation will give way to autonomous thinking once children realize that strict adherence to rules becomes problematic. Piaget (1932) identified three factors that contribute to the emergence of autonomous thinking:

(i)   ability to understand the perspective of others (changes in egocentric cognitive structures)

(ii)   development of a sense of reciprocity and fairness

(iii)   increased social interactions that enables the child to co-ordinate his or her perspective with that of others.

3.5.1.2 Implications for Moral Education and Role of the Schools

The school, as one of the secondary agents of socialization, is thus, by nature, vested with the responsibility of helping the development of moral judgement. Piaget did conceive the role of morally educating children as part of the cognitive task of the school. He advocated the use of co-operative learning and problem solving to allow children to move from the heteronomous to the autonomous stage. What Piaget believed to be empowering for children was the interaction between the developing intelligence and the social environment. As Elias (1989:79) puts it *"Piaget did not see much value in the teaching of morality to children by issuing rules of behaviour"*.

Resorting to direct teaching of rules may in effect be counterproductive because it may reinforce the moral realism by calling for submissive obedience to adult authority. Rather, moral maturity is demonstrated by an ability to realize the relativity and fallibility of viewpoints, a realization which is fostered by social interaction.

3.5.2.1 Kohlberg's Theory

Basing his thinking on the work of Piaget, Kohlberg (Molnar 1997:82-83) elaborated his theory of moral development. He refined considerably the work of his predecessor contending that socio-moral development took longer and was more gradual than Piaget thought, spanning over adulthood. Central to his theory are the concepts of justice, fairness, welfare and equality similarly to Piaget (Cummings & Harlow 2000: 300-307), but unlike the latter, his research led him to the conclusion that there are three levels of moral development, each distinct from the other in terms of socio- moral perspective. Level one, the preconventional level is similar

to Piaget's heteronomous reasoning. However, Kohlberg (Nucci 2002:3), contrary to Piaget, believed that perspective taking starts at this stage, though it is purely on an egocentric basis focusing on the instrumental value of an action of the rules and norms that uphold society and identifies himself or herself with the shared perspective of families and community and subsequently with larger society. The third level, known as the post conventional level, relates to the ability to draw ethical principles that are not necessarily those expected by society (prior to society perspective). These principles are more like moral laws that guide decision making and they are based on principles that cut across cultures and societies. The end point of Kohlberg's hierarchy, the second stage of the post conventional, is a theoretical possibility, a rational endpoint to the previous five stages, rather than an empirically proven stage.

3.5.2.2 Implications for Moral Education and Role of Schools

Kohlberg (Jeary 2001:2) was sceptical of both the traditional Aristotlelian approach and values clarification approach which conceive of moral education as the explicit teaching of virtue. According to him, moral education should focus on helping the child progress to a qualitatively different socio-moral perspective, by enabling him to participate in processes of democratic decision-making within the school context. The role of the school is therefore to provide an environment, which challenges the moral reasoning of children, and force them to see the contradictions in their reasoning. As Nucci (2002:4) argues:

> *While Kohlberg appreciated the importance and value of such moral dilemma discussions, he held from very early on that moral education required more than individual reflection, but*

also needed to include experiences for students to operate as moral agents within a community.

Kohlberg believed that democratic processes have to be built into the school's functioning and developed his concept of the Just Community Approach. There are three key features of this approach:

(i) Small size of the school- to enable community building and interaction

(ii) Community Meetings- to allow discussion based on the principle of justice and fairness

(iii) Participatory decision taking- to enable students to make a link between thinking and action.

The teachers have a crucial role in helping students address moral dilemmas when taking decisions relating to the management of the school or welfare of its members. They need to understand the students' reasoning to be able to show them the limits of their reasoning.

Kolhberg's recognition of the social role and potential of the school for moral education is a valuable one. Relying heavily on the Deweyan concept of democratic education, he attributes to schools a crucial role in morally socializing children. His approach is, to some extent, reminiscent of Kant's moral philosophy where justice is the core value around which his theory revolves.

3.5.3. Turiel's Theory

In an attempt to resolve the anomalies that appeared in the research carried out in the 1970s, Turiel (Nucci 1997:87-127) made major

adjustments to Kohlberg's theory. He attributed the anomalies to a more fundamental shortcoming of his predecessor's theory. Within the domain theory that he developed, Turiel distinguishes between two types of social reasoning, one associated with an increasing awareness of social rules and norms and the other, centered around the concepts of harm, welfare and fairness. The distinctive quality of the moral action has to do with the intrinsic interpersonal consequences of the action as Nucci (2002:5) puts it:

> *Conventions provide a way for members of the group to coordinate their social exchanges through a set of agreed upon and predictable modes of conduct. Concepts of convention then, are structured by the child's understandings of social organization.*

Conventions and morality are therefore two parallel developmental frameworks, social experience and interaction may require the individual to co-ordinate their understanding from both of those cognitive frameworks. The most significant contribution of Turiel (1983: 23-45) has been the recognition that both adults and children can make more morally oriented decisions based on fairness and welfare.

3.5.3.1 Implications for Moral Education and Role of Schools

The implications of domain theory for values education are several. First, the identification of a domain of moral cognition that is tied to the inherent features of human social interaction, means that moral education may be grounded in universal concerns for fairness and human welfare, and is not limited to the particular conventions or norms of a given community and takes into account the moral core of all major religious system.

Second, the "domain appropriate" approach demands that the teacher analyses and identifies, prior to the class, the moral or conventional nature of social values issues to be discussed in values lessons. Issues discussed have to be concordant with the domain of the values dimension they are intended to affect (Turiel et al 1991:56-62). The role of the teacher is to focus student activity (verbal or written) on the underlying features concordant with the domain of the issue. Thus, students dealing with a moral issue would be directed to focus on the underlying justice or human welfare considerations of the episode. With respect to conventions, the focus of student activity would be on the role of social expectations and the social organizational functions of such social norms.

Teachers are also better enabled to lead students through consideration of more complex issues which contain elements from more than one domain (Nucci 2001:91). By being aware of the developmental changes that occur in students' comprehension of the role of social convention, and related changes in students' understanding of what it means to be fair or considerate of the welfare of others, teachers are able to frame consideration of complex social issues in ways that will maximize the ability of students to comprehend and act upon the moral and social meaning of particular courses of action.

3.5.4. Gilligan's theory

Gilligan (1982: 32-69) highlighted potential difference that may exist between men and women's notion of morality. She argues that the basis for morality differs fundamentally genderwise. Due to girls' attachment to and early identity connection with their mothers, girls develop a morality based on an ethics of care rather than justice whereas boys individuate earlier and are more conscious of equality and autonomy. However, the

preponderance of research tends to show that both genders use an ethics of care and justice. Despite this lack of empirical support, Gilligan has drawn our attention to an important aspect of morality which is caring.

The objections of Gilligan to Kohlberg' theory is that our moral actions are not merely motivated by logic and reason, though we may use them to decide what to do and how best to do them but we cannot trace our moral obligations to reason alone.

3.5.4.1 Implications for Moral Education and Role of the School

Programmes following Gilligan's (Kazemek 1989:76-81) approach have tended to emphasize the need for developing empathy and care responses. The educational implications of her approach have been taken up by Noddings (1995 137-146). This approach requires people to take their time, and to allow human relationships to develop, under the belief that when these relationships develop, so does the individual. Human interaction is still the most transformative as Martin Buber (1965:743-777) mentions. His I-Thou relationship – the idea that meaningful relations between people is what brings us into a relationship with God – that is used as a comparison for Noddings' work. The schools are, therefore, just as other agents of socialisation, responsible for developing an ethics of care by the schools's own demonstration of care for its students. The first job of the school is to care for the children, that is, schools should promote the growth of students as healthy and competent moral people. Education, then, is fundamentally moral - aimed at producing moral people, using moral purposes, policies and practices. By diversifying the range of educational activities, Noddings (Kazemek 1989:81) proposes a multiplicity of educational models to accommodate the multiple capacities and interests of children.

3.6 THE SOCIOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF MORALITY

3.6.1.1 Emile Durkheim

Durkheim's work suggests a clear cut relationship between religion and morality because he situates both in the social context. As Schilling and Mellor (1998) state:*"What is moral is everything that is the source of solidarity, everything that forces man to regulate his actions by something other than… his own egoism."*

Durkheim's notion of morality is closely connected with his concept *of homo duplex.* This is the idea that individuals are internally divided in two natures. On the one hand, there are the egoistic impulses that any individual has and on the other hand, the capacity to reach beyond the passions of egoistic nature to the realm of conceptual thought and moral activity. Through participation in society, people are predisposed to look at the world in a collective way and develop shared cognitive perspectives and practices. The realization that man, as an individual, can be transformed by a superior power, not only finds expression in the rational, cognitive and moral dimensions of man, but may also take the quality of the sacred and becomes spiritual and religious. For Durkheim (Turner, 1990:1089):

> *We know that morals are a product of the society, that they permeate the individual from without and that in some respects they do violence to his physical nature and his natural temperament, we can understand the better that morals are what the society is and that they have force only so far as society is organized.*

There are five ways in which the social and the moral is related in Durkheim's theory (Turner: 1990:1089-1103).

(i)   An action is seen as moral if it is aimed at achieving a social end (the common good), that is, the intention.

(ii)   An action is moral only if it is motivated by social or altruistic sentiments, that is, the motivation.

(iii)   An action is moral when it is socially prescribed in accordance with collective ideals and values, that is, the referent.

(iv)   The social context is a precondition for the existence of morality in both the empirical and philosophical senses.

(v)   Moral codes are socially determined by moral authorities (institutionalization).

His view of morality has often been criticized as constraining probably because he considered that morality resulted from social interaction or immersion in a group. According to Durkheim (Carr: 1991:111), the concept of morality entails three essential elements. The first one, discipline, involves both the need to yield to the moral order and the need to restrict impulse. Discipline controls impulse, recognizes the moral law, and subjugates the individual to that law.

Group attachment, conceived as the collective ideal that attracts us, is the second element of morality. Discipline, on the other hand, is conceived as that which commands us. The third element of morality is autonomy, or self-determination. A fundamental axiom of morality is that the human being is, in Durkheim's words, the "sacred thing par excellence" (Durkheim 1961:11). The conformity implicit in morality in its mature form is not the result of physical constraint or external imposition; rather, it is the result of individual reflection that deems conformity as good because there is no better alternative for social life. This conformity is liberation and not resignation because it is based on enlightened acceptance.

3.6.1.2 Implications for Moral Education and The Role of the School

Elias (1989:107) argues that *"…the school has the potential for imposing discipline and the good order as well as fostering group purpose in which the individual are subordinated to the group."*The goal of moral education is to develop in the child the elements of morality: discipline, attachment to the group and autonomy. In the moral education of very young children, the teacher may use authority to impose moral rules and use punishment to show disapproval of violations of those rules but as children's conceptual and reasoning powers develop, the teacher's task becomes more one of reasoning. "*The process of moral education thus strives to shift children gradually from deference to authority to an internal, self-chosen moral orientation.*" (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Report on Character Education: 1998).

The classroom is an ideal transitional stage between the affective morality of the family and society's more impartial morality. One function of the school is to bridge the gap between the personal moral system of the home, based on love and intimacy, and the impersonal moral system of society, based on collective self-interest. Given the assumptions that Durkheim makes on the nature of morality, as simply an aspect of socialization where values and norms are transmitted, moral development was considered by him as a natural result of attachment to the group. This attachment manifests itself in a respect for the symbols, rules and authority of that group.

Schooling, of course, is more than the transmission of abstract knowledge and modes of thinking. Through the study of the social sciences and the humanities and through classroom experiences, children can gain insights that help them move to a mature morality. In this way, morality that is

originally based on deference to authority can gradually broaden to include attachment to groups and, finally, through reason and study, develop into an autonomous acquiescence.

Building on Durkheim (1961:10), moral education can be seen as a process by which young children are brought into the moral life of society. Although the process necessarily requires different kinds of experiences at different ages, the content of moral education and its final goal remain constant. The content is the moral values that regulate and give stability to our social life; the goal is to produce autonomous individuals who know those moral values and are committed to acting in a manner consistent with them. As other functionalists, Durkheim has emphasized that schools are instruments of moral socialization through both the explicit and hidden curriculum.

The criticisms to this approach have been numerous and can be understood in the context of theories of social reproduction such as those of Bowles and Gintis (1976) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1970). Basing themselves on a neo Marxian perspective, and, using a class based approach, they highlight the dominance of the elite whose moral codes are projected as being the ideal. (Ballion 1998: 60-63). Morality is thus conceived as part of the superstructure with a deliberate oppressive agenda. The school is then considered to be a symbolic social institution, which contributes to social reproduction by means of the hidden curriculum, which serves to legitimate the values of the dominant classes.

3.6.2.1 Karl Marx

Marx's contribution to the definition of morality has been significant in the sense that he brings together two traditions in moral thought (Amato 2000).

In a way, there is a similarity between Marx and Dewey as both reject the idea of abstract rules guiding ethical behaviour. Rather they believe that the only way we can refer to moral claims is by observing moral action. However, unlike Dewey, Marx helps us refocus our inquiry away from individual wills toward the historical and social intentions instantiated in the structures and processes of a mode of life. An analysis of this mode of life and structures is in itself moral praxis. In contrast to Kant (1987:28) whose moral principles are determined à *priori,* Marx situates morality in the realm of the concrete, in our material desires. This 'situatedness' grounds morality in a historical and empirical perspective because it is the only part of morality that is available to judge our moral claims. Indeed, he seems to suggest that the only 'material' (empirical) evidence that exists to judge our claims are our actions as embedded in the history of man. This analysis is primarily à *posteriori.*

3.6.2.2 Implications for Moral Education and the Role of School

Marx's materialism draws our attention to the impossibility of deriving moral claims that are not rooted in both the individual and collective reality. Within the school system, moral education would therefore involve helping students analyse their actions and reflect on their underpinnings. Such a position seems to echo the underlying philosophy of critical pedagogy of Freire (Giroux & Mclaren 1986: 213-238). Freire believed that education should serve as a means of emancipation of people. Current educational practices, he argues, are reflective of the 'banking' concept of education because it involves teachers depositing dead knowledge in the minds of pupils. Education is an institutionalised from of oppression because it ensures the transmission of the knowledge, attitudes and values of the elite and not the mass. The only way to overcome this oppression is to use education as a transformative agenda (Freire 1972:81).

Indeed, there is a consonance between Marx and Freire, although they belong to radically different schools of thought. The contribution of Marx to the field of education is made explicit in the critical pedagogy of Freire. Marxist revolutionary politics and analysis have been used to show how in many societies schools function to impose repressive capitalist values. If education is to be conceived and used differently, it can become an instrument of change. This kind of education has become known as critical (sometimes dialogical) pedagogy and it involves teachers using classrooms for a critique of bourgeois ideology or the worldviews of the oppressors (Mac Laren 1995:1-87).

Central to this understanding of education, is Freire's notion of critical or emancipatory literacy. For Freire, literacy is central to what it means to be human. He explores the complexities of this understanding in his writings. At heart, Freire understands literacy *as "a creative act that involves the critical comprehension of reality"*. As such, literacy becomes "*a vehicle by which the oppressed are equipped with the necessary tools to re-appropriate their history, culture, and language practices."* (Freire 1972:156)

Freire (1972:53), true to Marxian philosophy, believes that morality, when it is institutionalized leads to oppression as it seeks to subjugate the will and consciousness of people. He conceives of education as a liberating force by enabling people to be critically conscious of their existence. For Marx and Freire, to educate morally is to help people emancipate and take control of their lives by becoming aware of the different ways in which the elite is perpetuating oppressive practice. This is conceived as a collective act firmly grounded in the realities (materialistic and otherwise) of the people.

The role of the school, according to Freire (Nash 1997:104), can be situated at two broad levels. Firstly, the school should enable this collective process of thinking and questioning current practices. School life offers the opportunity for interaction and discussion but is, simultaneously, itself a social institution which may be legitimising and reproducing the oppressive practices. The school alternately offers the possibility for experiencing first hand liberative practices, if a conscious effort is made and an explicitly emancipatory agenda adopted (Freire 1972: 60-95).

Secondly, the school, through critical pedagogy, should help to develop critical thinking which enables the person to develop independent thought and the ability to realize his humanity.

3.7 TOWARDS A WORKING UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT OF MORAL EDUCATION: SYNTHESIS FROM PHILOSOPHY , SOCIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY

Philosophical analysis directs us towards an understanding of the assumption that underlies our concepts of moral educatio. Psychology, on the other hand, generates understanding of how the individual develops moral thought across various stages of life. Sociology highlights the interaction between individual thought and the social processes in the formation of the moral self. In each discipline the distinct traditions that have directed thought, have also served to enrich our understanding of the concept of moral education.

The attempt to reconcile the differing philosophical anthropology of Kant and Aristotle and examine their relative degree of truthfulness, falls outside the purview of this work. It is, nevertheless, relevant to analyse the implications of those two philosophical positions.

The Kantian conceptualisation posits one major consideration when deciding upon the moral worth of an action, that is, the individual must be able to make a moral judgment. This involves:

(i) Assessing the possible consequences of alternative courses of action for oneself and others.

(ii) Weighing these consequences in terms of what one thinks is one's duty and in society's interest

(iii) Evaluating the alternatives with respect to one's moral principles which could be in agreement or in conflict with the moral norms of society.

The appeal of Kantian ethical theory lies in its emphasis on a universal moral law that is apprehended by both reason and faith, in its emphasis on our duty to do good and be good. Much of this philosophical grounding had a definite influence on cognitive and developmental psychology of Piaget and eventually, Kohlberg.

This position seems to be in conflict with an Aristotlelian approach which highlights the importance of habit and character in moral decision-making, rather than the following of predetermined abstract rules that are not grounded in the cultural experience of the individual. Aristotle draws our attention to the reconstructedness of our moral experience. We respond to moral situations in a *characteristic* way, that is, we are conditioned by our cultural experience, our emotions and our cognitive set up. Our thoughts and rational self (to which Kant thinks we should appeal to make a decision) are embedded in our emotional self and cannot be construed independently.

These two philosophical positions have given rise to two concepts of moral education: the first conceives of moral education as character formation, where the school deliberately seeks to influence students' character by adult modeling and other conscious activities; the second, where the school seeks to create the conditions where critical thinking and reasoning is developed as a means to give to children the cognitive and emotional tools to deal with moral problems. Whilst one resorts to deliberate actions determined by adults, the other promotes the use of deliberative and dialogical processes as the cornerstone of the role of the school in promoting morality. The former proposes a formal curriculum to introduce character education programmes aimed at teaching certain values, while the latter, operates more through the hidden curriculum.

The proponents of character education programmes conceive of schooling in its functional perspective and seriously consider the moral socialization role of schooling. From a mere acquiescence to the moral authority of adults this approach eventually targets an 'enlightened acceptance' that comes with the mature understanding of the why of societal norms and principles. The influence of Durkheim on such a conceptualistion of the role of schooling in providing moral education cannot be overlooked as compared to the more interrogative mode proposed by the proponents of the Just Community School Approach. This approach, though advocating a more participatory input from students in the decision-making processes of the schools and reflexive autonomy, still conceives of the role of adults as central in showing to students the limits of their reasoning. These two positions are in opposition to the values clarification approach that views the teacher's role as a facilitator rather than a guide[11].

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[11] The guide, as compared to the facilitator, has a more directive role as he/ she knows the truth and 'guides' the person so that he/she can find it. The facilitator only helps the individual finds his/her own way.

Historically, the movement of values clarification as an approach to moral education is grounded in the philosophy of 'do not impose' initiated in the tumultuous 1960s in America. According to Leming (Molnar: 1997:36)*"The proposed solution was not to attempt to restore a sense of traditional values to youth, but rather to assist them in clarifying their current values."* Values clarification is also based on a cognitive developmentalist approach that functions on the maxim ' know thyself'. Based on the premise that values change over time and that values are individually determined (relative) and change over time in response to changing life experiences. Recognizing these changes and understanding how they affect one's actions and behaviours is the goal of the values clarification process.

For the purpose of values clarification, Raths et al (1966:245-289) identified three categories: choosing, prizing and acting. The value must be chosen freely from a list of alternatives, only after thoughtful consideration has been given to the consequences of each alternative. The value must be translated into behaviours that are consistent with the chosen value and integrated into the life style.

Values clarification is grounded in a philosophy of relativism that seems to be in contrast with both Kantian and Aristotlelian philosophies. The trend, however, in many industrialized countries is to revert back to a more shared moral perspective, Moral education is often perceived as a means to address the social issues in contemporary society.

3.8 CONCLUSION

The current literature is witness to the debate between those favouring both the implicit and explicit character education programmes and those who fall more in line with the cognitive and social perspective offered by

educational psychologists like Piaget and Kohlberg whose theories of education tend to support a programme of moral education that is articulated through the hidden curriculum. Banking more heavily on the development of moral reasoning and critical thinking, the overview provided in this chapter traces the origin of the morality in the various disciplinary traditions and highlights their impact on educational ideas.

However, those varying procedures of morality and moral education are also expressed in the different cultural contexts where the life experiences of individuals and the psychological set up, shape both individual and societal notions of morality, moral education. Aristotle, Dewey, Durkheim and Marx provide grand narratives that underpin the general framework. However, adding flesh to the bones of those theories demands that we understand the particulars as embedded in the socio-cultural evolution of a particular society. If moral education as stated in Section 1.7.1 (Exploration, Background to the problem) is closely linked to the furtherance of democratic ideals and citizenship, then an analysis of the socio-historical development of a nation is a prerequisite for generating insights on perceptions of moral education. To these considerations, we now turn in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

CULTURE AS A CONTEXT FOR MORAL EDUCATION

4.1 THE RELEVANCE OF CULTURE ON PERCEPTIONS OF MORAL EDUCATION

4.1.1 Definition of culture

Culture, in the context of this work, refers to a network of shared meanings to which certain people have access and from which they draw to communicate with and recognize one another (Feinberg 1998:95-151). We can distinguish basically between what we call a thick or thin interpretation of the term. In the former case, culture may simply designate the things that we take for granted when interacting with others of the same culture. The term here is employed in a behavioural sense. The thick definition of culture tends to be more semiotic and cognitive and refers to a network of taken for granted elements, beliefs or practices through which meaningful interaction develop. The crux about both of those definitions is that culture involves shared meaning making. The views and beliefs that human beings form in their pursuit of happiness to organize and structure their individual and collective lives represent the foundation of culture (Parekh 2000:142-156). These views and beliefs are shared and the perceptions that they produce and which are distinct to the cultural group become the distinguishing characteristic of that group. Culture has therefore an exclusionary and symbolic aspect in the sense that it carries the idea of group belongingness (Feinberg 1998:95-151). Yet, there is another definition that views culture as not existing independently of people's minds, but rather as mental representations, interwoven and embodied in symbols.

Culture is therefore embedded in the daily activities of people and takes shape in shared perceptions about enactment of roles, goal setting, and the resolution of conflicts. It does not exist objectively and independently of people's perception and negotiation of it (Killen and Hart 1995: 285-288)

From this definition, it follows that culture influences our values and understanding of right and wrong. However, the degree to which culture has a deterministic role on the individual is dependent upon the nature of interactions and the social setting. An understanding of the role and influence of culture on an individual's construction of morality requires a consideration of the various theoretical positions concerning the notion of self.

4.1.2 The Notion of Self

The concept of self or personhood is multifaceted and multidimensional taking its sources in philosophy and is articulated in psychology, sociology and anthropology.

There are broadly six philosophical and psychological notions of the self (Van der Ven 1998:110):

(i)   Substantialness: Under this concept, internal consciousness is viewed as the defining criteria of the self. It distinguishes the self from its external environment.

(ii)   Bundle: The self is perceived as being made up of different psychological states.

(iii)   Eidetic: The self is a construction, a schema that organises the diverse experiences.

(iv)   Noumenal: The self is perceived as 'a purely formal unifying principle of subjectivity'.

(v)   Dialectical: The self is embedded and imbedded in the network of
       social relations

(vi)   Identity: The self is perceived as a narrative and interpretive
       agent within a context.

One tradition looks at the self as a transcendental and unified being, conscious of itself as independent and distinct from others. The 'I' is related to self-awareness and consciousness in the tradition of the Enlightenment. The other looks at the self as a product of the interaction with the social learning. Further, within the theory and research about the self, we commonly distinguish between the spiritual and social self but little mention is made of the development of the moral self and the role of culture in that process.

4.1.3 The Cultural Embeddedness of the Self

Two clear traditions emerge here: one that conceives of the self as a purely internal and self-contained entity independent of the outside world and a second, which takes into account the interpersonal relationship, the dialogical orientation of the self. This second understanding seems to corroborate with the consensus reached within the field of cross-cultural psychology that recognize both the inter and the intra-personal dimensions of the self.

As Saltzstein (1997: 51-67) puts it, differences do exist within culture heterogeneity which is the result of the multifaceted experiences and judgments of individuals. In fact, he sees those differences as stemming from two significant factors:

(i)   The different position of authority and social power belonging to different individuals and their resultant understanding of values.

(ii)   The need for personal space that is a crucial psychological requirement for the well being of individuals irrespective of their cultural background.

These two aspects impinge to a large extent on the individual's commitment to upholding the values embedded in his/her culture and account for the diversity within the culture. Basing his thinking on contemporary studies of human development, Saltzstein (1997:58) explicates that all human beings experience themselves as agents capable of decision-making and initiation of action and the self is a discrete social being with a bounded personal identity.

Cultural construction of the self centers round this bi-polar definition of the individual and collective but cultural variations exist that tend to support the assumption that the personal is constructed out of social interactions (Feinberg 1998: 95-151). This view contradicts the argument of many cultural theorists that the self is solely constructed either socially or culturally. The cross cultural variations that emerge from research findings (Nucci 1996:1223-1242) are indicative of a common core which is characterized by the psychological need of maintaining autonomy over a personal sphere together with a shared perceptive that is given by the cultural set up. The notion of 'I' is considered to be a fundamental psychological pre-requisite for functioning in any social order. The individual is not only an object of socialization but is also reflexive. The existence of a personal sphere across all cultures serves to demonstrate that the "I" is not a passive recipient on which society acts, but is also interrogative and participative, actively constructing a coherent, holistic world view.

4.1.4 Culture as the Context for Developing the Moral self

The dialogical and narrative negotiation of the self, which emerges out of a pattern of social interaction, is mediated by culture. Since the social self (Van der Ven 1998: 110) is actively constructed during participation in activities which have shared and symbolic meanings, it follows that culture provides the meta framework within which those interactions take place. The implications for understanding the importance and influence of culture on the development of the moral self are two-fold. Firstly, this position contradicts the philosophical tradition of the Enlightenment where the moral self is related to a formalized subjectivity which regulates thinking perception and behaviour consciousness. Secondly, conceptions of self, society, and morality are transmittable to children and reflected through the organization of the family and the society at large(Killen & Hart 1995: 286).

In the context of the present work, culture is therefore the dominant configuration around which moral socialization takes place because it provides the overarching orientation for the development of the self (Parekh 2000:150).

4.2. MAURITIUS AS A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY
4.2.1 A Socio-historical Perspective

Mauritius is a relatively young nation with a history spanning just over two centuries. The pre- independence era is marked by two important colonial periods: French and British which have strongly influenced the social, political and cultural set up of the island (refer sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3).

The institutional history of Mauritius is based on immigration from three different continents: Europe mainly France, Asia and Africa. The early

dominant national group was the French, who were later to become the Franco Mauritians. They maintained control over the island's resources. The subsequent flow of slaves from Madagascar and Mozambique and the Asian immigrants completed the peopling of the island.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, the French were able to maintain economic and cultural hegemony despite an official British administration through the control of various key institutions like the Church (Selvon 2002: 197). At the social level, segregation along the criteria of race, ethnicity and religion was rigorously maintained through a number of practices which have taken various forms.

The French, particularly, maintained strict social boundaries with other ethnic groups, and considered that marriages with other racial groups threatened the purity of their blood and that a distinct demarcation line was to be drawn between the ruled and the rulers. However, the arrival of the missionaries in the 19th century changed the cultural landscape to some extent due to a massive proselytisation of the slaves and their conversion to Catholicism (Ramdoyal 1977: 27). The Indians had their own religion and culture but the slaves, it was believed, had to be culturally and spiritually uplifted through the teachings of the Gospel. This belief did not find strong supporters among the French plantocracy because this could eventually meant the emancipation of the slaves. However, proselytisation speeded up the assimilation of the slaves whose culture was portrayed as decadent by missionaries. The villages of the fishermen and artisans which consisted mainly of descendants of African origin and people of mixed origin were scattered all along the coastal regions and unlike the Indians, interaction between those villages were minimal. It is very much likely that this geographical factor coupled with beliefs of the missionaries that these people were in the most need of spiritual guidance meant that in a

relatively short span of time, the Creoles came to be completely " 'deculturised' and 'acculturised' to the European model which they was expected to emulate (Addison and Hazareesingh 1984:74-79). The French tried to resist by all means these pressures by influencing educational and language policies in favour of assimilationist set up. They sought to integrate the Indians into what they termed a "Mauritian culture".

The 20th century witnessed strong and repeated political agitation that marks the beginning of a class struggle which was indicative of a fundamental change operating within the core of Mauritian society. Not only are the political implications of this era substantial in terms of democracy and citizenship, but they are also revealing of the basic processes of nation building at work in the pre-independence period which have impinged upon the identity construction of the various components of what is commonly termed the rainbow nation (Varma 1977:119).

4.2.2 Monoculturalism versus Multiculturalism

Mauritian multiculturalism has been the product of its history and till now our varied cultural mosaic is perceived as an economic and social strength despite the complications that arise in terms of nation building and citizenship.

Having analysed the impact of those historical forces upon the birth of the Mauritian society, we now turn to a contemporary analysis. In economic jargon, the Mauritian case is something of a miracle, having managed to overcome the twin problems of inflation and unemployment. Less has, however, been achieved in terms of social and human development and little has been done politically in terms of strengthening democratic values, citizenship and nation building.

The economic prosperity of the island led to the emergence of a large middle class in the 1980's. Western influence on the island has remained present, even after independence due to tourism and the media. Higher standards of living have also meant greater access to goods and services and more demanding aspirations on the part of the middle class. Government policy aimed at promoting investment and consumption has also chalked out patterns of consumption that have altered the lifestyle and expectations of Mauritians in general.

The above-mentioned changes have had a definite impact on the values and value systems of Mauritius. From a primarily traditional society based on collective values and maintaining conservative structures, there emerged what is apparently a more flexible set up. However, the cultural landscape is not so simple and straightforward as it seems. Most people would readily compartmentalise and oppose those definite trends in the cultural history of the island: some perceived it as being traditional and rigid where little interaction took place, and others, as being as the other fluid and flexible (Alber 1990:5-32). Reciprocity and social relationship have always characterized inter-cultural relations in Mauritius.   The Mauritian society of the early 20th century may well have been more liberal in many ways. In the study of senior citizens of a disadvantaged area of the capital, Easton (Asgarally 1997:49-64), points out the reminiscence of an era where a spirit of fraternity prevailed among the large majority of working class, is common among senior citizens. Intercultural bonding took place by open invitations to members of other groups to participate in the religious festivals. Such participation complemented the already existing socialization process that was already in place in other spheres of life. That proximity among different cultural groups was more prevalent among the working class. This can be explained in terms of the solidarity that

characterizes interaction between people of lower income groups (Mariaye and Varma 2004:49-67).

Standards of living increased and as a large section of the working class acceded to the lower middle class, these bonds were seriously weakened for various reasons. Firstly, relationships among middle class citizens function more on a competitive rather than collaborative basis with emphasis on 'keeping up the appearances'. Changing patterns of consumption were accelerated by facilities of hire purchases and enhanced aspirations for a more Western lifestyle created by the media and supported by shifting value systems. This had a unifying effect on cultural make up. The common core emerged characterizing both the public and private sphere. In the public sphere, the adoption of democracy with its focus on individual rights and merit has oriented perceptions and representations towards a more materialistic outlook that redefined indicators of success.

4.2.3 An Interpretation of the Mauritian Experience

Walzer (Tamir 1995:3-57) identifies two basic institutional histories that can possibly explain the socio-historical evolution of the Mauritian society, that of modern nation state and immigrant society. Both of these explanations are interlinked and interdependent. Mauritius is by nature a nation of immigrants. However, unlike the model proposed by Tamir, the indigenous people were not displaced nor were the immigrants forced into a certain neutrality that is so closely identified with secularism as we usually understand the concept. What is unique in the Mauritian experience is that both individual groups and the state itself is actively committed to maintaining religious and cultural life, national memories and customs. The state is equally close and respectful of the different religions although the

102

Catholic Church is the most organised and influential religious lobby representing the French interest. In this function the Catholic Church entered into conflict with the British administration especially with regard to education.

Thirty-five years after independence, the emergence of the Mauritian nation is still awaited for. Though many Mauritians would not wish to return to the country of origin of their ancestors, the trend has been to actively encourage a revival of the ties with the old countries. Many reasons can explain the lack of success in building a nation. These are as follows:

(a) Our inability to derive a common language. While the official language is English, the language of social mobility and upliftment is French. However the only language that is understood and spoken by over 95% of the population, Creole, is not recognised as the *lingua franca* of the island.

(b) Religion is understood as the major vector of identity and hence culture. Religious denominations have served to categorise Mauritians for a long time. Until only very recently, the Central Statistical Office used religious background and affiliations as one of the means of analysing the composition of the Mauritian population. Only during the last census that the presentation on an ethnic and religious basis has been banned.

(c) Our constitution itself recognises and promotes this religious and ethnic separation through the best loser system which was introduced at the time of independence to allay the fears of religious and ethnic minorities (Alber 1990: 5-32). The National Assembly consists of sixty-

two elected members and eight best losers to balance ethnic representation.

(d) The education system itself serves to further enhance the commitment to religion and culture rather than reinforcing the processes of nation building. Historically the curriculum was mauritianised after the students' riots of May 1975 but the system has remained grafted on the 6+5+2 model with a definite elitist bias, characteristic of a colonial society. A national curriculum was eventually developed and the official medium of instruction is English even at the primary level although a significant section of the population are not literate in English. This language barrier serves as a selection mechanism enabling those who master it to take advantage of the system (Bunwaree 1997: 139-176). Though oriental languages are taught at all levels, the practice of selecting a language is based on religious and ethnic grounds. Thus, education policies, whether intentionally or not, have legitimised and reinforced segregation.

(e) Various court decisions on inter ethnic matters pertaining to the Muslim personal law or to educational matters related to the issue of 50% reserve seat in Catholic schools, have demonstrated the difficult task of the State to find a flexible balance between the universalistic principle and the particularistic individual fundamental rights (Waldis 2003: 383-397). These decisions have in some way encouraged an understanding that the system of justice is subject to religious scrutiny.

The influence of the above mentioned factors have been mediated by the use of ethnic based politics that emerged in the pre-independence period (see section 2.1) and which have persisted till today. This system has the special characteristic of ensuring that each ethnic group was properly

represented and that the rights of none were thwarted. However, it also forestalled and jeopardised in a fundamental way the possibility of creating a genuine democracy. As Bunwaree (1994:168) argues, the process of nation building in the years just after independence focused entirely on laying the economic foundation of the island and there was no real concern for constructing democratic citizenship despite the political assurances of the various governments. Miller (1995: 65) considers that the loyalty required for active citizenship conflicts with the loyalty to ethnic and cultural groups. In Mauritius this conflict has become evident in education where the desire of the Catholic Church desires to maintain autonomy over its confessional colleges (financed out of state funds) and continue to recruit officially 50% of its students from the Catholic community only. Both of these practices interfere with the democratic rights of citizens of other religious faiths.

4.3 CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR MULTICULTURAL MAURITIUS

The challenge of a multicultural Mauritius has been to integrate the various perspectives offered by different religions and cultures into a shared notion of citizenship. Miller's (1995:63-66) interpretation seems to point towards the issue of reconciling the values of the various cultural communities as a stepping stone for building national identity. The constant tension between religious/ ethnic/cultural identity and national identity has often turned out in favour of the former. An important outcome of this analysis is the issue of shared values that could be developed by broadening the aims of multicultural education to include those of moral education.

However, Miller's view is in opposition with what Taylor (1992b: 68-70) believes to be essential for nation building in multicultural societies, that is the recognition of the value and specificity of each cultural group through a

105

multicultural curriculum. Unlike Miller, he perceives cultural loyalty as a potentially enabling factor and a precondition in which the democratic ideal can be realised. Taylor's position seems to reflect the Mauritian model which has adopted a policy of equal and official recognition of the various ethnic groups that make up this cultural mosaic. But the Mauritian experience has also been significantly different from what Taylor foresees. The politics of equal recognition has encouraged cultural immurement which has been actively promoted for political purposes. There are several socio-historical factors that have helped initiate and perpetuate this phenomenon.

4.3.1 The Pattern of Settlement

The possibility of acquiring land and property by the Indian immigrants significantly altered the demographic set up of the island. Indians created small villages around their acquired property mainly in rural areas whereas the slaves, once liberated, settled along the coastal and suburban areas. The pattern of settlement for each ethnic group has been affected by a set of different factors, cultural or economic. The liberated slaves chose to leave the sugar plantations, the most plausible reason being a desire to flee the horror experienced during the sugar plantation life. Many of the Muslim traders settle near or around the capital. Geographical segregation thus had a definite impact on cultural integration. Geographical proximity encouraged a reinforcement of cultural and religious affiliation and strengthened the ties among members of a cultural group. Rituals were celebrated with fervour (Tirvassen 2002: 111) and inter ethnic marriages became, in time, socially unacceptable. Such a context prevented the development of a more interactive relationship between ethnic groups. It certainly tended to reinforce the prejudices and stereotyping and carry them over to our contemporary context.

4.3.2 The Stronghold of Religion and Religious Leaders

The impact of religion on conceptions of self, identity and affiliation is tremendous. Each religion is identified with a particular ethnic group and not only parliamentarians but also the leaders of each ethnic group are perceived to be legitimate representatives of that particular ethnic group. These public figures actively comment and advise the government through the press or any other form of representation, on various issues about which they may not be qualified to comment. However, because of the political power they wield, they exert great influence very often on economic and educational matters. The Catholic Church is the most organised lobby, but, recently the Hindu socio-religious organisations have followed the trend and the public discourse of their spokespersons has focused basically on the flaunted rights of a particular ethnic group in relation to another. The confrontation between the leaders of these organisations and the Catholic Church has exacerbated in the recent years. The perception of the former that the Catholic Church is symbolic of the colonial forces which have not really disappeared with independence and the adoption of a democratic Constitution. This perception has been maintained and reinforced by the media which encourages cultural and religious immurement and gives precedence to cultural rather than national loyalty. The Mauritian situation offers a very peculiar rendering of Halstead (Tamir 1995: 99) liberalism 1 and liberalism 2. Halstead's distinction is based on the twin concept of political and cultural community. The former, he describes, in democratic terms as being a community of citizens who owe equal duty of loyalty to the Constitutional government and who are in turn accorded equal rights and fundamental liberties without regard to race and religion or any other consideration. On the other hand, cultural community relates to the shared identity based on language, religion, ethnicity and history. Liberalism 1 describes a situation where the State is

neutral with regard to the collective goals of cultural groups but in contrast actively protects the constitutional rights of the citizen. This is in opposition to liberalism 2 where the government recognises and protects the distinctive religious, linguistic and cultural heritage of the community.

Despite the fact that it seems that the Mauritian case is built around the liberalism 1 model, there seem to be cases where there is an ambivalence. Because our cultural set up precludes a situation where cultural and political community coincide completely, the state is forced to adopt one approach instead of the other. In education, for example, the conflictual nature of political and cultural considerations seem to be inevitable. The cultural aspiration to preserve one's own distinct identity through the setting up of schools that are confessional and denominational in nature is one fundamental right of the cultural minorities in an allochthonous set up like Mauritius. However, major complications arise when the preservation of the cultural rights of one group impinge upon the constitutional rights of another.

Mauritius is a case in the point. Education throughout its history, has been used as a means of segregation and maintaining power. Democratisation of education, which really started after independence, with the advent of free education, was to give way to a conflict that has yet to be resolved. Denominational schools established by religious and socio-religious organizations have for clear and declared agenda the furtherance of a particular faith and culture. Yet, their existence has been rendered possible through state finance. Education being a constitutional right, the state has to provide for it whether directly or indirectly. This dualism that characterizes governmental function as the guarantor of particular and collective rights is very much visible in education.

In Mauritius as in any other multicultural society, the task is to determine how far the cultural and constitutional agenda should be furthered through education. One conception advocates that education should enable the emancipation from the uncritical presentation of a particular understanding of the world and human life and the exercise of choice in moral matters. A second conception advocated by Kymlicka (1995:16) presupposes that cultural structure is the context for choice and that their shared identity including moral identity should be maintained through education.

If we are to understand at all the role of education and subsequently that of the school in a secular and multicultural context in helping to resolve these various conflicting positions, we need to reconsider what our aspirations are for deriving a set of values in multicultural schools.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The socio-cultural and historical analysis provided in this chapter has highlighted the complexity of the Mauritian society in cultural, religious and ethnic terms. The political, economic and democratic set up developed in the process of nation building has had a significant impact on nations and perceptions of education in general and moral education in particular. However, these perceptions take shape and are mediated through concepts about the role of the schools.

Two lines of thought seem to prevail over this issue, one advocating a direct and overt involvement of the school in matters related to moral education (transmission) and the other relying more on the socialization role of the school. The next chapter explores these two vantage points and analyses the arguments in favour of each while taking into account the perspective offered by developmental theorists.

The conceptual framework which relies heavily of Bandura's approach is discussed and the socio-cognitive perspective which account of the transmission, socialisation and developmental role of the school is also presented.

CHAPTER 5

THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS IN RELATION TO MORAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Schools are primarily conceived as institutions which provide for direct instruction and formal learning. Schools exist to a large extent because with industrialization, parents, for a variety of reasons, can no longer take responsibility for the education of the children. Because of the large amount of time needed for carrying out economic activities and the professionalism expected in the educational endeavour, the task of education has been largely allocated to the schools. But these are not the only reasons why the schools have been vested with the task of education. Indeed modern societies also require that schools foster a political and ethical outlook that will favour its continuity and ensure that future citizens integrate fully within the socio political, economical and cultural set up (Mac Laughlin 1995: 85). Children are expected to learn a variety of behaviours, to master concepts and to acquire a set of skills during schooling. These expectations are all based on certain premises concerning learning and the acceptance of shared and what can be called non-negotiable norms. The curriculum is the embodiment of those assumptions and norms, and, the principles that govern its elaboration, are indicative of those that support education and the existence of schools.

The organization of learning experiences are almost invariably based on two psychological positions. The first, can be traced back to a very liberal interpretation of behaviourism that underlies the theory of observational learning of Albert Bandura (1977:24-28) and the second favours a more

cognitive developmentalist approach to learning and is largely derived from Piaget (1932) and Vygotsky(1986). However whatever the psychological position on which learning is based, the necessity for it to occur in a social context cannot be over looked.

5.1.1 Socialisation Role of the School

Van der Ven (1998:127) identifies the two main tasks of the school as socialization and transmission in general. Basing his analysis on Berger and Luckmann's (1967: 130), he defines socialization as *"the comprehensive and consistent induction of the individual into the objective world of society or a sector of it"*.

Socialisation, as induction, comprises cognitive and affective aspects together. Pure knowledge, comprehension and skills, which are of the realm of socialization of knowledge and cognitive socialization, are required for the individual to participate in the existing social order; they allow the individual to make meaning of the world around them. Affective socialization, which is complementary socialization, refers to the emotional identification of the individual with significant others from whom both symbolic and moral meanings of convictions, attitudes, behaviours and actions are acquired and subsequently internalize. This model of socialization is particularly relevant for moral education because it highlights the multiple levels at which moral socialization takes place: micro level of the individual, the macro level of society and the meso level of interaction. At the level of the society, the child is initiated, through agencies of secondary socialization, into the symbolic universe of society and at the micro level the child actively reflects upon the knowledge passed on to him and dialectically combines it and produces his own understanding and interpretation of this universe. As Van der Ven (1998:

89) puts it *" At the meso level of interaction , the child internalizes the convictions beliefs, values, and norms he./she adopts from the various significant others with whom he/ she is in intense communication."*

The notion of self is germane to a successful integration of the knowledge and understanding generated at those three levels. Cognitive and affective maturity depends on the continuing abstraction process that these three levels of socialization entail.

The role of the school is situated at the meso level of interaction. At this level, the child identifies with significant others including the teachers and peers. Both the formal and informal set up of the school, the design and organization of activities are all aimed at providing opportunities for the child to take over the roles and attitudes in a variety of cognitive and emotional ways and build his own identity through observational learning. Adults in the school setting, particularly, are expected to act as role models, displaying the behaviour that underlies principles, values and beliefs.

5.1.2: Observational Learning as the Cornerstone of the Socialization Process

Bandura (1986 51- 80) proposes four distinct processes of observational learning. The first group relates to attentional processes which involve the child's selected and focused attention upon that particular model that becomes of interest to him /her because of personal attributes. The school, as an agent of socialization has the unique characteristic of being able to present to the child a wide variety of models that are available for observation over a long period of time. Thus, the convictions, values and norms displayed by the model are constantly reinforced so that they

113

become represented in the child's memory and can later be used. For Bandura (1986: 109) availability of models continuously over a period of time is crucial if the child is to enact the particular behaviour. The school is in a privileged position because the child remains within the school setting for a longer period of time when compared to other agents of socialization. Not only is constant observation but also cognitive rehearsals are possible. The latter is a prerequisite if enactment of the model's behaviour is to follow. Enacting relates to the production process where the child learns by doing; the conceptual, narrative and imaginal codes are transformed into action and integrated into the child's own personal symbolic conception of the universe. The last group of processes, the motivational processes are probably the most determinant ones. It may be possible for the child to complete the first three processes successfully but ultimately not enact the behaviour learned, as the required reinforcement is not available to elicit it.

It is not hard to understand how the school setting provides an ideal social setting for observational learning especially in terms of moral learning. It provides opportunities for all four processes to take place. Moreover, because the encounter between model and child is frequent, more frequent than in any other setting, sometimes lasting for over many years.

In light of Uzgiris's analysis (Lewis & Feinman 1991: 215) observational learning is dynamic in nature involving model and learner in a dialectical process that causes each to mutually influence one another. His interpretation is interesting in the context of moral education in the school setting.

While the social and hierarchical framework of the school facilitates modelling, the real contribution of the school to enhancing observational learning in the moral field lies in the possibilities it offers for interaction and

constant reinforcement of attitudes, values and knowledge. No other agent of socialization achieves this in a more systematic and organized way than the school. The symbolic interaction between participants takes place in multiple forms of social arrangement: the formal set up of the classroom, the informal set up of the playground and during the organization of co – curricular activities. The rules and regulations of the school itself, to a certain extent, define the standards of expected behaviour. Berger and Luckmann (Van der Ven 1998:98) describe the mesolevel of interaction as crucial for creating opportunities for identity formation. They state, *"Finally by this identification with significant others the child becomes capable of identifying himself, of acquiring a subjectively coherent and plausible identity".*

For Van der Ven, not only, is moral socialization an important and yet overlooked aspect of the socialization theory, but also, the role of significant adults as potential models in various instances of socialization has to be emphasized. However he also raises an interesting issue as concerns the conflict that may exist between the knowledge, values, skills and attitudes displayed by the model and the understanding that the learner may have internalised during the course of previous social interactions. The resolution of this conflict lies in the cognitive and emotional ability where the individual has to construct his / her own interpretation of events to fit into a highly personal schema, a schema that will ultimately help generate his / her own moral principles and code. As the child becomes increasingly aware of the more universal perspectives, the internalization processes become more complex as the various role models may demonstrate radically opposing views. The child thus moves along a continuum of spiraling complexity in terms of his/her own choice of views and attitudes in a specific moral context, but, he/ she is, at the same time, developing the cognitive and emotional maturity to make choices

more effectively (Van der Ven 1998:104). Berger and Luckmann emphasize that the child thus becomes, not only, the object of socialization, but also, the subject because it is in the process of reflecting on the knowledge passed on to him in the light of his/ her social distribution.

Students interact with knowledge within a socio-cultural environment. This external social experience results in the formation of internal mental structures that are influenced by the presence of social, cultural, contextual, and activity-based factors. The student does not acquire an exact representation of this knowledge but rather, a personal interpretation of the external knowledge. The accuracy of this newly constructed knowledge will be based on the student's prior knowledge and the impact of the social, cultural, contextual, and activity-based factors.

Using the construct of observational learning to explain the process of moral socialization reveals the school as a portent moral socialization agency. The school offers a unique vantage point in the sense, that, it offers a variety of models for the child to choose from. However, this very strength of the school can also pose problems insofar as models within the school may display opposing values and behaviour. However using a Meadian approach to distinguish between the concepts of 'I' and 'me', Van Der Ven (1998:105) argues that the 'I' makes a free selection of the values and beliefs offered by different models and does not need a uniform, overarching canopy of convictions, values and norms in order not to be drawn into ambivalence. This theoretical position is very much in line with what Bruner (1990: 67-89) calls the "distributed self".

Additionally, the multiculturality of the Mauritian context may reinforce the value norm and belief conflict making it more difficult for the learner to find

the consonance, coherence, contiguity and stability required for identity formation and role performance. Stocker (1989: 165) believes that plurality of values itself does not necessarily lead to value conflict unless the confrontations become real. In the Mauritian situation, however, the task of moral socialization becomes complicated because interaction between cultural groups causes a person to feel inclined to choose a value that is in contradiction with his/her tradition and culture. Such problems related to intercultural moral socialization may thus be problematic for young people especially when they may develop bicultural moral identity. Moreover, confrontations and clashes between the values of different ethnic and cultural groups may lead to ethnocentrism.

However, a social cognitive approach to education would rather highlight the learning opportunities provided by moral conflicts as a means of creating disequilibrium in mental schemas thereby compelling the individual to question the moral beliefs or moral order being 'handed down' to him/her by the models which are in the school situation. Recognising, acknowledging and understanding conflict is an essential component of cognitive development, which, is in turn crucial for the construction of the moral self. As the child listens to the divergent and convergent voices of adult role models in his/her environment, he/she becomes active in creating an open- ended self that recognizes the diversity of roles and the role distance required to manage effectively the tensions, divergences and contradictions amongst those roles. The cognitive developmentalist approach would thus rather emphasize the ultimate aim of moral socialization as being the creation of a meta-perspective that would enable the reconciliation of the multiple perspectives offered by the various role enactment.

Reaching or developing this meta perspective would necessarily involve making compromises and 'getting one's hands dirty' in the process. Both of these are important in the process of moral socialization because morality is about making choices and not all are either clear cut or involve trade–off situations. The child must thus develop simultaneously the ability to assess the costs and benefits involved in making a moral choice and to develop emotional maturity and the willingness to act upon this choice.

5.2. THE TRANSMISSION ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

The major difference that exists between the socialization role and transmission role of the school lies in the fact that socialization is participatory in nature; children learn by participating in the various activities organized by the school. Much of the learning that occurs during the socialization process is unstructured and unplanned because, primarily, it falls under the purview of the hidden curriculum. The socialization mode operates in a covert manner within the curricular substructure which embodies moral rules representing a shared understanding and assumptions supported by a common world view.

The transmission role of the school takes place in a more overt way because those unconscious assumptions, rules and patterns that underlie the practice of morality are explained and intentionally taught by a teacher and intentionally learnt by the child. It is integrated in the formal curriculum insofar as direct moral teaching occurs in schools as part of specific classes or as a secondary aspect of subject teaching.

Jackson et al (cited in Van der Ven 1998:126) distinguish between two groups of moral education processes at school: deliberate attempts to provide for moral instruction and attempts to enhance moral behaviour and

moral practice that reflect the morality which is being directly taught to the students.

The school provides for moral education in eight forms:

(i)   Formal moral instruction

(ii)   Regular moral instruction

(iii)   Rituals and ceremonies

(iv)   Visual displays with moral content

(v)   Spontaneous interjections of moral commentary

(vi)   The existence of classroom rules and regulations

(vii)   Expressive morality (non verbal communication such as facial expression that sanctions morally incorrect behaviour) and

(viii) The morality embodied in the curricular substructure

Those eight forms cover the entire gamut of cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects that are necessary for learning to take place. Formal and regular moral instruction, as well as visual displays, can be interpreted as basically representing an attempt at transmitting the required knowledge for moral cognition and decision making; the behavioural aspects become manifest in the adherence to rules and regulations and participation in rituals and ceremonies; the emotional aspect is emphasized in the expressions and interjections of teachers and peers as well as the curricular substructure. It is evident that the concept of moral education described above is much deeper and broader than transmission.

In the cognitive realm, transmission is restricted to the development of memorizable knowledge and discounts critical thinking and problem solving. The transmission mode represents an attempt by adults to initiate children into the moral solutions that are reflective of the unity of their moral community. It hence does not encourage students to form personal judgments which may deviate from traditional propositions. In the affective

domain, the transmission mode operational in schools involves motivational and attitude development which aims at enabling the students to integrate those propositions into his /her personality and to secure the commitment of the individual to those very solutions and answers. Again, as for cognitive abilities, there is no room for deviating from the traditional choices. In fact the affective mode serves to reinforce what the cognitive mode has achieved by developing the required sets of attitudes that will support the moral consensus reached by the community. But to really secure the individual's allegiance to the moral norms, the transmission mode focuses on the formation and exercise of the will and the development of self-discipline. Such strong volitive emphasis stimulates the individual to put into practice and persistently uphold the convictions and values that have been transmitted.

Many of the character education programmes that have been implemented internationally (Ryan & Mac Lean 1987:183) and the values education programmes which currently exist in the Mauritian context rely on the transmission mode since they focus primarily on the triad of knowledge, desire and will. However, the currency of the transmission model has been seriously questioned in the past and is being criticized even today though not for the same reasons.

The 1960s saw the rise of values clarification movement as an alternative to the transmission mode operant in the schools. Two major factors have contributed significantly, namely the publication of the May and Hawthorne Report in 1928 on the impact of religious education and the publications of Simon and Kohlberg (1966). In 1922, the Religious Education Association initiated a study of the effects of religious education. Between 1924 and 1929, the Institute of Social and Religious Research, funded by John D. Rockefeller and housed at Teachers College, Columbia University,

undertook the most detailed and comprehensive effort to date to assess the impact of schools on character. The report of the Character Education Inquiry was published in a three-volume series entitled: *Studies in the Nature of Character* (Hartshorne & May 1928-1930). Among the many disturbing findings within the 1,782 pages was the following:

> *(T)he mere urging of honest behaviour by teacher or the discussion of standards and ideals of honesty, no matter how much such general ideals may be "emotionalized," has no necessary relation to conduct...there seems to be evidence that such effects as may result are not generally good and are sometimes unwholesome...the prevailing ways of inculcating ideals probably do little good and do some harm. (Vol. 1, p.413)*

The research conducted by Hartshorne and May in the 1920s left the field of character education in apparent disarray, in that, it appeared that traditional directive methods of teaching for virtue did not work. Although the publication of findings of the Character Education Inquiry alone did not account for the demise of the Character Education movement, it undoubtedly played an important role. Its findings which revealed that the programmes of moral education "were at best ineffective", led to a serious set back of programmes that were emphasizing the transmission role of the school in the provision of moral education.

After 30 years of dormancy, the issue of moral education was to be tossed in the limelight again in the 1960s with the publication of two doctoral theses by Sidney Simon (1966) and Lawrence Kohlberg (1966). Eight years later, each published his first work dealing with moral or values education. Simon, on the one hand collaborating with Louis Raths and

Merrill Harmin (1968), co-authored *Values and Teaching*, the highly influential first statement of the theory and technique of values clarification (Raths, Harmin and Simon 1966). Kohlberg, on the other hand, in an article in *The School Review* for the first time linked his cognitive-developmental theory of moral reasoning with the practice of moral education in schools (Kohlberg, 1966) and later based on the findings of research on cognitive development in schools formulated his " Just Community Schools". These two approaches to moral education dominated the field of moral or values education for the next 25 years. Values clarification enjoyed more popular success in schools, and the cognitive-developmental approach received more attention and acclaim from scholars and researchers. As is typically the case with educational movements, it is difficult to judge the precise impact these two approaches had on educational practice. However, given the volume of journal articles, curricular materials, and books centering on these two approaches, it is safe to assume that in the eyes of most school personnel, the cognitive-developmental approach and values clarification have been synonymous with moral or values education throughout the past two decades.

The dominance of these two schools of thought- one typically focusing on the rational analysis of the values claims behind positions on social issues, and the other, on the process of discussing moral - can also be understood in the light of broader changes occurring at the level of philosophy of society. The 1960s were characterized not only by a general rejection of whatever appeared to be interference with the individual's autonomous thought and freedom but also a firm belief in relativism. No world view or cultural or moral perspective was to be given precedence over others. Additionally, concepts of learning were changing rapidly under the sway of cognitivism and constructivism and both the cognitive developmental approach and values clarification movement were more reflective of the

current day concerns. With the political and cultural plurality of modern societies, it also became increasingly difficult to find one common set of norms, values and beliefs on which members of society from a highly diverse background could agree. Moral choices were thus left to an entirely personal domain as stated by Johnson (Ryan & Mac Lean 1987:79):

> Another related factor in the contemporary moral climate is the widespread conviction that political pluralism is a philosophical justification for a crude relativism .In a society where there can only be private worlds, there can be no universal moral context or principles.

The transmission role of the schools was thus underscored because it was perceived as a means of indoctrinating learners and preventing them from becoming freely choosing and self -responsible individuals. It inhibited a sense of personal responsibility though it ensures social harmony and produced harmonious and disciplined communities (Bauman 1995: 53). Today many societies, especially multicultural ones, present a dismal picture of failure to reach a collective and cohesive vision. The moral chaos and relativism that are so characteristic of many contemporary societies can be largely attributed to a rejection of the transmission role.

5.2.1. Revisiting the Transmission Role

The contemporary context is fraught with paradoxes (see section 1.2). On the one hand there is the discourse of multiculturalism and valuing of difference and on the other hand the coercive unification brought about by technology and economic compulsions. The resultant 'atomization' of both production and social processes leads to a sense of disintegration and personal isolation. Johnson (Ryan & Mac Lean: 1987: 65) argues that with

123

industrialization the crucial bond between consequences and action and between self and consequences became so attenuated as to be meaningless. Social-moral communities ceased to exist when the corporate mind took over.

Indeed the school is one social institution that still tries to function as a community distinct from the real world. Though it cannot hold onto its traditional transmission role with its narrow cognitive emphasis, it retains its role in initiating the younger generation into what previous generations have thought to be the best solutions to our moral problems, however diminished its authority and effectiveness. One can also counter-argue the two major points advanced against the transmission mandate of the school. Firstly the cognitive emphasis can be strengthened by deliberately reinforcing critical thinking and problem solving. Instead of simply presenting, the moral solutions developed by the community of adults for memorization and imitation, the process of arriving at those conclusions has to be highlighted. Secondly, multiculturalism does not necessarily entail conflicts (see section 5.2.1) just as monoculturalism can lead to a single world-view. Lickona (1991:20) argues that despite the divergences that exist in the field of applied ethics, there is convergence of thought on the basic moral values that enable democracies to be functional. The very notion of pluralism is supported by a particular set of values that can be termed as "core values transmittable to children whatever their cultural background. Minnery (1994:139) discussing reasons supporting why values should return to public education argues "*There is a basic, foundational code of moral and ethical conduct that, for whatever reason, has been forgotten by many of today's young and is missing from many of today's public schools.*"

Despite the fact that constructivist principles of learning have been established as the dominant paradigm in education, in moral matters, educators worldwide agree (Lickona 1991; Ryan 1987; Carr 1991) that some form of transmission is necessary. Young children do not build their knowledge from scratch. There needs to be at least a foundation on which they have to build their own perspective. There is a marked difference between using the transmission mode to establish a moral climate that will ultimately foster moral reasoning and moral independence and indoctrinating children. As Sockett (1996:126) states:

> *Children are perfectly capable of understanding different positions in the matter of controversial issue, and, if the climate has been established, children can accept that an individual's teacher are not an attempt at indoctrination or the last word on the matter.*

Until children become equipped both with the moral verve, the intellectual skills and sophisticated social understanding to make independent moral judgments, some form of transmission is both inevitable and necessary.

In the moral realm, philosophical discussions for centuries have centered around the existence of absolute and eternal moral values that exist independently of perception and culture. Idealist thinkers like Kant have tried to suggest universal principles and criteria against which moral thought and action could be judged unlike German existentialists such as Nietzsche who advocated that no criteria exist against which moral standards can be assessed. However, in practical social terms, a minimum consensus must be reached to allow society to function effectively. The task of moral transmission is, therefore, to pass on this core moral knowledge on which moral understanding can be consolidated. A

reconceptualisation of the transmission role will have to be cast in the light of this foundational perspective, rather than, the sole and final goal of schooling.

5.3. THE DEVELOPMENTAL TASK OF THE SCHOOL

Two basic perspectives have influenced the understanding of the developmental tasks of schools; the socio affective processes as elaborated by Erikson (1962) and the cognitive theory of Piaget (1932). Piaget holds that cognitive development refers to the transformation of cognitive structures that is both a function of innate tendencies, maturational drives or environmental stimuli and of interaction with the environment that causes cognitive conflicts. These cognitive conflicts are resolved through the twin processes of assimilation and accommodation that enable the individual to build an increasingly complex mental representation of the world around him/her. He further argues that cognitive development is stage governed and dependent on physical maturation. Learning involves, therefore, the construction mental schemas that will enable the individual to apprehend the world around him/her and hence adapt to its changing conditions in a more effective way. The role of the school thus conceived in Piagetian terms is to provide appropriate opportunities for cognitive conflicts for each stage so that children can proceed to higher stages. For Piaget cognitive development is a prerequisite for development in other aspects and namely the moral domain. Kolhberg (Jeary 2001:2) reinforces this idea by emphasizing that processes of development in the cognitive domain precedes and are parallel those in the moral. He explains *"Although moral stages are not simply special applications of logical stages. Logical stages must be prior to moral stages, because they are more general"*

To enable the child to reach higher stages of moral growth, the school must actively promote cognitive development and sharpen the skills of critical thinking and problem solving. Both cultural and educational experiences may in fact speed up the sequence.

One interesting offshoot of cognitive developmentalist thought is the recognition of the interrelatedness of the cognitive, social, moral and affective areas of development that is also representative of a more eclectic approach in psychology of education today. Kolhberg integrated in his theory both the cognitive and social aspects of moral development (Van der Ven 1997:193) and based on this understanding conceptualized the role of the school as a triad. However, Kohlberg's interpretation of the moral domain is based on research that centers on observing children's behaviour when they are playing and the latter's understanding of the notions of fairness and justice, which is indeed a culturally bias consideration as argued by Gilligan (see section 3:5:4:1)

5.4 The Triarchic Functions of the School

If the prime objective of the school is to provide the required conditions for children to develop cognitively, and, given that other areas of development directly depend on the achievement of cognitive aims, then it follows that if moral education is to be provided within the school's social setting, the school will have to focus primarily on the development of reasoning skills as applied to the field of morality. If one way to enhance cognitive development is to place children in situations of cognitive disequilibrium, then the use of moral dilemmas in both hypothetical and real situation is warranted. Indeed, it can be argued that the school is the ideal agent to carry out this task because it has a wider social setting as compared to other instances of primary socialization, is regulated by set of moral

principles embodied in its rules and regulations and requires collective and shared decision-taking by members with different or multiple perspective, thereby creating unique opportunities for cognitive disequilibrium in both the private and the moral realm. Conflicts of interest requiring the attention of the learner are bound to occur.

If it is undeniable that the school is mandated to fulfill this function, it is also equally true that the role of the school is not solely limited to cognitive development. However, developmentalists would have us think that because all the other aspects of development are dependent on cognitive development, the latter should become the sole school preoccupation.

Lickona (1991:53) identifies three aspects of building character which he perceives as the ultimate end of moral education in schools, namely moral knowledge, moral feeling and moral action. Although cognitive development is a prerequisite for the development of moral knowledge, it does not automatically lead to moral feeling and action. Schools may improve the skills of moral reasoning of its learners, without having developed the concurrent affective disposition and the will to act in a moral way. These three aspects of moral education which ultimately produce moral identity and moral character, have then to be fully catered for in the school context by providing opportunities for socio-emotional growth and undertaking moral actions.

The theoretical framework for both of these aspects is provided by Erikson (1962), who advocated that development is stage bound and requires the resolution of conflicts that pertain to the entire life span of the individual. His psycho- social approach to development informs our understanding of moral identity by providing a structure whereby feeling and action is integrated.

Using a neo Freudian perspective, Erikson (1962) explains that identity formation depends on the successful completion of developmental tasks which are socio-affective in nature. Of particular relevance to us, is his concept of identity formation, which occurs during adolescence. Though other authors have emphasized that moral identity is an important component of identity and identity is actively constructed through interaction with others, Erikson (1962) draws attention to the development of emotions as an important aspect of personality and character. Emotions are important because they define the attachment that the individual will have for values. They are the vehicles for experiencing the good, feeling for what is just, doing the right and refraining from what is wrong. Emotions which are always connected to socio-moral events (Killen & Hart 1995:91) are not only cognitively represented, but also over time inform social reasoning and guide behaviour. Improving the ability for moral decision-making requires the concurrent ability to feel emphatically and to view events from the perspective of others.

Selman's (Mc Daniels 1998) model of social role taking represents an improvement over the purely cognitive approach provided by Piaget and Kohlberg because it gives to social interaction a pivotal role in the development of moral maturity. Selman (1980) places emphasis on the role of experience and learning, such that advances in social perspective taking depend heavily on the individual's experiences with others, including appropriate social stimulation and education. The progression to higher levels of social perspective taking depends heavily on the provision of appropriate social experiences (Atwood 1992:113).

The perspective offered by Selman as to the extent that moral socialisation referred to the active renegotiation of social relations and the gradual

reworking of one's conception of self and others in line of the reciprocal relations, can be viewed as an extension of Piaget's conception of moral socialization. One cannot overlook the basic tenet of Piaget's genetic epistemology regarding all operative knowledge: all knowledge starts with action (Piaget & Inhelder 1964:119) and through reflective abstraction, activities are transformed into cognitive operations and self-reflective knowledge. Piaget's distinction between heteronomous and autonomous thinking is based on the shift from egocentric thinking to decentration and perspectivism (co-ordinating one's perspective with that of others (Carpendale & Muller: 2004 196). This global cognitive shift in the child's morality represents a revolution in social relations and occurs because of the increase in breadth and depth of the child's social circle. Such a change is also brought about by the recognition of the difference between social convention, rules and expectations and moral issues based on concepts of fairness and welfare. The individual's moral orientation increasingly rests on mutual respect and reciprocity in interactions with peers of equal social power (Damon & Killen 1982:347-367).

The proposition that moral understanding develops primarily out of peer interactions has important implications for the role of the school. Since the individual's construction of moral concept and social norms depends on the quality and variety of social interactions between adolescents and adults and within the peer group, the school should offer opportunities for students, not only to interact, but also, to resolve their moral disputes. Teachers are important because they encourage students to be empathic and develop perspective taking but moral disputes are more likely to occur among peers because moral transgressions are more frequent during social interactions within the peer group. (Nucci & Weber 1995: 1452-1498).

5.5 CONCLUSION

The role of the school in providing moral education has therefore three interrelated and overlapping aspects: firstly, transmission which secures a climate where moral dialogue can take place; secondly socialization that creates the opportunities for experiencing and experimenting with moral situations as well as improving perspective taking skills and moral decision making; thirdly, attending to developmental needs by encouraging cognitive conflicts.

CHAPTER 6
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1: OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The literature of the previous two chapters support the idea that conceptions of moral education are embedded in conceptions about education and schooling which are themselves grounded in economic, social and cultural set up. Additionally, it has been established that conceptions of moral education, though not always clearly articulated, become visible through the activities carried out in the school context and the behaviour of adults.

In an eco-psychological perspective, that is the person process-context model of Bronfenbrenner (1986: 287) one could describe the interaction of a child in different social systems and interactions among these systems. School is understood as a micro-system for the child with direct interactions. By connecting the school with the child's family and the macro influences of society, the school is also a meso-system. By virtue of their membership in the family and the society, actors' perceptions about the role and function attributed to the school as an organisation is influenced by the norms and expectations of both the micro and macro level. Their world views and experiences are coloured by their psycho social, cultural, historical and institutional understanding.

My theoretical stance here is that schools are conceived primarily as agents of moral socialisation rather than only agents of transmission. This socialisation role becomes possible because of the opportunities provided for social learning in the set up of the school. The theoretical premise on which my understanding of learning in the moral domain is based, is that of

social cognitive learning whereby the individual constructs moral meaning out of the interactions with significant others in the classroom and school setting. My reading of social learning as developed by Bandura (1977: 24-28), however, is not only limited in the strict traditional sense to observational learning. I find that the social cognitive model developed by the later Bandura (1991:45-103) which focus on four processes (see section 5.1.2) offers a more rational basis for the theoretical framework to be used here. His theory focuses on how children and adults operate cognitively on their social experiences and how these cognitions then influence behaviour and development. The notion of modeling, or vicarious learning, as a form of social learning, is relevant in the internalisation of values and moral socialisation. In addition, Bandura also introduced several other important concepts, including reciprocal determinism and self-efficacy. The social cognitive theory explains behaviour in terms of a triadic, dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the environment, personal factors, and behaviour. Its strong emphasis on one's cognitions suggests that the mind is an active force that constructs one's reality, selectively encodes information, performs behaviour on the basis of values and expectations, and imposes structure on its own actions (Bandura 1989: 1-60). Through feedback and reciprocity, a person's own reality is formed by the interaction of the environment and one's cognitions. In addition, cognitions change over time as a function of maturation and experience (i.e. attention span, memory, ability to form symbols, reasoning skills), in a way that is similar to Selman's description of our evolving concept of persons and relations. It is through an understanding of the processes involved in one's construction of reality that enables human behaviour to be understood, predicted and changed.

A core concept in Bandura theory, which forms the corner stone of my theoretical framework, is *vicarious capability* that makes observational learning possible. Such capability is a function of cognitive development. *Observational learning* allows one to develop an idea of how a new behaviour is formed without actually performing the behaviour. Approaches to moral learning as embodied in many of the moral education programmes prevalent in American schools (Lickona 1996:93-100), for example, likewise posits environmental pressures, in the form of models, reinforcements, and sanctions, as elements that govern the process of internalisation. These theories share the term 'internalization' as a description of the origin of moral conscience, which is supported by the agents within the school. To a large extent this model of internalization is also shared by most sociologists and anthropologists, whose concept of socialization includes the acquisition of morality under the tutelage or pressure of socializing agents such as parents, teachers, and religious leaders.

However, observational learning cannot completely explain how the person develops his moral sense of self. For people do not simply take in or internalize an external morality, but rather are active in generating their own moral understanding by constructing and re-constructing concepts of reciprocity and equality. As Aristotle believed (see section 3.2.2), morality is not a matter of *ab initio* invention, it is rather a reconstruction rather than construction. Thus, the social cognitive theory, which incorporates both the elements of observational learning and cognitive processes that enable own negotiation, is an appropriate theoretical framework. The adolescents in the Mauritian secondary school have reached the self- reflective stage proposed by Selman (1980:35) where they can reflect on own thoughts and even engage in mutual perspective taking. That is primarily why the later theory of Bandura (1991:49), which is elastic enough to accomodate

both social and logical cognition, has been chosen as the underpinning theoretical framework. Observational learning and the cognitive processes that are contingent upon it can be used as a premise to look at the transmission, socialisation and developmental role of schools in providing moral education.

This study therefore proposes to consider the role of the school in providing moral education in terms of the learning processes and mechanism as perceived and experienced by the stakeholders.

6.2 THE QUALITATIVE APPROACH

This will be a qualitative study using interviews and focus group discussion as the sources of data. The questions I wish to investigate are intertwined with contextual issues of the participants' experiences in the secondary school setting and as such, a detailed, first hand account of experience from the point of view of those experiencing becomes necessary.

Three competing paradigms guide qualitative inquiry: postpositivism, critical theory, and constructivism. Guba and Lincoln (1994:105) define research paradigms as the basic belief system or world-view that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways.

Thus, a research paradigm directs the investigator's approach to studying essential properties and relations of being and also the limits and validity of knowledge claims. Specific methods of research arise from the researcher's paradigm. Each of the four qualitative paradigms are defined by Lincoln and Guba with reference to the following three questions:

1) The ontological question deals with the form and nature of reality, and what the researcher can study and make knowledge claims about.

2) The epistemological question encompasses the relationship between the researcher and what can be known.

3) The methodological question is answered in terms of the researcher's procedures for finding out whatever he or she believes can be known.

There are apparently two opposing conceptions of reality that researchers embrace. On the one hand, the 'foundational' stand which is defined as the assumption that reality is one, knowable, independent of perception, 'out there' to be grasped only by the objective eye. The best way to know the "reality" is for the researcher to remain 'outside' it. On the other hand, the interpretive stand, including the phenomenological approach and symbolic interactionism contends that people actively construct their reality by imposing meaning upon their experience in the course of social interaction and acting according to their perceptions. There is not one reality but many and the only way to make meaning of these realities is to be part of them. The main aim of different adherents of the interpretive approach is not to find out one summative truth but to develop an understanding of a social situation that takes into account the experience and the interpretation of all those taking part in it.

Interpretive research responds to the inherent challenges of inquiry focused on human experience. Unlike other animals and inanimate objects, humans are able to make and share meaning. Scientific explanation of an objective, positivistic nature is the enduring tradition of the natural and physical sciences. Social science research however, seeks to understand the meaning of social phenomena. Thus, the hypothetical-deductive model characteristic of pure amd applied science is inadequate for social science research centered on humans. The sense making which

is so central to human activity sets people apart from the rest of nature. Humans are complex and quirky, requiring responsive and adaptable research methods. The researcher needs to have empathy toward the researched to understand their position, feelings, and experiences. The need for empathy is found in the qualitative research doctrine of *verstehen*, which is German for 'understanding'. This refers to our unique human capacity to make sense of the world, which asserts that "humans can and must be understood in a manner different from other objects of study because humans have purposes and emotions; they make plans, construct cultures, and hold values that affect behaviour". (Patton 1990:57)

The qualitative stand has had a measure of success in the field of sociological research but has been seldom applied in educational research in the Mauritian context which is still dominated largely by the quantitative paradigm. The resistance to the adoption of such a stand lies in the perception that the qualitative research tradition, to which phenomenology and symbolic interactionism belong, produces personalised accounts of events which cannot be strictly termed as 'research', since both the data collecting tools and the data have not been rigorously 'antiseptised'. Owing to adherence of the quantitative paradigm to the criteria of reliability as a condition for emulating the methods of the natural and physical sciences, such methods as participant observation and assuming an insiderstatus, are rarely used. As a result we find a dearth of studies where these methods are used in our local context.

The stand adopted in this research is that the methodological issues linked to the interpretive paradigm have to be understood in the light of what research is purported to achieve. If the aim of educational research is to generate understanding so as to empower stakeholders to improve a situation, then we need to use methods that enable us to discover the

cultural meaning of the context of our research. As a result our method should provide us the means to discover reality through understanding of the setting and the problems as they are experienced by the actors and key stakeholders. I wish to avoid the visiting expert approach which 'prescribes' with inadequate understanding of the context.

The role of the researcher conceived essentially as that of an outsider finding out the 'truth' disempowers both the researcher and the researched. The foundational view that "presents research, when it is properly executed, as producing conclusions whose validity follows automatically from the 'givenness' of the data on which they are based" (Hammersley & Gomm: 1997) becomes doubtful when we consider the complexity of the context where we have to investigate the social, economic and cultural context that explains a particular perception of the role of school and moral education.

The present study aims at developing understanding as to stakeholders' perspective on the role of the school in providing moral education. Given that the present research has been undertaken in an exploratory mode, with a view to identify and understand people's perception and conceptualization of issues related to moral education, an interpretive stance has been adopted. The rationale for this choice is strongly grounded not only in the research questions set, but also, in the philosophical conviction that the basic aim of the current study is to generate understanding of the situation rather than identifying a causal relationship. The need for presenting a detailed view rather than providing a "wide angle lens or the distant panoramic view"(Cresswell 1998:17) places the investigation into an interpretive mode rather than a positivist perspective.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000:3) describe qualitative research as " situated activity that locates the observer in the world." Qualitative research considerably enhances the scope of educational research by making it possible to study educational phenomena in their natural setting. Because qualitative researchers study social contexts in depth and use a set of interpretive, material practices to make the world visible, qualitative research has transformative power. The concern is to make meaning out of people's interpretation of events coupled with the need to develop strategies that add rigour, breadth, and complexity lead qualitative researchers to make use of multiple methods.

Research in the field of moral education spans the entire gamut of research approach and research methods. The current status of qualitative research relates to four aspects of moral education. Firstly, those focusing on the nature of moral development and moral experience that belong to the psychology of education. Secondly, the philosophical inquiries into the nature of moral language and moral experience seeking to achieve greater clarity and understanding of the philosophical assumptions underlying positions on moral education. The third category of research focuses on the evaluation of moral education programmes and educational outcomes. Fourthly, some researchers also focus on the development of new measurement techniques for quantifying variables relevant to the study of moral education.

The present study belongs not only to the psychology of education as its theoretical grounding is interdisciplinary in nature. Understanding how various stakeholders perceive the various aspects of school life as being connected to moral education requires primarily an understanding of the broader functions they attach to schooling and their own personalization of the moral experience. This requires, in turn, psycho-social understanding

of the lived experience of the individual in his/her particular socio- cultural context drawing from both philosophical and sociological viewpoints.

In that context, therefore, the interpretive paradigm, which allows for more flexibility and seeks to generate phenomenological insights that serve to make meaning of people's perception, is particularly relevant (Myers: 1997:241).

6.2.1. The Epistemological Assumptions

Interpretive researchers start out with the assumption that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings. The philosophical base of interpretive research is hermeneutics and phenomenology. Interpretive studies generally attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them and as such do not predefine dependent and independent variables, but focus on the full complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges (Kaplan & Maxwell 1994:45-68).

Research questions have a determining role in helping the researcher choose the method that best suits the project. However, research is always undertaken within a specific epistemological standpoint. Indeed, the way a research question is framed reveals the ontological, epistemological and even methodological assumptions of the researcher. Wildemuth (1993:451) still links epistemic assumption to method although she sees method determined by the epistemology, not vice versa. She states:

> *It is true that the positivist approach, with its goal of discerning the statistical regularities of behaviour, is oriented toward counting the occurrences and measuring the extent of the*

behaviours being studied. By contrast, the interpretive approach, with its goal of understanding the social world from the viewpoint of the actors within it, is oriented toward detailed description of the actors' cognitive and symbolic actions, that is, the meanings associated with observable behaviours.

But Bradley (1993:432) sees that the methodology and epistemology are wedded to each other. She presents: "*the internal rationale of qualitative research traditions as methodological issues and practices that arise from assumptions about reality and what we can know about it."*

Her claim that each epistemological standpoint is connected a to particular methodological approach seems to be supported in practice since most qualitative researchers tend to adopt strategies to give voice to people rather than predefining the variables on which to focus. The different research traditions reflect different commitments to different styles of research and different forms of representation.

I sought to obtain understanding of the moral socialisation role of the school in a multicultural setting. Understanding, as Gadamer (1981: 109-110) describes it is:

… like action always remains a risk and never leaves room for the simple application of a general knowledge of rules to the statements or texts to be understood…understanding is an adventure and , like any other adventure, is dangerous..but..it is capable of contributing in a special way to the broadening of our human experience.

The current project is, therefore, situated in the transformative agenda of interpretive paradigm. I am seeking to understand the moral education experience within the social setting of a school from the perspective of those who are living it. The cognitive requirements involved in my understanding others cannot be met through the use of foundational epistemological assumptions characteristic of logical empiricism. Knowledge of what others are saying and doing depends upon some knowledge of the background of beliefs, values and practices that produce them. Interpretation of the discourse of the participants requires a particular view of human agency and my interpretation is based on the assumption that people actively create meaning and their actions are indicative of these underlying perceptions.

Such an epistemological stance underlies the ontological belief that the human being is primarily a subject of representations: about the world outside and about the depictions of ends desired or feared. Taylor (1991: 311-312) argues that this subject is a monological one. We are in contact with the outside world, including other agents, the objects we deal with and our own and others' bodies, but this contact is through representations we have 'within'. The subject is first of all an inner space, a mind. Understanding can thus be linked to the Aristotlelian notion of phronesis which is a form of experiential personal knowledge and reasoning.

The philosophical assumption which the current research endorses is one which recognises the social and individual construction of meaning similarly to Nietzsche perspectivalism. However, unlike the radical view that Nietzsche offers on subjectivities and his denial of the existence of a locus of meaning, the premises adopted here are more in line with society generally and more precisely, dialectical constructivism which encompasses social constructionism, adopted as the conceptual

framework. The interest of social constructionism is to discover the ways social reality and social phenomena are *constructed*. The sociological method of social constructionism is to look at the ways social phenomena are created, institutionalized, and made into tradition by humans. Their focus is on the description of the institutions, the actions, and so on, not on analyzing causes and effects. Socially constructed reality is seen as an on-going dynamic process; reality is re-produced by people acting on their interpretation and their knowledge of it.

The analytical model developed by Griffiths (1998: 85) who proposed a socio-cultural approach to create an account of stakeholders' viewpoints that recognise the 'situatedness' which includes the historical, cultural and institutional settings and the universals, provides an interesting vantage point.She further differentiates between the broad and the personal context. The former generates understanding about societal, sociological, historical and institutional circumstances and patterns. Such an understanding is crucial to locate experiences and viewpoints and grasp the realities of the participants. The personal context takes two forms: position and life history. The former is one of the crucial methodological elements in the research design of this study. The perspective from which participants operate in their capacities as students, teachers, administrators and parents determine to a large extent the way they construe the role of the school in providing moral education. It is through their professional and personal circumstances that participants prioritise what is moral experience for them.

The professional understanding that participants have of the educational processes is embedded and sustained by their personal history. This study discusses, to some extent how aspects of the personal experience

underlie the professional experience of the participants. Priority will be given to participants' voices.

6.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The design takes its source in the approach of the study. The qualitative nature of the study lends itself to an emergent and holistic design rather than the more predetermined structure of quantitative designs. Janesick (Denzin and Lincoln 2002:381) invites us to conceive of the design as a dance choreography. He states:

> *A good choreographer refuses to be limited to just one approach or one technique from dance history. Likewise the qualitative researcher refuses to be limited; as Flick (1998) has recently observed, the qualitative researcher uses various techniques and rigorous and tested procedures in working to capture the nuance and complexity of the social situation under study.*

Much of the similarity that is used in this analogy relates to dance and qualitative research as a creative act that revels in spontaneity but which is not without direction. All choreography as all research starts with a basic idea that drives the research, a critical question. The specificity of qualitative research is that it is both intentional and reactive; it takes shape only when it is in process. The lines of investigation though defined in broad terms become more precise only as the research process unfolds. The first set of design decisions are the following:

   (i)   What is studied?

   (ii)   Under what circumstances?

   (iii)   Who is involved?

6.4. STARTING FROM THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

For me as qualitative researcher, all three questions are interlinked in the sense that the research questions are naturally tied up with the methods used. Janesick (Denzin: 2001: 193) calls this the warm up. My foundation question is how stakeholders in education perceive the role of the school in providing moral education. Interviews and focus group discussions were the means to uncover perceptions and to explain what produce them. The foundation questions led to other essential questions as shown in the figure below:

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ What are stakeholders' perception about the role of the school in         │
│ providing moral education?                                                │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐
│ What is their         │  │ What are in general   │  │ What is their         │
│ conception of the     │  │ their expectations     │  │ understanding of the  │
│ aims of education?    │  │ about schools?        │  │ concept of morality   │
│                      │  │                      │  │ and moral education?  │
└──────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐
│ What place is         │  │ What is their         │
│ attributed to moral   │  │ definition of the     │
│ education?            │  │ functions of schooling?│
│ What is the degree of │  │ Have the expectations │
│ importance of         │  │ evolved over time?    │
│ character education   │  │ What are their        │
│ that is revealed?     │  │ educational           │
│ How is their view     │  │ priorities?           │
│ influenced by their   │  │                      │
│ culture and lived     │  │                      │
│ experience and own    │  │                      │
│ philosophy?           │  │                      │
└──────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────┘
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Much of this exercise was informed by reference to the existing literature on the connected issues. But the meaning of words and concepts were further articulated during the data gathering phase. Indeed, interaction with the participants gave new perspective to the research focus in a process similar to the uncovering the different layers of meaning that could be

drawn from different settings. As shown above sets, of questions 'funnelled' out from the previous set of questions in a continuous spiralling movement.

6.4.1 The Selection of the Site

There were three basic sites of investigation: the school, the home and the Mauritius Institute of Education, all chosen with respect to the stakeholders identified. The school was conceived as an important site because it was at the centre of our preoccupations. However more important than the 'physical' aspect of the site was the notion of 'shared social space'. Since participants were expected to voice their perception on the moral aspects of school's socialisation process, the concept of site as a physical space became redundant. Since I sought to understand people's perception of the school as a moral 'site' no observation was carried out but pupils and rectors were interviewed within the school setting.

6.4.2 The Selection of Participants

The participants were carefully selected to represent the multiple voices within the school setting and the multicultural setting of Mauritius. Categories of stakeholders were identified and from each category, a sample was chosen as shown in the table below:

Table 6.4.2 (i) *Categories of Stakeholders*

Categories	Numbers	Data Collection Instrument
Teachers	33	Focus Group Discussion with 7-9 teachers in each group
Students	30	Focus group discussion with 7- 8 students
School Administrators	9	Individual interviews
Parents	10	Individual interviews

6.4.2.1 The Teachers

It is not always easy to identify the most appropriate participants for a focus group. If a group is too heterogeneous, whether in terms of gender or class, or in terms of professional and 'lay' perspectives, the differences between participants can have a considerable impact on their contributions. Alternatively, if a group is homogenous with regard to specific characteristics, diverse opinions and experiences may not be revealed. Participants need to feel comfortable with each other. Meeting with others whom they think of as possessing similar characteristics or levels of understanding about a given topic, will be more appealing than meeting with those who are perceived to be different (Morgan 1984: 253-270).

A sample of 33 teachers was taken and four focus group interviews were carried out with seven to eight teachers. The teachers were from a varied background.

Table 6.4.2. (ii) *Profile of Teachers*

Teacher	School Type	Years of Experience	Religion	Subject	Gender	Age
AA	Private	12	Hindu	Business studies	Male	29
AB	Private	8	Muslim	Biology	Male	26
AC	Confessional	13	Catholic	Economics	Female	40
AD	State	10	Hindu	Physical Education	Male	32
AE	State	8	Hindu	Maths	Female	30
AF	State	21	Hindu	French	Female	52
AG	Confessional	12	Catholic	English	Female	24
AH	Private	7	Hindu	Chemistry	Male	43
BA	Confessional	6	Catholic	Biology	Female	27
BB	Confessional	14	Muslim	Design and Technology	Male	37
BC	Private	18	Catholic	French	Female	41
BD	State	17	Hindu	Home Economics	Female	42
BE	State	7	Hindu	Design and Technology	Male	28
BF	State	10	Muslim	Business Studies	Male	35
BG	Private	4	Catholic	English	Female	26
BH	Private	22	Hindu	Maths	Male	49

Table 6.4.2. (ii) *Profile of Teachers Con'd*

Teacher	School Type	Years of Experience	Religion	Subject	Gender	Age
CA	Private	11	Hindu	English	Female	31
CB	State	4	Muslim	Art	Male	26
CC	State	15	Hindu	Chemistry	Female	45
CD	State	7	Hindu	Computer studies	Male	32
CE	Confessional	13	Catholic	Physical Education	Male	40
CF	Confessional	2	Hindu	Biology	Female	24
CG	Private	6	Muslim	Biology	Male	27
CH	State	4	Catholic	French	Female	25
DA	State	17	Hindu	English	Female	43
DB	Confessional	12	Muslim	Maths	Female	46
DC	Private	12	Hindu	Maths	Male	33
DD	Private	18	Hindu	Economics	Female	47
DE	Confessional	9	Catholic	French	Female	32
DF	State	8	Muslim	Chemistry	Male	39
DG	Confessional	4	Hindu	Design and Technology	Male	26
DH	State	11	Muslim	Urdu	Male	39
DI	Private	5	Hindu	Hindi	Female	27

The samples used in qualitative research are small, to allow intensive study and they are not usually wholly pre-specified. Instead selection is sequential (by a rolling process, inter-leafed with coding and analysis) and is conceptually driven, either by the theoretical framework which underpins the research question from the outset, or by an evolving theory which is

149

derived inductively from the data as the research proceeds. The sampling for the case was similar to a case selection where the participants were chosen according to the criteria mentioned above. Some of these teachers are past students of the Mauritius Institute of Education and as such enabled the identification of other participants. I was interested to regroup people who have had as diverse life experiences as possible.

I also tried to take into account the great diversity that characterises the experience of secondary school teachers of Mauritius, a diversity that is produced by their participation in multiple formal and informal setting across different school types and their own experience as teachers of specific subjects. I tried to constitute as far as possible heterogeneous groups so that the interaction became beneficial in terms of group dynamics. Instead of considering a representative sample I did purposeful sampling as required by the approach I had adopted for my research. Of the various parameters that could be used to constitute the groups, gender, age, school type, religion group and subjects dimensions were considered. Those dimensions shed particular light on the influence of the participant's culture, life experience and outlook.

Basing myself on Gilligan's insight (Section 3.5.4) it was deemed interesting to investigate gender differences that may exist in the conception of morality and eventually the impact it may have on the conception of moral education. Moreover, religion is also an important parameter. Given the historical and the cultural setting of Mauritius, the religious aspect could not be overlooked. Religion plays a key role not only in identity formation but also in framing individual worldview of which morality is an important part.

One of the basic tenets of interpretive research is that participants should also be empowered through the research to apprehend their own social reality. The interaction created during the focus group discussions held with teachers enabled participants to discuss their own views on a variety of issues related to schools and moral education. This process of articulation necessitated self-understanding and self-talk which was provoked by the sometimes conflictual ideas presented. In being called upon to explain and support their positions and perceptions, the participants clarified their own standpoint by analysing their experiences and revisiting their own understanding through this productive dialogue with others. This entire exercise proved fruitful for both participants, my colleagues who acted as critical observers, and myself.

6.4.2.2 The Students

The sample size for students was also 30 and four focus group discussion were carried out. In fact, since equal recognition was given to the perspective of both teachers and students, their sample size was equivalent. Four schools were selected and the balance between boys and girls was maintained. One private school, one state school and two confessional schools were chosen to provide a well-balanced perspective to the research. Two confessional schools were chosen on account of their explicit commitment to moral education.

In each school, a teacher personally acted as gatekeeper, facilitating access to the school and the students. Both a girls' and a boys' confessional school were chosen together with a boys state secondary school and a girls' private school. No distinction was made on the urban and rural denominator because the school client is quite varied geographically, despite the fact that the government is trying to convert

access to school on a regional basis. The religious and ethnic background of students, diversity of family background and nature of school experience (school performance, behaviour, involvement in co-curricular activities) were important denominators that were communicated to gatekeepers and helped them to identify and select students.

Students of upper secondary classes were chosen, that is pupils of form IV and V. The rationale for this choice rests on the assumption that students falling within the age group of 14-17 years would feel freer to express their thoughts and they would have spent enough years in the school to have participated a variety of the experiences offered in the school. Additionally it is expected that for at this age, they would have attained a level of cognitive and emotional maturity to look critically at those experiences provided and form their own personal opinions using their own justification for the perception that they hold. Their profiles are represented in the following tables:

Table 6.4.2.(iii) *Profile of Students from Girls' Private School*

Students	Stream(Science Art, commerce,)	Age	Religion	School experience
A1	Arts &Humanities	16	Catholic	Average achiever, moderate involvement in school activities and has some behaviour problems with a few teachers
A2	Arts &Humanities	16	Catholic	Very low achiever, moderate involvement in school activities and has some behaviour problems with a few teachers. Troubled family background
A3	Commerce	16	Hindu	Low achiever, Little involvement in school activities and no behaviour problem.
A4	Arts &Humanities	15	Muslim	Average achiever, moderate involvement in school activities and sporadic behaviour problems
A5	Commerce	17	Catholic	Average achiever, high involvement in school activities and one favourite with some teachers
A6	Science	16	Catholic	Low achiever, moderate involvement in school activities and has no behaviour/ disciplinary although irregular at school
A7	Science	17	Hindu	Above Average achiever, Some involvement in school activities (quizzes etc) and has had behaviour problems with a few teachers in the past.

Table 6.4.2.(iv) *Profile of Students from Girls' Confessional School*

Students	Stream(Science Art, commerce,)	Age	Religion	School experience
B1	Commerce	14	Hindu	Average achiever with moderate involvement in school activities but no behaviour problems
B2	Arts and Humanities	15	Catholic	High achiever with low involvement in school activities and has no behaviour problems
B3	Science	15	Hindu	High achiever, moderate involvement in school activities. Very regular at school
B4	Science	15	Muslim	Average achiever, moderate involvement in school activities. very regular at school and close friends with B3
B5	Technical	16	Hindu	Average achiever, high involvement in school activities and had some disciplinary problems last year on account of truancy.
B6	Science	16	Hindu	Average achiever, little involvement in school activities and has no behaviour problems.
B7	Commerce	16	Catholic	Low achiever, moderate involvement in school activities and has some behaviour problems with a few teachers
B8	Technical	16	Hindu	Average achiever, moderate involvement in school activities and has some behaviour problems with a few teachers

Table 6.4.2.(v) *Profile of Students from Boys' Confessional School*

Students	Stream(Science Art, commerce,)	Age	Religion	School experience
C1	Science	16	Hindu	average achiever, member of the school council and has participated actively in co-curricular activities
C2	Arts and Humanities	16	Catholic	Above average achiever, moderate involvement in school activities.
C3	Science	15	Hindu	Above average achiever, moderate involvement in school activities
C4	Science	15	Catholic	Low achiever, moderate involvement in school activities. Has been transferred to this particular school after 2 years of secondary education in another institution.
C5	Technical	16	Hindu	High achiever, moderate involvement in school activities
C6	Science	16	Catholic	High achiever, high involvement in school activities and quite a favourite with teachers
C7	Commerce	17	Catholic	Average achiever with moderate involvement in school activities
C8	Technical	15	Muslim	Low achiever with moderate involvement in school activities .

Table 6.4.2.(vi) *Profile of Students from Boys' State School*

Students	Stream (Science Art, Commerce,)	Age	Religion	School experience
D1	Technical	16	Hindu	Above average achiever, moderate involvement in school activities.
D2	Arts and Humanities	16	Hindu	Average achiever, with moderate involvement in school activities.
D3	Science	15	Hindu	Above average achiever and is a member of the School Council.
D4	Commerce	15	Catholic	Above average achiever, moderate involvement in school activities.
D5	Arts and Humanities	16	Hindu	Low achiever with moderate involvement in school activities.
D6	Science	16	Muslim	Low achiever, with little involvement in school activities and has had a few disciplinary problems in the past
D7	Science	17	Muslim	High achiever with moderate involvement in school activities.

The focus group discussions with students were held in the school premise without the presence of a teacher. Students spoke freely, expressing their opinions in a spontaneous way. Care was taken to select students from varied backgrounds to enable discussions, convergence as well as divergence of views. The gatekeeper, who was either a teacher or the rector, was responsible for choosing students to participate in the focus group discussion. There was indeed a risk of bias in the teachers' judgment in the selection of participants. This posed no real problem since

the purpose of the research was not to find the correct opinion or data. Participants were called upon to explain and describe their personal experience

6.4.2.3 The School Administrators

School administrators are an important component of the sample. Because of their role in planning and implementing the curriculum in line with the philosophy of the school, they were expected to provide significant insights into the nature of moral education, the way it is implemented within the school setting as well as their own evaluation of the effectiveness of moral education provided in their school. Their function as school administrators places them in an ideal position to provide a holistic picture of the school as an institution, to be able to see the relationship of the parts to the whole and to understand how concretely the mission of the school takes shape in the experiences provided to students. School administrators, who are in most cases, the principals or rectors of the schools are also the leaders of the school. One of their most important tasks is to build a strong network of relationships within the school. Collecting data on the way in which school administrators go about this task and understanding the assumptions that underlie their perceptions and actions can prove to be crucial in understanding the moral experiences in the school.

The initial proposal made provision for the individual interview of 15 school administrators but this was not possible because the period starting end September till end of November proved unsuitable. Important end of year exams were being held in schools and the end of cycle exams for the Form V and Form VI students. Some school administrators, despite their goodwill were not able to make time for the interview. It is to be noted here that the interviews were scheduled for August 2004 but access to all

157

schools was significantly delayed because of the delay in receiving official acceptance from the authorities. However, the insights developed from the nine interviews held with administrators helped develop the kind of understanding the study was aiming at.

Profile of the School Administrators

In the government sector, all school administrators are required to have a number of years of teaching experience to be considered as eligible for the post. In confessional schools the same principle applies but in private school the situation may be different across schools. Since many of the private schools have independent governing bodies, the requirement of teaching experience may not apply in all cases. While selecting the school administrators, care was taken to choose as far as possible those school administrators with some background in teaching. Since the research was to focus not only on the school context but also inclusively on the classroom situation which also provides significant opportunities for moral learning, it was deemed necessary to have school administrators who would be able to analyse the school both as an *ensemble* and at micro level, that is, the classroom.

Out of the nine school administrators interviewed, three were from confessional schools both from Catholic and Muslim faiths with a declared commitment to religious and moral commitment and an explicit programme of moral education in the case of the Catholic confessional college. The rest was equally distributed between government and private schools.

Table 6.4.2 (vi) *Profile of School Administrators*

Administrator	Position	Sex	School Type	Years of experience as administrator	Religion
A	Rector	Female	Confessional	10+	Catholic
B	Rector	Male	Confessional	4+	Muslim
C	Deputy Rector	Male	State	9+	Hindu
D	Rector	Male	Private	13+	Hindu
E	Manager	Female	Confessional	3	Catholic
F	Rector	Male	Private	9	Hindu
G	Rector	Female	Private	5+	Hindu
H	Deputy Rector	Female	State	5+	Hindu
I	Rector	Male	State	12+	HIndu

6.4.2.4 The Parents

Parents were selected to participate in the study for various reasons. Firstly, they are important stakeholders in education. Secondly, in the study of the school as the meso-system (Grusec & Kuczynski 1997:105-129), the interrelationship between parents and the school becomes of primary importance. Because parents are crucial partners of the school their own perception of education and schooling influences the expectations of their children *vis à vis* the school and teachers. Since the educative process takes place both at home and at the school and as teachers are often expected to act in *loco parentis*, exploring the perspective of parents provides useful insights into the role of providing moral education especially in a multi- religious and multicultural context.

Table 6.4.2.(vii) *Profile of Parents*

Parents	Religion	Age	Sex	Children's School type	Occupation
A	Catholic	41	Female	Confessional	Hairdresser
B	Catholic	50	Female	Confessional	Secretary
C	Hindu	42	Male	Private	Civil servant
D	Hindu	51	Male	State	Lecturer
E	Catholic	48	Male	Confessional	Self employed
F	Muslim	43	Female	Private	Civil Servant
G	Hindu	43	Male	State	Executive Officer
H	Anglican	53	Male	Private	Businessman
I	Muslim	46	Female	State	Housewife
J	Hindu	43	Female	State	Clerical Officer

6.5 SELECTION OF METHODS: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Since I wanted to uncover participants' perception and understanding, the focus group discussions and individual interviews were used. The former methods were used with teachers and students and the latter with school administrator and parents.

Focus groups produce qualitative data that provide insights into the attitudes, perceptions and opinions of people. In focus group discussion the group facilitator ensures that "*priority is given to the respondents 'hierarchy of importance, their language and concepts, their frameworks for understanding the world*" (Kitzinger 1995:299-302).

The methodology involves bringing together a group or series of groups of individuals to discuss an issue in the presence of a moderator. The moderator ensures that the discussion does not go astray, while eliciting a wide range of opinions on those issues.

The main purpose of focus group research is to draw upon respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions in a way in which would not be feasible using other methods, for example observation, one-to-one interviewing, or questionnaire surveys. These attitudes, feelings and beliefs may be partially independent of a group or its social setting, but are more likely to be revealed via the social gathering and the interaction which being in a focus group entails. Focus groups elicit a multiplicity of views and emotional processes within a group context. They are particularly useful in this study when the perception and culture of particular groups are of interest, and enabled me to explore the degree of consensus on a given topic (Morgan & Kreuger 1993:132). Focus groups can be used at the preliminary or exploratory stages of a study (Kitzinger 1995:300) but in my case the focus group discussion was the main source of data collection from teachers and students. Because of its participative nature, it allows for greater interaction between participants and enables them to highlight their view of the world, their values and beliefs about a situation and ask questions of each other, as well as to re-evaluate and reconsider their own understandings of their specific experiences. Revelation of multiple understandings and meanings by participants permit subsequent explanations and articulation of their behaviour and attitudes.

The focus group discussion sits nicely with the interpretive research project by giving participants the opportunity to be involved in decision-making processes (Race et al 1994:733), to be valued as experts, and to be given

the chance to work collaboratively with researchers. However, not everyone may experience these benefits, as focus groups can also be intimidating at times, especially for inarticulate or shy members. This is why the constitution of the groups was carefully planned so as to help minimise the possibility of the discussion being hijacked by a few participants.

6.5.1: Focus Group Discussion: Practical Organisation

Organising focus group discussions usually requires careful planning more perhaps than other types of interviewing as getting people to group gatherings can be difficult and setting up appropriate venues with adequate recording facilities can be time consuming.

The recommended number of people per group is usually six to ten and in this research the group size has varied from six to nine. Only one meeting with each of several focus groups was arranged. Focus group sessions usually lasted from one to two hours. The Mauritius Institute of Education was used as a neutral location to avoid either negative or positive associations with a particular site or building (Powell and Single 1996: 201).

Care was taken to assemble the group in such a way that participants felt comfortable with each other. Meeting with others whom they think of as possessing similar characteristics or levels of understanding about a given topic, is more appealing than meeting with those who are perceived to be different.

Group members share certain characteristics and it is likely that, while not all their experiences in life are identical, group members share certain

experiences. Morgan et al (1984:253-270) suggested that, ideally, focus group participants should be a homogeneous group with sufficient variation among participants to allow for contrasting opinions.

I have also employed a tactic called the *extended focus group* with the teachers. This procedure includes a questionnaire administered to participants prior to the group session. The questionnaire included issues to be discussed during the focus group session and allowed the participants to already start thinking about the topics before any group discussion began. Information from these pre-group questionnaires has helped to ensure that I obtained out minority opinions as well as more dominant majority ones.

6.5.2 The Individual Interview

The semi-structured individual interview was used with the school administrators and the parents. Among the various types of interviews is used in various types of research, the structured interview is the most common. The interview, as a method of data collection, is strongly established in both quantitative and qualitative research traditions. The nature of the role of the researcher and the data interpretation is, however, still the subject of debate. I used a semi- structured individual interview with rectors for two reasons.

On the one hand, I felt that because of the important functions shouldered by school administrators, using for example a focus group discussion or a group interview would not allow them enough time to express themselves as individuals and administrators of a school. In the interpretive tradition, the interview is perceived not only as an exercise of collecting data but also one where a relationship is constructed with the participants. The

relationship that develops enables the construction of shared meaning and subsequently makes understanding possible.

Secondly the semi-structured interview allows greater flexibility especially in the case of exploratory research while helping the researcher and the participant to remain focused on the issue at hand and to seek to uncover similarities and differences as well as processes. The type of questions spanned the three categories proposed by Spradley (1979:103) descriptive, structural and contrast and their open ended nature made it possible to use probes and cues to obtain the required understanding.

6.5.2.1 Guidelines

Guidelines for the semi structured-interviews and focus group discussions for the different groups of stakeholders explored the same issues. In line with the research objectives (see section 1.5.1), there were two clear groups of open-ended questions. The first focused on their participants reading of what is meant by the term education, morality and moral education. The second set of questions referred to their views on current practices and their own personal evaluation of those practices in the school situation.

However, because of their different positions in the education process and schools, the questions had to be approached and framed differently but the guidelines were similar:

- Education - its significance and importance in personal life
- Relevance of school in helping to achieve life goals- Important aspects of school life

- Explanation of what is meant by morality and its relation to the process of education and schooling

- Understanding of a morally acceptable person - qualities and attributes

- Evaluation of the degree to which the school is helping to develop moral persons and its shortcomings in this regard.

- Teacher's role in providing moral education.

It was deemed to be useful to start with the more general questions to enlist from the beginning the participation of each member of the group. Simple and broad issues enhance participants' self-confidence that the questions are within reach. In addition, the sequence adopted was more or less in line with the research questions established in chapter one and because categories of analysis were already built into the research tools, it greatly facilitated data analysis.

The guidelines for the semi-structured interview with school administrators and parents were slightly different. Parents though involved in the process of education and schooling are, strictly speaking 'outsiders' in the sense that they do not participate or have first hand information on the processes of schooling whereas other categories of participants are fully involved and interact on a daily basis. Their guidelines as shown below focused on their expectations of education and schooling and on an interpretation of their children's experiences:

- Expectations about education for their children

- Broad functions of education in the contemporary Mauritian society.

- Perception of the effectiveness of schools in helping to fulfill those functions

- Understanding of the concept of morality

- The moral mandate of the school - its relevance
- School practices as regards moral education: evaluation of the current situation.

Since school administrators' viewpoint was sought in their capacity as school leaders, the opening questions focused on a description of the school mission statement which is believed to reflect the perception about the aim of schooling and education. The following issues were discussed subsequently:

- Expectations of parents and teachers with regard to education
- The place of moral education in their curriculum- relevance in the current context
- The school and classroom practices with respect to the above
- The teacher's roles - an appraisal of how far teachers can and should fulfill these roles
- Proposals and solutions to enhance the process of moral learning in the school.

The four key tasks involved in the interview were to (Mathers et al :1998:9):

(i)   locate the participants
(ii)   obtain agreement to participate in the study
(iii)   conduct the interview
(iv)   record the answers

The first task involved selecting a sample of 15 school administrators of various backgrounds and from all three types of schools. Five from each category of schools were selected and they were contacted and their

consent to participate in the interview sought. In the first instance they all expressed willingness to participate in the study and requested more details about what participation entailed. I provided these details in person and undertook an ice breaking exercise with each of the prospective participants. Appointments were made at the convenience of the respondents but unfortunately as happens with all fieldwork, unforeseen contingencies reduced the number of participants from fifteen to nine because of the reasons mentioned in the previous section.

The semi- structured interviews and focus group discussions were carried out mostly in Creole or French and only one interview with the administrator in English. Because of the methodological approach was qualitative, it was deemed more appropriate to use the native language (Creole) or the social language (French) rather than the official language (English) in order to enable all participants to express their views freely. The transcripts were therefore in those two above-mentioned languages but an English translation was provided for each.

6.6 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER AS THE QUILTMAKER

Denzin and Lincoln (2000:4) describe multiple and gendered images to represent the researcher's role, among which we find the quilt maker. The quilter stitches, edits and puts slices of reality together. This process creates and brings psychological and emotional unity into an interpretive experience. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials that describes the routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual's life; I find this image of quilt maker particularly apt at describing the creative work of the researcher.

Research on people's perception on education, schooling and their moral function within the school setting requires the researcher to reconcile two opposing functions: the former is based on the demands of researcher as being objective, trying, as a someone who does not belong primarily to the setting, to decide on the storyline that will fit into the varying perceptions of the participants and give equal recognition to the perception of each. The latter refers to the requirements of the qualitative discourse that the researcher becomes part of the situation as a means of developing an understanding the worldview of its participants. This symbiotic view of knowledge conceives of research as essentially an act of communicating rather than knowing, where the researcher gives a personal rendering of his or her own experience. The aim is not to unveil the truth but to help reconstruct the multiple voices that would serve to illuminate theory. In that light the researcher's role has to be reconceptualised because it can no longer be understood as unveiling the truth but rests on an assumption of truth that is not foundational in nature. The researcher is thus no longer the visiting expert who, after having observed and diagnosed in a detached way, renders a verdict based on the data obtained.   Rather, the researcher's role is to bring reflexivity to a situation although positivists would have it called 'subjectivity'. Jansen and Peshkin (1992:681-725) refer to this as an interactional quality that emerges out of the dialogue that the researcher engages with the participants and the text. The human instrument, as opposed to a paper and pencil survey or questionnaire, is the primary tool for gathering data. This is in line with the assertion that it is difficult to devise a nonhuman instrument with sufficient adaptability to adjust to the different realities that may be encountered in this type of research (Lincoln & Guba 1994:179). The researcher as instrument approach uses our human capacities to limit bias and subjectivity while capitalizing on intellectual responsiveness to let the study emerge. The

intent is to learn from the participants and interpret their experience without influencing them, and what they think about issues central to the study.

The researcher's role, whether more traditional (gatherer of data) or interpretive (building relationship), is always somewhat hierarchical. Ignoring power differences contributes to their perpetuation. Thus, being aware of these differences, even bringing them into the discussion, can serve to equalize power to some extent. Engaging in mutual meaning-making and viewing participants as experts can further reduce hierarchies and contribute to the empowerment of participants

In interpretive research, the researcher becomes the research instrument and the data literally filters through the lenses of the researcher's eyes. To be able to develop the ability to emphasize, I paid attention to the following:

(i)   Awareness - The researcher's awareness of self, other and field is essential to reveal what is 'actually going on' as we collect data.

(ii)   Availability - Being present; the researcher's ability to be immediate and in contact with the interviewee/ participant in the here-and-now. The 'I-Thou', dialogic relationship is used, rather than the 'I-it'.

(iii)   Ability to use self as instrument; to be in touch with own affective response; to use all our senses; to be alive to the obvious.

(iv)   Process orientation - "*A process is a succession of events that one experiences, responds to and helps create.*" (Brown 1997:80). Qualitative researchers need to "…follow the tide as it flows [and] maintain a flexible, exploratory attitude." The researcher "…*forgoes attempts to control the direction of the*

course of a qualitative study and lays aside a desired outcome."
(Brown 1997:81)

Embracing this particular stand on my research project required that I revisit my own understanding of the concept of validity.

6.7 RETHINKING SUBJECTIVITY - USING REFLEXIVITY

Researchers using the interpretive mode have to pay special attention to the issue of subjectivity. Indeed much of the criticism levelled against this approach lies in the fact that the researcher may underscore some aspects of his or her findings and privilege others. Proponents of qualitative research argue that no research is biased or value free because it is always done from somebody's perspective and tells the story of some individuals rather than others to identify a particular source of systematic error: a tendency on the part of researchers to collect data, and/or to interpret and present them, in such a way as to favour false results that are in line with their prejudgments and political or practical commitments. This may consist of a positive tendency towards a particular, but false, conclusion. But there are also sources of bias that stem from the research process itself. It has often been pointed out, for example, that once a particular interpretation, explanation or theory has been developed by a researcher, he or she may tend to interpret data in terms of it, be on the look out for data that would confirm it, or even shape the data production process in ways that lead to error. Thus, one widely recognized danger in the context of ethnography is that if the researcher 'goes native', he or she will interpret events solely from the point of view of particular participants, taking over any biases that are built into their perspectives.

It is important to reiterate that subjectivity is welcome in qualitative research. At the same time, steps to assure that results reflect the meanings and stories of participants, not that of the researcher have been taken. Fortunately, qualitative researchers have effective ways to handle subjectivity, including the self-reflective journal, peer research teams and peer debriefers, and participant checks. A few of those have been used in the process of the research and are discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

The dissolving of distance between the researcher and those with whom the research is done and the recognition that both are labile, non unitary subjects (Britzman 1998: 229-238) makes a strong case for 'strongly reflexive' accounts about the researcher's own part in the research. If researchers are sufficiently reflexive about their work, they would be able to draw from a variety of resources to guide the gathering creation and interpretation. There are a number of ways in which reflexivity could be woven into the research process. I have identified three levels or moments. The first level relates to the my own dialogue with the text- the conversation that is involved in the process of rewriting not the transcripts of the interviews and focus group discussion but my own account of what I believed to have been the core elements of my dialogue with the participants.

Secondly, I had conversation with a critical colleague who attended the focus group interviews and some of my individual interviews. This exercise has enabled me to come to terms, to a certain extent, with some of the issues I grappled with not only at the time of data analysis but at the time of framing the design. It also made it possible for me to step out of myself and to take distance with my own representation of myself in the research setting. As Reinharz (1997:5) argues we create a self into the field, the

situationally created self distinct from the research based self and the brought self. My critical colleague effectively highlighted the contradictions that existed not only in my writing of the text but also my interactions with my participants. My writing was not only transcribing a given reality but was itself the very process of creating it.

The third level relates to the opportunities given to the various voices to be mapped in the text. This stemmed out of a concern to empower the participants to direct the research process not only as a means to get closer to the truth but rather out of an ethical concern to make the research relationship reciprocal rather than hierarchical. The transcripts and the first interpretation were sent to some participants.

Despite the fact that the canons of objectivity as set up in the foundationalist epistemologies no longer hold good from the interpretive standpoint, inter-subjectivity can be achieved by building within the research process mechanisms through which the researcher can use participants themselves or critical colleagues to help them gaze at themselves and their work.

6.8 ESTABLISHING VALIDITY

Unlike the concept of objectivity where there are fairly strong grounds philosophically and theoretically to examine it, validity is not easily configured. The basic aim of any research work is to help advance knowledge in that particular field of study. In qualitative research the aim is to advance understanding of a particular social situation and not to derive generalizable principles that will permeate to other social settings. It follows that the conceptualisation of validity under those two different traditions is different in the sense that in interpretive research the issue of

authenticity, the conflation between method and interpretation are seen as the cornerstone for establishing validity.

The former refers to the trustworthiness of the data which can be inferred by looking at the design and methods. Though no single method is superior to another to lead us to the truth, there are some methods more suited than others for research on human construction of social realities. Care should be taken to choose the design and methods that best respond to the research questions. A certain degree of validity has to be achieved in each; the validity of the design would be established by situating adequately the researcher in the empirical field, by defining how the design is connected to the paradigm, how the empirical material will interact with the perspective offered and what strategies of inquiry and research methods will be used. The greater the coherence among these, the higher the level of validity because it would have demonstrated a sound understanding of the field that is being researched together with the informed use of the adequate strategies of inquiry. Additionally, for interpretive research, authenticity is also enhanced when the research reflects the twin qualities of balance and fairness. Including a variety of voices by giving space to the variety of views and perspective offered by diverse stakeholders in the text is one way of reducing the potential marginalisation of certain categories of stakeholders (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:297).

The present research included four categories of respondents: teachers, parents, rectors and students from a total of 21 colleges all over the island. Government, private and confessional schools were fairly represented as well as the different ethnic groups. The gender balance was also maintained to secure the representation of males as both teachers and

rectors of schools. In all 33 teachers participated in the four focus group discussion held.

However, the more difficult aspect of validity resides at the level of the interpretation of the data. Interpretivism operates under an ontology of relativism just like constructivism, which assumes multiple though conflicting, social realities. Transactional and subjective, the constructivist researcher literally 'creates' the findings in an interactive process with the researched. Thus, as in critical theory, the traditional distinction between ontology and epistemology disappears. Constructivist research methods utilize a dialectical and hermeneutical approach whereby individual constructions are elicited, refined and interpreted, with increasing degrees of understanding through interaction between investigator and participants. The interaction enables the researcher to develop *'verstehen'* (Interpretive understanding), that is empathic identification with the participant in order to understand his/her motives, beliefs, desires and thoughts. Collingwood (cited in Denzin & Lincoln 2000: 192) calls this "historical knowledge" which aims at developing "inside understanding- the participants' definition of the situation. The choice of focus group discussion coupled with individual interviews allowed me to step out of my own historical frames of reference by, paradoxically participating in the life worlds of others through dialogue. But the other aspect of *'verstehen'* which emphasizes the reconstruction of the self-understanding of the participants is the bone of contention for establishing validity. The interpretive researcher does not have as such a means for establishing whether one interpretation is better or provides an explanation that is closer to the truth compared to another; rather the interpretation will be defended on the lines of defensible and plausible reasoning alongside some reality that is known to the author and the reader (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:178). Through this the researcher objectifies that which is to be interpreted.

However, this claim can be defeated on the ground that the research. cannot completely step out of his frames of references The argument here is circular; our knowledge is constrained by the understanding derived from our past experience and the limits of our understanding is traced out by our knowledge. As 'subjectivities', we cannot have an interpretation that is free of any perspective. There can be no truth correspondents to our understanding, there always exists alternative yet equally valid interpretations.

Hammersley (1990:61) developed alternative criteria which I tried to use for my own research when it comes to the interpretation of the texts that were created out of the interviews and discussions. There are two central elements here: plausibility (whether it seems likely) and credibility (given the circumstances of the research and our understanding of the phenomena). These are to be established either by face value or presentation of evidence. However, what is accepted or rejected as a matter of evidence is dependent on the norms established by the research community, thus become a matter of social judgment. My understanding of these two concepts led me to use the help of two of my colleagues who are themselves nearly completing their doctoral studies and who are working on generating social understanding of different aspects of issues related to Mauritian education as critical support. They studied both samples of transcripts and the interpretation that I gave to them. Their feedback was most of the time received during the discussion we had where I was presented with an alternative yet equally valid interpretation. I was also expected to elaborate on my interpretation of the texts that emerged. This exercise was extremely productive because these colleagues also attended a few of my focus group discussion and had a different reading of both the situation and text. Additionally my first reading of the text was sent to some participants on three occasions so that they

also could validate my interpretation of a text that they have created. Thus both from the inside and outside I attempted to reinforce the plausibility and credibility of my interpretation.

6.9 ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE RESEARCH

The two main ethical issues in the present research are those of confidentiality and anonymity. Care was taken to maintain the confidentiality of the information provided and to respect the privacy of those participating the study. All participants were informed in advance of what was expected of them by the gatekeepers. They participated on a voluntary basis and this was evident in the enthusiasm displayed during the focus group discussions and interviews. Permission for recording the discussion or conversation was sought and a sample of participants received a copy of the transcripts for vetting. Thus, in the true tradition of democratic research, participants were empowered to express themselves before, during and after the interview or discussion.

Additionally, the methodology adopted is also reflective of an ethical stance because I gave priority to stakeholders' interpretation and life experiences, the methods used were flexible and allowed an open-ended dialogue among participants and between the participants and myself.

6.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has dealt with the methodological issues of the research. As demonstrated, the methods that were most appropriate for achieving the objectives were used. In the next chapter, I will discuss about the findings and its interpretation.

CHAPTER 7
DATA ANALYSIS

7.1   INTRODUCTION

In this section, the findings from both interviews and focus group discussions will be presented and analysed. The themes developed in the current chapter have been generated from the issues that were discussed during the course of my interaction with the participants. The analysis and interpretation of the data thus gathered has been carried out in the light of the research objectives set in chapter one.

The objectives of this study (section 1.5.1) are to :

(i)   develop an understanding of parents, teachers and students interpretation of morality and moral education

(ii)   uncover and explain the teachers'. parents', administrators' and students' understanding and perception of the aims of education and schooling

(iii)   generate understanding as to the impact of stakeholders life histories and culture on their perception on the role of education, schools and teachers

(iv)   analyse stakeholders' perception of the relevance of moral education and the role of schools in providing moral education

(v)   develop guidelines for implementing a programme of moral education at the secondary level.

Since the third objective has been covered in detail in chapter III, the first section of data analysis is therefore centered on a general discussion of the findings about the concept of education rather than the detailed and

comparative mode that characterizes the findings and discussion of the two subsequent issues. This is because the definitions of education are relevant here only in the light of the implications they have for moral education and are therefore useful only in the sense that they provide data about the more general context of the moral mandate of schools.

I then move to exploring the stakeholders' perceptions of the nature of morality and its relationship to religion, spirituality, conscience and social conventions. This is followed by their views of moral learning and moral education. The third part of this chapter deals with the stakeholders' description and evaluation of the effectiveness of the current practices and strategies adopted in the different types of school and a reflection on the models adopted. The next section describes the stakeholders' views on the relevance of moral education in a multicultural context like Mauritius and the last part of the chapter analyses the implications for the role of the school in providing moral education. The last objective is dealt with in the last chapter of the thesis.

7.2 THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATION
7.2.1: Findings

In their discussion of the concept of education stakeholders highlighted different aspects of education which have implications for the role of the school in providing moral education. Two clear perspectives emerge: one referring to what can be termed as a narrow concept of education and the other based on a broader perspective of what education is purported to achieve. The first mentioned restricts the goal of education to an economic and 'technicist' view by defining it as a means of equipping people with the skills needed to survive in an increasingly competitive environment. Often qualified as a 'passport' for a bright future, the concept of education in

Mauritius seems to fit in what seems to be the economic model of education (Pandey 2001: 12), that is one where education is primarily viewed as a preparatory process to enter the job market. Education was thus defined as the transmission of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are relevant to the needs of an industrialised society. This 'transmission' is not only conceived as a matter of subject teaching, but also, of engaging students into patterns of behaviour that are reflective of those in the workplace.

Most *students* as well as parents consider this aspect as central to the educative endeavour. As one male student from a state secondary school observed :

> *" L'éducation li presque tout aujourd'hui parcequi sans l'éducation nous pas gagne un certificat at sans certificat nous pas gagne travail après et sans travail nous pas capave faire nanier."*

(Education means everything to us today because without it we do not get a certificate we do not get a job and without a job you achieve nothing.)

Most parents also adhered to this view and the following comment by a mother illustrates their position:

> *"Ça les prepare pour l'avenir et les aide à mieux se connaître a connaître les autres, à s'adapter à la societe quoi! Pour le certificat et le travail. C'est tout pour nos enfants. Sans l'éducation on n'est rien dans le monde."*

(It prepares them for the future, to know about themselves, to understand others, to adapt to society. It is important for the certificate and the job. This means everything. Without education we are nobodies.)

Both views expressed above are predicated upon the belief that education is essentially a product and the aims of education can only be gauged, through its outcomes such as performance. Education is thus closely, if not solely, associated with results and academic success. The issue of certification therefore ranks high as a priority especially in the context of an input and output model that considers the human resource aspect of education primarily. It is not surprising, therefore, that certification becomes a way of measuring the effectiveness of the system in delivering the goods.

Many students have fully endorsed this product-oriented view of education where being educated is equivalent to getting the certificate. While explaining their understanding of the aim of education, many students, both boys and girls, frequently referred to the 'sacrifices' made by the parents in financing their schooling and highlighted the point that education is an investment and that parents expected to earn the return in concrete terms which clearly implied good grades for the certificate and the expected reward of a well paid job that will enhance their status. While many teachers did not completely agree with the desirability of holding such narrow aim of education, they perceived it as inevitable in the light of contemporary national and international circumstances. They further argued that such a view is vehicled in political discourses since education is seen as an essential part of government policy in its twin pursuits of equity and social justice.

The broader perspective relates to education as the 'development of person' understood to be intellectual, social, emotional, moral, physical and spiritual. The intellectual aim, also construed as the knowledge aim, seems to be a prime concern. Rationality and critical thinking are seen as generic competencies through which the child acquires knowledge and develops perspectives that are so necessary for autonomous functioning. As explained by a parent:

> *" Une bonne éducation te permets de raisonner sinon tu vas pouvoir te tenir en société, t'as rien dans le crâne. Tu dois être au courant de ce qui se passe dans le monde, des autres civilizations. Quand un enfant sort de l'école il faut qu'il ait un baggage intellectuel."*

(A good education enables you to think rationally if not how will you fit in society, you've got nothing in the head. You have to be aware of what goes on in the world, of other cultures. When a child leaves school, he needs to have some level of intellectual development.)

The perception of knowledge can also be broadened to include social knowledge conceived as understanding of social codes. Moral knowledge can be interpreted as the ability to discriminate between right and wrong, both of which are essential aspects of knowledge that should be developed by the school through both the overt and hidden curriculum. Moreover, when referring to the developmental aim of education many parents also frequently mentioned the term character formation in their discourse. A person of character as described by parents has not only a well developed personality and can make independent and autonomous judgments but also upholds moral principles which serve as guidelines for behaviour and decision-making.

Character is construed as the moral aspect of personality rather than being related to the notion of virtue. Most stakeholders, who referred to character formation in their discourse, implied to some extent that the school is saddled with the responsibility of giving some direction to the attitudes and disposition of the child.

Students' view about the development of the person focused on the social definitions of personality, that is, the relation to others and in society rather than the issue of moral education per se. The basic concern of most students, irrespective of gender, seems to be the development of a balanced personality. What they do understand by the term can be gauged by the following typical comment:

> *"L'éducation ce n'est pas juste académique, on peut rencontrer d'autres personnes on se fait des amis dans d'autres écoles par exemple par l'éducation on apprend à découvrir d'autres personnes, on apprend à se tenir en société par example au travail on sera pas seul et on va devoir côtoyer d'autres personnes. On apprend le savoir-vivre. C'est une éducation qu'une personne doit avoir pour être complet.*

(*Education should not only focus on the academic aspect. We can meet other persons and make friends with students of other schools. Through education, for example, we learn about others. We learn to behave properly in society and at work, for example, we will not be alone. We will have to get along with others. We learn to live together. We need to be educated to become a complete person.*)

The discourse held by some stakeholders revealed that social interactions should play a key role for helping to attain crucial educational aims such as the development of a positive self-esteem and emotional well being. For this to happen the child has to be concurrently trained to develop moral responsibility. Teachers were particularly emphatic that the school and its environment should "habituate" the child into respecting shared values of society and develop moral responsibility. Frequent reference was made to the need for coherence and continuity in school policy with regard to matters of obedience to rules and regulations. It became clear, in the course of the focus group discussion with teachers, that the aim of personal growth in education, if it is to be achieved by the school, is contingent upon the existence of a school environment that is reflective of those values.

Additionally, the overlapping aims of personal growth, personality development and moral responsibility grow out of a recognition that for the stakeholders, the ultimate goal of education is to have good and responsible people capable, not only of respecting what society stands for, but who can also make judgments about the rightness or wrongness of both individual and collective decisions. It is interesting to note that those from confessional schools of different faiths lay more more emphasis on the development of persons rather than academic achievement. As demonstrated by the following comment of one of the teachers:

> " *Chaque élève doit reussir bien sûr parcequ'ils viennent ici pour apprendre parceque les parents vont dire on les a envoyés ici pour qu'ils aient un certificat surtout au niveau académique il faut qu'ils réussissent bien sûr ils ne peuvent pas sortir d'ici sans un certificat mais en même temps je voudrais leur développement personnel intégral.*"

(Each child has to succeed because they come here to learn because parents send them to school to get a certificate. They have to succeed. Of course, they cannot come out of school without a certificate but at the same time I would want them to have an all round development.)

While the teachers from confessional schools perceive academic achievement as a means to an end, personal growth and development seem to represent the long-term desirable end goal. Their perception of the aims of education is embedded in their religious philosophy and in the principle of equity of persons irrespective of their social rank and status.

The philosophy of confessional school rests on broader foundations, which focuses largely on the development of the persons rather than the narrow aim of educating for economic purposes. The mission of the school which is grounded in its religious beliefs, focuses on educating the individual primarily for himself/ herself rather than for an instrumental purpose as demonstrated by this comment:

> *" Nous avons des élèves de différentes abilités et nous visons à développer le potentiel de chaque élève quelque soit son potentiel et donc nous travaillons de manière assidue avec ceux qui sont beaucoup plus capables et nous essayons d'aider ceux qui sont moins capables à réaliser leur potentiel tout en gardant en tête le fait que l'éducation n'est pas seulement académique mais aussi le développement spirituel et social."*

(We have mixed ability students and we wish to develop the potential of every student and as such we work laboriously with the high achievers and we try to help the less able to realize their potential while keeping in mind

that education is not restricted to the academic aspect only but also includes spiritual and social development)

School administrators at the confessional further argue that utilitarian understanding has been perverted in the contemporary context because the notion of benefits, whether individual or collective, is now measured in strictly monetary and economic terms. Their understanding drawn from religious roots seems to be oriented towards the well-being and happiness of persons which is not measured in purely quantitative but rather in qualitative terms.

Additionally, education for democracy and citizenship seems to be a well-established ideal among teachers who expressed concern about the fact that the current system of education does not cater for responsibility. While they recognize that, under ideal conditions, opportunities should be given, within the school setting and at home, they also highlighted that both the family and school contexts are not conducive to helping children develop a sense of responsibility. Blame for this situation is laid at the feet of parents, teachers, school administrations and decision-makers. For them, the ideals of democracy and democratic education should not only be present in political rhetoric about education.

7.2.2 Analysis

These two opposing concepts of education have interesting implications regarding the issue of moral education. The narrow definition of the concept and aims of education seems to be tied down to an instrumental understanding of the nature of the educative process and a very limited understanding of society and human life. At the same time such a discourse flows from the rhetoric of many governments about the need to

improve efficiency and productivity of labour in order to improve the rates of economic growth. The underlying philosophy of this particular worldview is an exclusively materialistic one that conceives of human happiness as being solely based on material achievement and success. Aristotle rated this ideal of human flourishing, the pursuit of wealth, as one of the 'lower' educational aims. Education defined under such a limited perspective can lead to pleasure but not long-term happiness.

In addition, it is important to recognize that the values embedded in this 'technicist' approach which supports the overly contractual nature of modern societies, are reflective of a utilitarian and consequentialist conception of ethics which is so characteristic of most industrialized societies. Under this perspective, education is equated with training and moral education with the passive transmission of those values and modes of thought that reinforce conformity especially in the work place. Indeed, the social reproductionist view of moral education discussed in chapter 3 becomes a useful paradigm to analyse such practices.

However, this perspective cannot be considered as a viable and desirable end for educators for whom education is a means of empowering people and making them autonomous human beings. If, as Kant (1925) expressed, the real aim of human life is the attainment of freedom that is paradoxically duty bound, education then, involves giving people the intellectual and moral resources necessary for them to shoulder their responsibility in an increasingly complex and demanding environment. This aim can only be achieved if we focus on the development of persons as individuals and as members of a collective social group. The broad definition of education is more humane as opposed to a humanistic approach and incorporates a very important element of moral education.

This interpretation is driven by a recognition that individuals should acquire concurrently a sense of self-concept and self-esteem and an understanding of the other that is not grounded in surface attributes(Perry 1984:143) but rather in the kind of moral choices that one makes based on social relational knowledge and social perspective taking. Autonomy of the individual is apprehended in terms of the thought and decision-making and an ability for empathy and respect for other persons that is supported by higher order thinking. Character is thus construed as the ability to place moral concerns at the center of our preoccupations and as the highest ideal in education.

Both the narrow and broad understandings of education have an important cognitive strand. The former sees logical thought and rationality as essential qualities to be able to function in a technological and scientific setting and to make informed choices as citizens of a democratic state. The latter views rationality as being needed to balance the consequences of action and to enhance understanding of the distress of individuals (Hersch 1990: 231).

There are basically two issues that emerge from the findings which I find particularly corroborative with the line of thought developed in the literature review. On the one hand, the emphasis on rationality, points to the distinct cognitive element that has been interwoven in the observational learning theory of Bandura (1991: 91). On the other hand, the repeated emphasis of adolescents and teachers particularly on the relevance of social interactions within the school context in forging convictions and personality, highlight the importance of the socialisation process and the development of a sense of self. The latter is constructed and embedded in the network of social relations and social roles that the adolescent is called upon to play. The school helps them to develop a coherent and cogent

sense of self when it treats them as agents capable of action and decision-making. This dialectical notion of the self has been strongly supported by Saltzstein(1997:56) in chapter 4 (see section 4.1.3).

The importance attached to the quality of the social environment needs to be highlighted. This position is clearly in line with the psychological approaches expounded in chapter 5 (see section 5.3.2). The aims of education are thus closely associated with the role of the school. The importance of engaging learning opportunities, the respectful and supportive relationships among students, parents and teachers, the emphasis on common purpose and ideals go a long way into creating an environment that satisfies basic psychological needs of recognition, develop intellectual and socio-moral capacities, reasoning and thinking skills, social skills and empathy(Molnar 1997:129).

What has been underscored in the findings, however, is the necessity to develop the concurrent socio-affective dispositions and resources which form the core of Erikson's approach (1962:45). I believe that in considering the developmental aim of education, one cannot expect to achieve moral excellence if attention is not paid to the socio-emotional processes that are as important as the socio-cognitive ones (Lickona 1991:53). The implications of a divorce of the intellect from the emotions are serious.

Human personality consists of three interrelated domains: cognitive, affective and behavioural. Education has to take all of those three aspects on board if it has as goal, the achievement of character. Emotion is what links us with others (Haste 1998:4), what gives us the will to convert thoughts into action and what defines our 'self'. This is unlike the Western tradition embedded in the Cartesian dichotonomy which seeks to present a universal inner logical order of moral concepts of which fairness and justice

are supreme. Gillingan's (1982:32-69) view discussed in chapter 3 (see section 3.5.4) provides a more comprehensive paradigm in helping to understand the unity of the 'self' in the first instance and secondly in the social discourses and practices that give meaning to moral identity.

7.3 STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF MORALITY

7.3.1 Findings

Parents defined the term morality as the ability to distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong based on values and norms that are agreed upon by society. This definition is, however, not clearly demarcated from the notion of social conventions as some parents perceive morality as being solely tied down to the respect of norms and rules established by society. Evaluation of any action is with reference to externally imposed norms that are to be transmitted to children. The following comment by a parent clearly underlines this :

> *" La moralité des principes, des valeurs, des normes des conventions qu'il faut respecter la société l'exige et nous devons adherer à tous cela."*

(Morality refers to principles values, norms and conventions. Society requires that we abide by them)

The parent's comment which is reflective of the general understanding of parents is crucially important in highlighting the relationships between morality, norms and conventions. For parents it seems that morality values and norms are interrelated. Since morality refers to the distinction between right and wrong, for them it follows that such judgments must be guided by

189

principles and values that are sanctioned by society. Their understanding of morality is almost exclusively 'public' in nature. Additionally, the parents' discourse can be clearly situated in the context of an absolutist and idealist paradigm in the sense that there are guiding and unchanging principles that influence or should influence decision-making. One parent clearly raised this issue:

> *"C'est très clair, il y a le droit chemin et puis il y a l'autre, c'est à toi de choisir. Mon rôle c'est de te prévenir si tu choisi ce chemin là c'est ce qui va t'arriver. Tu dois te servir de ta conscience et des valeurs spirituelles ou religieuses je ne sais pas moi il faut raisonner et utiliser ta tête."*

(It is very clear, there is the right choice and then the other. It's for you to decide. My role is to warn you if you choose this particular course of action, this is what will happen to you. You have to use your conscience and your values- spiritual and religious… what can I say, it is also a matter of reasoning.)

What is interesting in the perspective exemplified above is the belief that these absolutist principles derive from three sources which do not exactly belong to the same tradition. The religious perspective goes a long way in explaining the idealist position of most parents which has to be understood in the light of the strong religious influences on Mauritian society. As mentioned in section 2.6.3.2, till 1979, the term moral education was used synonymously with religious education.

Furthermore, what is worth noting in this comment is also the reference made to the use of conscience in deciding about moral matters. The superego represents the internalized values and norms that guide action.

Children's concept of right and wrong is consciously and unconsciously internalized as they watch adults' behaviour in their environment. However, morality is still strongly associated with rationality and ability to make well balanced and informed decisions based on universal values as embedded in religion. It is clear that parents do not expect morality to be *de novo* constructed by their children but rather the latter should understand the 'why' the shared perspective offered by religion and integrate it into their own perspective.

Students' understanding of the notion of morality is quite different from that of parents insofar as the importance of religion is concerned. Morality is perceived as a set of principles and values that guide behaviour. This set of principles may derive from religious beliefs or may be entirely divorced from them as the following discussion among students emphasizes:

> " *Pour moi la moralité n'a rien à voir avec la religion.*
> *Oui moi aussi mo d'accord, banne dimoune soi disant religieux la zotte faire pli di tort lezotte dimoune.*
> *Il faut pas generalize la religion li pas mauvais en soi, c'est dimoune qui mauvais. Aucun religion pas dire faire di tort.*
> *Ce qui mo pe rode dire c'est qui li pas necessaire qui un dimoune religieux pou li morale. Pour moi c'est deux zaffaires separées!"*

(For me morality has nothing to do with religion.
Yes I agree too. Those who claim to be religious, they harm others even more.
One should not generalise. Religion is not bad in itself. No religion tells to you harm others.

What I mean to say is that it is not necessary for someone to be religious in oreder for him to be moral.)

For female students there seemed to be dissonant voices with regard to the distinction between religion and morality. One group of girls students irrespective of religion and ethnic belonging, seemed to perceive religion as a springboard for solving moral problems while boys argued that religion and morality are separate issues. Some people are religious in the sense that they have strict adherence to religious rituals but this is not an indication of their morality. Intricately woven in the discussion above is the concept of morality as not harming others and conversely, the concept of caring for the welfare of others.

Unlike their female counterparts, boys found that the distinction between religion and morality is clear cut. To a certain extent, a complete disregard for the involvement of religion in moral matters was expressed. They claimed that religious matters have only relevance within the sphere of family practice. Morality, for them, derives from other than religious sources. However, similar to the girls, they stressed on not harming others and upholding the ideals of equality and freedom. An interesting issue that needs to be highlighted is the emphasis placed by students on morality conceived as 'doing' things. Moral experience is rooted in action. Their concern is on behaviour and the motives that guide behaviour, their frameworks of values partially received from parents and partially self-constructed.

Teachers' perception of morality was strongly related to the notion of person as a teacher stated "what kind of person do we want our students to be?" should be the most important question teachers should ask. Morality is therefore for them a matter of character. Two clear lines of

thought emerge: the first one construes of morality as cognitive judgement backed by strong attachment to core universal values that are rationally derived in the context of modern democracies and which cut across cultural and religious boundaries. The second is more grounded in the realities of the Mauritian context and recognizes the value of religious faith in transmitting moral values. In the focus group discussion held with teachers, the issue of morality and spirituality came to the forefront as illustrated below:

> " *Spiritualité moi mo croire ca marche ensam dans tout religion la moralité c'est la spiritualité. Il faut être moralement stable pour être spirituellement stable.*
> *Non moi mo croire mo capave moral   mais mo capave pas spirituel, pour moi c'est avoir éthiques, des principes dans la vie code de conduite c'est un base de principes. La spiritualité pour moi c'est autre chose."*

(I think that spirituality and morality are related in all religions morality is spirituality. One needs to be morally healthy to be spiritually healthy.
 No, I believe one can be moral without being spiritual. For me, it means having ethics, principles and a code of conduct. It means to have a set of principles. Spirituality is something else.)

These conflicting views as to the nature of morality interestingly point out to the linguistic maze that characterises debate in morality and moral education. It is clear that adults' perception of what morality refers to is heavily dependent on their life experiences and own religious and cultural beliefs. Those participants who argued for a clear demarcation give precedence to the cognitive aspect. Deciding between right and wrong and acting upon it calls for an understanding of what our duty and reason

are. Those who refer to spirituality seemed to underscore the value of rational thought in favour of an attachment to the highest ideals and principles embodied in religious beliefs.

One line of agreement, however, among some teachers is that morality belongs to the private sphere. Similar to parents, they refer repeatedly to conscience as illlustrated in the oft repeated phrase "C'est toi et to conscience" (It's between you and your conscience). Moral development in students can be gauged by the extent to which behaviour becomes regulated by and tuned to the child's conscience. There seemed to be an implicit assumption that knowledge of what constitutes right and wrong automatically leads to a realisation of what the appropriate course of action is.

The above definitions of morality have important implications for moral education. If morality is perceived as a set of values that is 'received' from religious sources and is justified in this particular context of one world view, it emphasizes the "given" nature of morality. Therefore, there is no *ab initio* invention. Once the attachment to the particular faith is secured, the person will embrace the morality embedded in those religious principles. It simply becomes a process of transmission. The objection to this view lies in the belief that such conditioning as pre-empted by transmission and a behavioural concept of conscience is inimical to the development of persons as autonomous, thinking and sentient beings. However, the purely cognitive perspective that sees morality as a developmental task is also unsatisfactory insofar as it ignores the ultimate connection between thinking and feeling.

Much of the school administrators' discourse was along the same lines as presented by teachers. However, they seem to recognise the need to

consider morality and spirituality as parallel rather than opposed spheres. Those from confessional schools re-affirmed their beliefs that morality cannot be discussed in a spiritual vacuum. They consider that there is a constant dialogue between the spiritual and the moral 'I'. One school administrator highlighted the need to maintain a balance in the various areas of development:

> *"Quand on parle morale, c'est un peu la conscience non, la conscience c'est la morale tandis que l'âme est spirituelle."*

(When we talk of morality, we are refering to conscience, isn't it? Conscience is morality; the soul is what is spiritual.)

The reference to conscience is salient once again but conscience can only be guided by religious beliefs and values. In another confessional school, the following example of moral practice was given as an example of moral practice:

> *"Durant le mois de Ramadan, nous avons une distribution de vivres et de médicament aux necessiteux"*

(During the month of Ramadan, we have a distribution of goods and medicines to the needy people)

It appeared that in confessional schools, morality is firstly closely related to religious beliefs. Their aim in engaging students in such activities is to 'induct' them into the religious practice of their faiths and at the same time these activities provide an opportunity to discuss and share values. The perception of the administrators of private school is extremely interesting.

Despite the religiously 'neutral' nature of their institution, they also actively promote values. As one principal of a private school pointed out:

> *Vous savez nous essayons par tous les moyens d'inculquer des principes, des valeurs à nos élèves pour que le comportement que ce soit à l'interieur ou l'exterieur de l'école s'améliore."*

(We try by all means to inculcate principles and values to our students so that their behaviour both within and outside school improves.)

The concept of morality is also closely associated with the notion of good and disciplined behaviour. The interrelationship between morality, discipline and 'good behaviour' needs to be addressed here. Firstly, the nature of morality is not only limited to thinking but is extended to moral action. As Lickona (1991: 92) argues, morality implies that we can act on our thoughts. However, an issue can be raised here as to whether 'good' behaviour is always indicative of moral thinking since behaviour can be motivated by both intrinsic factors (the reward given by our conscience for action directed towards the benefit of others) and extrinsic factors (the reward that will accrue to oneself). An over-emphasis on thinking can seriously relegate our understanding of morality to a purely mental process. The relationship between morality and discipline was explored further with school administrators from state schools. While they generally agreed with the vantage points offered by other school administrators, for them, in the context of their school, morality is embedded in the norms and discipline code of the school. Adherence and strict respect of the code brings about 'habituation' as Aristole propounded. One school administrator from a state shool commented:

"There are norms at home as there are at school. The child is tempted by certain negative behaviours but he does not do it, that is, he knows the pros and con. But the principal and staff should be there to see to it that all these are being respected on a permanent basis".

As the values and principles that support these norms are internalized, the conscience is developed and the students' morality becomes reflective of the society's morality. The school's mandate is to create optimal conditions under which the child's morality tallies as much as possible with societal expectations.

7.3.2 Analysis

My discussion of the definition of morality and related concepts will focus on four elements highlighted by the data:

    (i)   Morality and social conventions

    (ii) Morality and religion

    (iii) Morality and conscience

    (iv) Moral reasoning and moral emotions.

Participants' discourse revealed that concepts of morality are intricately interwoven and often confused with social conventions which are culture and society bound. Morality, in contrast, is centered on a set of concerns for justice, fairness and human welfare that are universal in nature and of relevance to both children and adults. Turiel's (Nucci & Weber 1995: 1458) approach that focuses on the two distinct domains of moral development and social convention throws some light on the understanding of participants.

Students as well as adults had difficulty differentiating actions in the moral and conventional domains. Progress in the conventional domain requires students to move progressively towards an understanding of the role conventions play in establishing and maintaining social systems and co-ordinating social interactions (Nucci 1997:5). Conversely, development in the moral domain would imply the resolution of conflicting claims to justice and human rights. These two perspectives would be in opposition only if the social conventions and norms of society as well as the social systems and organizations are not democratic, social norms and conventions are reflective of morality and are not mutually exclusive.

Such a theoretical premise is seriously weakened when it is applied to real life situations where morality and convention are overlapping spheres. Many of the issues that would appear to be in the realm of social conventions may upon probing expose a moral issue. Indeed, if our understanding of morality is extended to embrace issues of caring (Gillingan 1982:32-69), the demarcation is even more blurred. For example, the Chinese tradition of deference to the old is a matter of social convention as well as one of morality as it relates to enhancing the welfare of old people and protecting them from harm. Schweder (1991:6-34) brings an interesting perspective on the definitions of morality and its distinction to norms and conventions in his study of Hindu morality. His analysis reveals of a Western bias on Hindu rituals and cultural norms. However and his discussion of how the latter is a manifestation of Hindu morality, strongly supports my theoretical standpoint. The norms and conventions of any society or group are revealing of its underlying moral principles.

In addition, the socio-cognitive perspective on learning recognizes that the development of children's morality requires that they increasingly evaluate

situations from their own disciplinary experiences as well as observe occasions on which others are criticised or praised for their actions.

Thus, children learn that a variety of considerations are relevant to judging an act as right or wrong. Children learn about themselves and other people through interaction with the social environment. In everyday situations, social situations cannot be clearly categorized as matters of convention and of morality. Indeed, the former can be used to reinforce the latter. Once children form opinions about behaviour, they tend to internalize these in the form of personal standards and criteria for self-evaluation which in turn become the building blocks of their personality, character and moral identity (Lewis & Feinman 1991:215). The distinction as convention and of morality pertains to a strictly cognitive developmentalist perspective which my data seems to reject. Social cognitions are and should be considered as fluid entities directly and not strictly tied down to fixed thought structures. It is thus possible that because they have different social experiences, people may differ in their cognitive representations of morality and conventions.

Another area of interest, that is related to the above and which the findings suggest is the relationship between morality and religion. Kohlberg (Power et al 1989:344) as all other cognitive developmentalists, treats morality as a distinct domain from religion. For him, moral decisions are made on the basis of a developing sense of justice, derived from reason and not from religious beliefs or precepts. The findings reveal that many adult participants do not separate religion from morality and that religious convictions are integral to their sense of being moral. Also moral life has to be informed by a religious dimension, both being interpenetrating aspects of human experience.

In the course of focus group discussions and interviews with participants, it became clear that the reasons given to support ethical and moral perspectives with spiritual and religious connotations stemmed from the conviction that the acquisition, cultivation and maintenance of morals and virtues have to be configured as part of a religiously inspired conception of the good and flourishing life. This position must to be understood and analysed in the context of the socio-cultural matrix of the Mauritian society.

As discussed in section 2.2, religion plays a major role in the development of identity and definition of the self. Yet now, part of the findings have tended to support the view that ethical dimensions of behaviour can be conceived by the younger generation without the trappings of religion and spirituality. What can account for this shift in perspective is not only the trend towards secularism that characterizes modern societies but also an increasing mistrust of religion by the younger generation. This mistrust does not arise from the fundamental precepts of religion but from the overt use of religion to foster particular political actions. Moreover, the youth's social and life experiences have not yet enabled them to see the limit of moral reasoning. This is why more mature adults enriched by a greater diversity and depth of social and moral action have a more open ended understanding. As Toulmin (Power et al 1989:347-348) pointed out: "*Ethics provides the reasons for choosing the right course, religion helps us to put our heart in it"*. Religion therefore becomes a reflective response to our questioning of the limits of morality.

No discussion on morality can be complete without reference to conscience. Conscience can be defined as "the faculty by which distinctions are made between morality right and wrong especially with regard to one's own conduct" (Natale & Wilson 1991:145). Conscience, can be defined as being self-experience and in those terms, is narrower

than the concept of morality which has both an individual and collective connotation that involves self-reflection, self-evaluation and analysis of one's action and behaviour as well as responsibility. The Freudian approach highlights that the superego fulfills the self-judgemental function and is an integral part of personality. However, this theory of conscience is somewhat constrained by the belief that conscience evolves out of a fear of love withdrawal and that it has a primarily negative function, that of restraining 'bad' behaviour and the experience of 'guilt'. However, self-evaluation of behaviour and conduct is not only dependent on conscience and guilt. Both need a moral referential, a set of principles that will help qualify an action as good or bad. These principles are often observed in the person's immediate environment and reinforced through the development of habits, a system of discipline and other reinforcers such as the media. In this study, teachers, parents and administrators recognized the value of those 'external' features. However they did not necessarily the need to convert those extrinsic factors into intrinsic ones in order to develop ' a mature conscience' where judgement derives from the intrinsic processes of conative, affective and cognitive motivations (Natale & Wilson 1991: 156).

One of the components of a mature conscience is a basic conception of what works best for the common good and a judgement of the situation, which requires knowledge, consideration of the consequences of possible choices and established moral wisdom and courage to break rules, if necessary. Such requirements are basically cognitive in nature requiring critical, creative and imaginative thinking. Clearly one cannot discuss cognitive moral development without reference to Piaget (1932:360) and Kohlberg (1975:670-677). The literature review (see section 3.5.1.1 and 3.5.2.1) and the findings seem both to construe the cognitive aspect to be a dominating feature of morality. Understanding of what constitutes right

and wrong is a matter of reasoning, more so autonomous and independent reasoning despite the view that such reasoning could be placed within particular religious and cultural parameters. Such a standpoint clearly flows from Kantian ethics that perceives principled reasoning as the highest form of moral functioning. True to the Cartesian tradition, rationality and human reason should be the most trusted form of knowledge and should be based on universalistic laws and codes. Thinking, more specifically critical thinking, is required for making moral judements and for deriving those universal laws that guide behaviour. The conception that morality relates to primarily mental activities was widespread among all categories of participants. Yet, although they recognized the relevance of the social setting and the necessity of habit and role modeling, their interpretation seems to indicate a socio-cognitive definition of morality. However, one aspect that has clearly been underscored in the discourse is the relationship between morality and emotions.) Morality is not strictly limited to knowing the good but also loving the good (Lickona 1991:93-100). Indeed in my discussion of conscience as self-evaluation, there is an implicit reference to 'feeling good' when actions have respected the principles that people uphold. Until and unless, we recognize the value of emotions in enhancing morality, our understanding of morality and what constitutes moral education will not be complete.

The discussion on the perception of morality among stakeholders has clearly revealed that it has different meanings for individuals depending on the nature of their life experiences. Morality is related to concepts of convention, religion, spirituality and conscience. It has been established that its devlopment is dependent on parallel frameworks of social interaction and the social learning experiences provided by adults and peers. Once the nature of morality and its ambiguities have been dealt

with, the next logical step, is to turn to a consideration of what moral learning is and what moral education should be.

7.4 STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVE ON MORAL EDUCATION
7.4.1 Findings

The *students'* view of what moral learning is centered upon the role of modeling, the quality of the environment as well as the experiences in autonomy provided by learning/school situations. While they agreed that morality and moral decision-making lies in the personal realm, there is a recognition that learning experiences provided by the school generally help enhance their capacity for autonomy and self-evaluation. Implicit in this view is the assumption that moral learning is of a largely cognitive nature and that the locus of control is largely internal. Students believed that the onus of responsibility is individual in nature and that, whatever the external influences, the ultimate decision-making power lies with the person and his judgement. Indeed, as the comment below illustrates, students feel that as they grow up, they acquire the necessary intellectual resources to reason. As one student explicates:

> *"Nous capave prend certains decision nous même. Enfin de compte, c'est nous la vie et nous conscience. C'est nous qui décider, banne le zotte en dehors nos parents capave rode influence nous mais nous même bizin capave raisonner et prend nou responsabilité."*

(We can take some decisions on our own. Anyway, it's our life and conscience. We decide. Others, apart from our parents can try to influence us but we must think and shoulder our responsibility.)

At the root of the students' conviction in their own capacity to distinguish between right and wrong is that they have been properly groomed by their parents. Such grooming, according to them, occurs through the development of habits that are reflective of family customs and traditions. Two qualifications need to be made here. Firstly the family is an extremely important denomination in moral education because of its primary socialization function (Grusec & Kuczynski 1997:105-129). As pointed out by Kohlberg (1978:14), moral development, similar to cognitive development, occurs in a stage-wise process and most adolescents are likely to be at the conventional level, where they feel the need to act in such a way that meets the expectations of society. Adult roles are made explicit and modeled for children to emulate. It is no surprise therefore that for Mauritian adolescents, the family exerts such a formidable influence on children's disposition: to think and act in a certain way.

Secondly, the influence of habit is stressed. A child is also socialized into a family culture. Habits of behaviour, patterns of reasoning are moulded in the crucible of family interactions. Most of the students interviewed referred to the fact that habits and the need to conform are co-extant with personal autonomy and choice. There seems to be an overriding sense of autonomy and a sense of personal domain of privacy and choice which develop concurrently as the social universe of the child expands to include the peer group. Many of the students interviewed agreed that the peer group is important in so far as it is the only instance when they have reciprocal exchanges. Indeed, an important reason for liking school is given below:

> " Nous trouvé quand nous vine l'école, nous vine joindre nous banne camarades, nou éna interaction, nou apprend en tas quichose. L'école li couma une famille parcequi nou joindre nou banne camarades, nou causer".

(We realise that when we attend school, we get to meet our friends. There is some kind of interaction we learn a lot of things. The school is like a family because we get to meet our friends and we talk.)

These reciprocal exchanges with peers are considered to be an important source of moral learning and to be based primarily on 'dialogicality' as opposed to 'internalization' of values (Meadows: 1996:31). These findings clearly support a more exogenous model of cognition in the moral realm as compared to an endogeneous model based on fixed structures of thought. Moral learning seems to be effectively supported by dialogue and discussion. The lack of both in many school settings, as reported by adolescents, seems to explain why adolescents do not perceive instances of moral learning within the school setting. On the contrary, the conflicting signals and the discrepancy between the words of adults and their action is a hindrance.

The *parents'* discourse about moral learning and moral education is dominated by frequent reference to the acquisition of values and attitudes as well as the development of critical thinking. The major moral development task, according to them, is the derivation of a moral code that enhances decision-making. The process of moral learning is built upon childhood experiences and the kind of moral training (understood here as conditioning/habituation) proves to be crucial in determining the background that children have to strengthen their perspective. Moral learning is about choosing from different alternatives and developing certain attitudes and dispositions. This is illustrated by the following comment made by a parent*:*

> *"mo pensé li arrive ene l'âge cotte li bizin faire so choix mais sans qui mo bizin empêche li, li bizin trouvé qui sa choix la*

pas bon donc mo trouvé li ena un ancrage banne valeurs qui fine disseminé dans so l'enfance et ki aide li faire banne choix".

(I think he has reached a point where he needs to make a choice but without any conditions on my part, he has to find his own choice. I think that he has a good background. Some values are deeply rooted in his childhood and they help him to make a choice.)

This comment shows that the nature and quality of childhood experiences in moral learning or training provided by the school and the family, determine to a large extent the way in which moral development will progress in adolescent years. Another interesting element provided by mothers in the course of interviews is that moral learning refers to the ability to share the perspective of others. Perspective taking does not require purely cognitive skills but rather the development of empathic skills. As the following comment illustrates:

"Je me souviens, Eric avait fait une bêtise. J'étais enragée et je me suis dit - Mais, qu'est-ce que je vais faire avec ce garcon-là? Et j'ai eu la présence d'esprit de lui demander – "Qu'est-ce que tu ferais à ma place si un jour tu as un enfant qui aurait eu un tel comportement? " Là, il a ri. Il sait qu'il a fait une bêtise et il a tout de suite compris qu'il était dans l'erreur".

(I remember Eric made a blunder. I was mad and I asked myself, what am I going to do with this chap? and I had the presence of mind to ask him, ' What would you have done if you were in my shoes?' Then he laughed. He

knew that he had made a mistake and he immediately understood that he was wrong)

This anecdote shows that moral learning to a large extent requires self-evaluation and self-observation. Both are reinforced by an ability to walk in the shoes of another person as the egocentric cognitive structures changes. The theoretical implications of such a finding, according to the literature review (see section 5.1.2), are that moral learning can occur vicariously. As Bandura (1977:1986) explains, children internalise values, behaviour and attitudes, using vicarious capability (section 6.0) which is enhanced by an ability to empathise with others. What is also posited in the parents' perspective is that environmental pressures, in the form of models, discipline codes, reinforcements and sanctions enhance internalisation. As a mother highlighted in the interview:

> *" Il passe beaucoup de temps avec son prof. C'est un modele pour lui."*
>
> *(He spends a lot of time with his teacher. The latter is a model for him.)*

This position that is also in line with the sociological dimension of moral learning which sees morality as the acquisition and attachment to values under the tutelage of adults.

Parental discourse about moral learning and moral education reveals a strong sociological bias, and even so, a definite functionalist twist in their emphasis on discipline and group attachment. A father stresses both these factors in the following comment:

" Mo croire discipline important parcequi li inculquer valeurs, li oblige zenfants comprend qui li bizin respecter ban rules and regulations, li bizin respecter so l'école."

(I believe that discipline is important because it inculcates values. It compels the children to uphold the rules and regulations. He needs to respect his own school.)

This explains why in the previous section religion became important as a cementing factor in society. Their claims on moral education therefore would center primarily on socialising children into patterns of behaviour and providing opportunities for role taking and observational learning. As many parents argued, in order to encourage the cognitive conflict, that they perceive to be necessary for cognitive and moral maturity, discussions and case studies should be used as a method of teaching.

The teachers' understanding of moral learning corroborated with what parents had emphasized. Not only did they refer to the acquisition and internalisation of values, norms and principles for judging and evaluating decisions, they also highlighted the formative role of the home and the child rearing practices as determinant in preparing the child to continue his/her moral apprenticeship in the school setting. Moral learning in the school is clearly multidimensional for teachers and moral education permeates school life. However, there seems to be a point of contention as to whether all moral learning is rooted in action or whether immersion in an environment that is reflective of values that the community upholds will ultimately condition a person into internalising and integrating those values in the personal domain. The following extract illustrates those two perspectives

"Moi mo ine vivre sa pendant 7 ans dans un collège confessionelle pas éna sa dans time-table mais à la fin to lé to pas lé li change to perception – à travers dialogue à travers banne sorties, prend depuis grand matin, à force li tendé involontairement li lizin pe mette li en pratique.

Mais li vine ziste ene zaffaire tendé.

Oui mo aussi mo pas d'accord. Mo trouve qui zenfants extrêmement intelligents ek zotte observe dimoune extra bien alors mo pas trouver qui zenfant zordi jour nou pour precher. Bizin mette zotte dan banne situations ou comprend. Nou même nou bizin guette nou en tant que profs si nou pas capave être un model jamais nou pou capave enseigne zenfant valeurs."

(I am referring to my seven years of experience in a confessional school, Moral education does not exist in the time table but in the end whether you like it or not, your values will change- through dialogue, excursions, you hear so much about values throughout the day, that you have to practice them in the end.

May be it is just some kind of brainwashing.

I do not agree, I think that children are very intelligent and they observe you a lot. I do not think one can preach today. You have to place them in the situation. We have to look at ourselves as teachers. If we cannot be role models, we will never be able to teach any value).

Teachers' concern centered around the need to ground moral learning in real life situations. Moral learning is similar to any other form of learning, since children have to be given the opportunities to handle moral situations. What teachers have highlighted here is we cannot expect children to be intellectually autonomous and critical and not apply the

same reasoning in the moral realm. Adolescents, they argued, should be treated in a mature way and moral learning can only occur when the range of activities provided by the curriculum gives diversified opportunities to use the principles of values, that is, to apply them in concrete situations. Actions have the decided advantage of motivating students to internalise values and attitudes. Such a view concurs with Bandura's socio-cognitive model of learning which attaches importance to the motivational processes in learning. Active participation in morally correct activities serve to motivate students by providing them with feedback and reciprocity (section 6.0) as shown by this comment:

> *"Enfin sane fois la nou pas ine demande zenfants contribution. Nou ine prend 30 zenfants nou amène zotte dans couvent donne cadeax zenfants 2 à 3 ans. Après so lendemain nou ine re-appelle banne zenfants là, nou ine cause pou faire un deuxième fois zotte ine paraître motiver."*

(*Well this time we did not ask them for anything. We got 30 kids and took them to the orphanage to give gifts to the 2-3 year old children there. Then the next day we called them and asked them whether they would like to do it again. They were very enthusiastic.*)

Such an approach to moral learning is deemed to be successful because it integrates moral knowing, feeling and action and it cuts across the curriculum. Moral learning, according to teachers, cannot be restricted to particular situations belonging to the religious or ethical realm. For them, much of what goes on in the school is reflective of underlying values. Another pertinent issue raised by teacher in the course of the focus group discussion, is the opportunities offered in a multicultural-multireligious society like Mauritius. The school, they argue, is an ideal terrain, for

enhancing moral learning by putting children in situations where they are forced to broaden their thinking, to question their own beliefs, to be critical, creative and imaginative enough to develop understanding of the other. Teachers also used a comparative mode to discuss about the effectiveness of moral learning in the school setting. On the one hand, they argued that moral learning is not possible or becomes seriously jeopardised in a situation where adults, that is, parents and teachers/school administrators, present conflicting positions to adolescents. The following remark by a teacher clearly illustrates this point:

> "*Li claire quand un parent envoye so zenfants l'école confessional li pou abide by the rules mais quand li alle dans un SSS li capave mette l'administration au défi et li pas casse la tête are rules. Mais qui ou oulé zenfant la pensé?*"

(It's clear that when a parent gets his child registered in a confessional school, he / she will abide by the rules.But when he attends an SSS(State Secondary School), he will not mind the rules. He can challenge the administration. What do you expect the child to think?)

What is highlighted here is that conflicting role models within the school setting can seriously weaken the possibilities of moral learning especially when the destabilising forces are the parents themselves.

The *school administrators'* view focused on moral learning at both the classroom level and the school. More emphasis was laid on the possibilities that school life offers for observational learning. Frequent reference was made to the need for rules and regulations as the hierarchical framework of the school is understood to facilitate modelling and provide for constant reinforcement. One of the most powerful tools in

the hands of the adults in the school setting is the discipline code, that defines the parameters within which relationships develop. Respect for discipline and school rules and regulations is perceived as one of the core component of moral learning. This reveals of a traditional approach to moral learning which dominated the discourse of male school administrators from state schools as shown below:

> *"Les règles existent pour être respecter pour contrôler le comportment, pour leur montrer le droit chemin."*

(The rules exist in order to control behaviour and to show them (the children) the correct way)

The approach seems to be reminiscent of moral conditioning. There is less room for students to negotiate their learning. If students and teachers operate on the strict minimum of applying the rules, one cannot expect students to progress morally. A requirement for observational learning to lead to moral socialisation in the broadest sense is to provide opportunities for autonomous, decision-making. If rules and school codes are the only reference of defining moral action, students' socio-moral experience will be severely constrained.

However, this view was not shared by all. There were dissonant voices even within the bureaucratic structures of state schools. Much of what goes on in a school in the name of moral learning depends on the leadership style. A school administrator has some leeway even within the framework of the state school regulations. If the leadership sets the trend in terms of relational pattern within the school, the socialisation process and moral cognition can be enhanced. Some of those holding these views

have changed their opinions after long years of teaching experience as shown by the comment below:

> *"Vous savez, moi à mon époque les enseignantes étaient, moi je pensais quand j'étais prof il fallait être rigide, qu'il fallait être sévere, il fallait punir quand les enfants ne faisaient pas leurs devoirs et après plus de 30 ans, je m'aperçois qu'il faut avoir une certaine discipline, il faut baliser, dire aux enfants au départ, voilà je veux telles telles choses".*

(When I just joined at that time teachers were, well I thought that I had to be strict and inflexible, that I had to punish them when they did not do their homework and after more than 30 years, I realise that one needs to maintain some level of discipline but you need to draw the line of demarcation from the very beginning. Here you are, I want this and this.)

When the decisions and perspectives of school leaders are born out of classroom practices and embedded in the relationship with pupils, their understanding of moral education and moral learning tends to reflect the socio-cognitive learning approach.

Another interesting feature is the clear gender distinction in the understanding of moral education. The female school administrators interviewed oriented their discussion of moral learning and moral education towards the notion of caring and education and very often referred to how their own social roles as mothers have coloured their perceptions.

Unlike the approach that sees moral education as the 'passing on' of complex patterns of approval and disapproval from one generation to the next (Simpson 1989:103) the female participants often referred to the

sensitivity to customary relationship, caring and well-being. According to these women, the scope of moral education extends to an account beyond the rational aspects of evaluation in order to supplement serious and reflective inquiry with meaningful purposes. Emphasis was also laid on the need to establish a culture of dialogue within the school.

7.4.2 Analysis

The positions about moral learning themselves may be entrenched in assumptions about learning in general. One line of thought clearly tends towards the behaviourist explanation of learning, that is, one centered almost exclusively on behaviour.

 Given that the learning refers, according to this viewpoint, to conditioned reflexes in certain situations, it is not difficult to see that this approach is highly inadequate in explaining and delimiting the scope of education. While behaviour can be used as an indicator of learning in some fields-(perceptual and psychomotor), the behaviourist approach can prove to be limiting as in the case of moral learning, where the end is as important as the means. When evaluating whether an act is moral or not, one cannot consider only the consequences but also the motivation and principles that produce an act. Using this paradigm to explain what moral learning is and what moral education should achieve, tends to place an over-emphasis on adherence to rules and regulations and practices. It seeks to control and enforce rather than aim at the development of an enlightened acceptance of them as necessary for the welfare of the individuals and the society at large.

School administrators and teachers who exhibit this understanding regard the discipline of the school as the ideal tool for fostering moral learning.

While the value of sanctions, praises and reinforcements is well-established in helping to mould behaviour in the early years, their effectiveness in securing the commitment and loyalty of adolescents to the values embedded in the code of discipline is, at best, temporary. Adolescents may well adopt a consequentialist position in order to avoid the pain of sanctions but the code of discipline would have achieved nothing more than compliance born out of fear of sanctions and repression. The great paradox that underlies moral learning in the Mauritian classroom is that, in terms of cognitive development, the approach adopted is designed to foster higher order thinking and reasoning and yet in the moral realm, a behaviourist approach is used and the same adolescents are expected to be compliant and unreflective.

Concerning research on the level of moral development of adolescents Nucci (2002) establishes that adolescents in the age group fourteen to seventeen are at the conventional level and no longer in the preconventional level where the principle of avoiding pain applies. The kind of stimulation that adolescents need to 'mature' cannot be achieved if the conceptual framework used to understand moral learning and education remains behaviouristic. The fact that all students interviewed rejected this approach would suggest that the observational learning theory, which is more akin to the socio-cognitive perspective, is a more credible paradigm for engaging in reflection of moral issues.

A second interesting theoretical point that can be raised in the light of the findings concerns the importance given to observation as a cornerstone in moral education. The adults' discourse emphasized that adolescents 'watch' adult behaviour and make meaning out of it. This is to my mind, an extremely interesting evidence that supports Bandura's description of the four processes involved in observational learning (see section 6.1). The

pattern of adult behaviour is not simply reproduced, but they are evaluated against the values, norms and principles that the family and home environment have provided and against students' own increasing understanding and knowledge about moral matters. These are also derived from the peer group in the course of their socialisation process outside the school setting. Therefore, the students' evaluation cannot be a purely mental and cognitive activity because moral evaluation, though to a large extent a critical exercise, is also performed with reference to a set of criteria. These criteria can be of diverse nature, cognitive or emotional.

An appeal has to be made here to Durkheim's theory of socialisation (see section 3.6.1) with reference to group attachment as being a significant element. The findings have revealed that membership in two important social groups, the family and the peer group, has been brought to bear on the personal construction of moral learning in the school situation. One cannot conceive of moral experiences occurring within the school as embedded and influenced only by what goes on within its walls. The adolescents' focus group discussions supported a very broad definition of school life and highlighted the opportunities for moral socialisation constructed 'around' school life.

Therefore, observational learning incorporates clear cognitive elements because observation for adolescents includes some form of evaluation. As the child's social experiences multiply, the cognitive and affective resources that he/she has to evaluate what happens in his environment, increase and improve qualitatively   (Van der Ven 2001:135) to enable him/her to make sense of his/her moral experience and construct his/her own perspective. Recognition has also been given to the importance of induction (see sections 5.1.1) as a significant element in enhancing moral learning.   This is in support of the cognitive developmentalist view

expounded by Kohlberg (Molnar 1997:82-83). According to this view, moral development is seen as progress through well defined stages that are reflective of the increasingly complex modes of thought stimulated by interaction with the environment. Teachers' clear reference to induction rather than action, however, can lead us to believe that both the cognitive and affective elements are required for individuals to participate productively in social life. This is in direct support to the model of moral socialisation adopted in this project as described in section 5.1.1. Recognising that emotions are an integral part of moral learning and education provides an interesting link between Bandura's concept of motivational processes in explaining how observational learning and affective socialisation which serves to complement a purely cognitive understanding of moral education.

Participants referred frequently to the concept of critical thinking, interpreted as rational thinking and logic (Lipman 1991:13). Rational thinking is perceived as superior to emotions. I argue that such a hierarchy and distinction is unwarranted when referring to the moral dimension. Thinking cannot be only confined to critical thinking but may include other aspects of thinking such as creative and imaginative thinking that occupy an important place in moral life.

Moral understanding demands that we use our imagination to carry out social negotiations. Nussbaum (1997: 117) defines emotions as evaluative judgements of value and importance. Emotional judgements are more active than a neutral affirmation of the facts. We commit ourselves to feeling emotions and so there is an impetus for further action not inherent in the purely rationally oriented judgement as illustrated by the view which follows (Sprod 2003:25):

The context of an emotion is not just a cognitive context, but an active context in which we are engaged in a world we care about. To insist on a concept of cognition (or judgement) that is essentially divorced from all such care and concerns is not only to adopt a wholly demeaning conception of emotion; it is also to accept a wholly useless concept of cognition and judgement.

There is emphasis on the need to ground moral experience in action which is reflective of the implicit recognition of the relevance of emotions in the moral form of life. By engaging students in moral acts, and eliciting the emotions and by teaching them how to cope with a variety of feelings and situations, one simultaneously secures their commitments to caring for others. Additionally, the idea of caring for others and learning to discriminate between right and wrong in a group has a definite added advantage – that of learning to think with others and for others. Students highlighted the crucial role of dialogue with peers and teachers which enables discussion and thus moral socialisation to take place.

Modes of thoughts and moral forms of life grow more complex in a multicultural context. In this context it is crucial to add caring and creative thinking to the pillar of critical thinking (Lipman 1991: 117). Critical thinking implies analysing the different aspects of a given situation. I argue that thinking in the moral realm necessitates not only critical thinking but also imaginative thinking because what is required is to make decisions not only within one paradigm of the good but within rival interpretations of the right.

Using both philosophical and psychological insights to understand the concepts of moral learning and moral education leads to the realisation

that learning in the moral realm is extremely complex. It requires the negotiation and integration of parallel developmental and emotional frameworks. At a philosophical level the discussion has highlighted the need to develop a renewed understanding of the place of emotion in moral thinking and motivation.

On the psychological front, while observational learning is still a useful construct to explain the nature of moral socialisation, it is crucial to move beyond the purely socio-cognitive and cognitive developmentalist perspective paradigm proposed by the late Bandura. There is a need to integrate insights that can be provided by the concepts of conscience and self-evaluation in the formation of the moral self. It is important to recognise that, in the theories related to morality, individuals are participants in the fabric of the larger community. Thus, the presence and effect of the society must be acknowledged. Secondly, the three elements of morality work together as one. There is no discernible separation between thoughts, feelings and action.

7.5 CURRENT PRACTICES AND MODELS OF MORAL EDUCATION IN THE MAURITIAN CONTEXT-: AN EVALUATION

This section highlights the current practices and prevalent models of moral education in Mauritian secondary schools. Moreover, it will present stakeholders' views about the relevance of moral education in the current Mauritian context. This discussion constitutes the groundwork for establishing understanding of the role of the school in providing moral education.

7.5.1 Findings

The data revealed that moral education exists in Mauritian schools and it is mainly in implicit form. Only confessional schools make provision for an explicit form of religious education and moral education within their curricula. What *students* reported and interpreted, as a form of moral education in those schools is the regular formal moral and religious instruction received. Nonetheless, they regard this instruction as a 'necessary evil' given the fact that they resent the 'moralising' approach used by many of the teachers who are responsible for carrying out such instruction. Two objections have been raised against this directive approach. Firstly, students considered themselves to be cognitively mature enough to judge about wrong and right without the guidance of the teacher. The latter, they often claim, either 'does not practice' what he/she preaches or is perceived as being old-fashioned, out of tune with reality, judgemental and prejudiced against them. The following discussion is a very common example of adolescents' frustrations:

> *"Oui, on nous dit tout le temps, il faut apprendre les examens approchent, c'est là qu'il vont moralizer.*
> *Vous avez des classes d'éducation morale, ou education à la vie ?*
> *Non, de forme I à III nous avons l'éducation à la vie*
> *Je pense qu'on aurait du continuer ça*
> *Oui, oui c'est vrai, parcequ'une fille reste une fille, à n'importe quel moment, elle peut avoir envie de faire une connerie … mais il faut changer la manière de faire, on n'est pas assez ouvert, on est trop traditionel. Une fois j'avais demandé à un prof comment une fille peut savoir qu'elle est enceinte, elle a répondu et puis m'a demandé 'est-ce que tu es enceinte."*

(Yes, we are constantly told to study as the exams are approaching, This is when they brainwash us.

Do you have specific moral education classes?

No from form I to III we have Life Education.

I think this practice should have continued.

Yes, it is very true, because a girl may at any time make a mistake. But the way in which the classes are conducted has to be changed. They are not open minded enough. Once I asked a teacher the ways in which a girl can know whether she is pregnant or not.She answered my question and then asked me,' Are you pregnant?'.)

The perception that teachers are overly conservative persisted throughout all focus group discussions. This conviction is reinforced by the wide age gap. Most teachers are at least two generations older than the students and most of them are perceived as middle class conservative females. While this may not always be the case, such a perception creates negative expectations on the part of the students and may limit the dialogue between teacher and pupil. In some schools, a student's personal life is publicised in the school. The necessary trust for the maintenance of a fruitful relationship disappears, making it impossible for the teacher to have a positive influence on the adolescents. Not only are they ill-disposed to listen but the school environment rarely produces models which they can emulate.

Both male and female students displayed great sensitivity to words and behaviour of teachers and this corrobates with teachers' observations. Although they did not explicitly admit it, adolescents' discourse revealed moral education occurs deliberately or by default of adults in the school environment. Apart from direct moral instruction that can occur in either moral education classes, religion class or family life education' a form of

moral education that cuts across all schools, irrespective of ethos and type, is moral commentary and interjections. This seems to be the current practice in most classes and is almost invariably followed by non-verbal communication such as facial expressions (see section 5.2.1). The majority of students also referred to the existence of school rules and regulations as a form of moral education although they argued that they saw no valid reason for certain rules and their moral content. They were quick to distinguish between matters of convention, which in no way affected their welfare or that of others, and matters that relate to moral values. It became clear in the course of the focus group discussion, that rules and regulations are not decided upon collaboratively by stakeholders. A common set of rules is prescribed to all state secondary schools by the Ministry or management which simply send circular letters to parents in a one-way communication. Student councils are responsible for enforcing the rules and sanctions but have little say in the decision-making process. Another channel identified by students as an attempt at moral instruction is the morning assembly. Two conflicting views can be noted here. On the one hand, students from State Secondary Schools expressed a wish for more regular assemblies so that they can be "more updated" on school events; others expressed their complete disinterest and boredom at such practices and highlight that:

> *"Recteur causé causé, personne pas écouté …… non (rires)*
> *banne forme I écouté. Tous les jours c'est un brainwashing'*

(The rector just goes on and on. Nobody listens…no, (smiles) only the form I students listen. It is a daily brainwashing.)

The only interesting variation occurred when students themselves prepared a special assembly in the context of a religious or cultural celebration.

The findings would suggest that students are much more responsive to the morality embodied in the curricular substructure, such as the school atmosphere as revealed by the kind of relationship that exists among adults themselves and between adults and students as well as adults' behaviour in general. Conflicting instructions and values exhibited by a single individual seem to be a destabilizing force in the child's moral environment.

While *parents* could refer quite easily to their own practices as regard moral education at home, their understanding of what goes on in the school seems to be limited to the anecdotal reports of their children or to their infrequent visits to the school and discussion with teachers. Much of their discourse focused on the expectations about what teachers ought to do. To some extent, they believed that moral education is not adequately catered for ar present in the schools in an overt form, although they referred to teachers' 'talk' in the classroom. Interestingly, many parents argued that the power of persuasion and emulation of 'talk' depended on a teacher's individual charisma and personality which they considered to be crucial in motivating and inspiring youngsters. Teachers 'who walked their talk' were perceived as having more credibility as moral agents. For parents, it seemed that the success of any form of education depended more on the one- to-one personal relationship that exists between students and teachers as illustrated below:

" Quand il a eu cette attention le comportement a changé, il est devenu responsable d'où cet emphase, si tu as l'attention de ton prof, tu l'aimes, il va devenir ton modèle."

(When he got that individual attention, his behaviour changed. He became more responsible. This is why I emphasized the importance of teacher's attention. If you like your teacher, he/ she will become your model.)

Parents also seemed to have faith in moral interjections within the class. They believe that such interjection work, even if not immediately, in bringing about a change in behaviour. Some referred to the relevance of story telling as a potentially effective form of moral education. Similar to students, some parents do not attribute much moral significance to rules and regulations and they claim that the rules are often applied in an arbitrary manner. Although they agree that sanctions must be applied, and adherence to the school code represents necessary training for future life, they contend that adherence to the code should be binding on both adults and adolescents to be effective. Furthermore, they argue that moral learning from school regulations and discipline may be strongly constrained if an appeal is not made to the child's reason in apprehending the 'why'. Such a perspective corroborates with their definition of moral learning in the previous chapter.

The *teachers'* view seemed to both confirm and reject the point of view of parents and students. Many teachers reported that the main instrument they use for morally reaching out to students is through 'talking' and seizing opportunities that emerge in the course of classroom activities and discussion. While most of them perceive this as an important aspect of their profession, others highlighted that the effectiveness of such talk is doubtful in the current context because students are more receptive to

alternative moral sources such as their peer group and the media which seriously erode their moral authority. Some teachers revealed that they refrain from any form of moral instruction, especially if they are working in a state or private school because such practices can cause them trouble with the parents and administration. Moral commentaries that are very general in nature and which are politically correct appeared to be their safest instrument.

Those practising in confessional schools felt their administration gave them more leeway in terms of a more personal negotiation and autonomy over their classroom management and pedagogy. Some were directly involved in the formal moral instruction classes and described the positive influence that the participatory approach adopted produced in individuals and the class as a whole. Values clarification coupled with the case study method are used to engage pupils in reflection about social and moral issues that may affect them. However, in most cases, teachers orient the discussion in favour of the moral point of view. In the end as one teacher explained, "They have to realize it by themselves that what we as a school and a society have said is correct". Thus, even in discussion classes, the transmission mode is dominant as the moral solution presented by the teacher is 'proved' to be right. Most teachers were also aware that much depended on the quality of the relationship between them and their students. Some discuss about their privileged relationship with older, more mature students with whom they can afford a more balanced judgement. With the younger ones, they use directive rather than dialogical approach. Many teachers also highlighted that by genuinely caring for students, they are able to win their trust and exert an influence on them. If they succeed, students are much more responsive to this than to direct instruction.

Few teachers referred in their discourse to the use of pedagogy as a moral instrument. While they discussed about their attempts to establish collaborative forms of learning and classroom rules as vehicles for transmitting specific values, they did not see all the aspects of pedagogy as having moral implications.

Lastly, school administrators largely diverged in terms of their description of moral education models adopted in their schools. While moral education programmes does not exist in either state or private schools, administrators, however, stressed that moral education is catered for in one way or another even in the teaching of subject matter as illustrated here:

"It is an ongoing process while the teacher is say, conducting a maths class, the values are there, are transmitted in a logical way so the curriculum sees that the transmission of values is an ongoing process.
So what you mean is that in subject matters values get transmitted?
Yes it cuts across the curriculum. You do not need a subject like values to teach values. It can be done indirectly."

According to administrators, the curriculum seems to provide adequate opportunities for morally educating students if teachers seize them. Secondly, they also described the caring and commitment exhibited by all the staff as a potent source of moral learning. Implicit is the assumption that the school ethos will provide adequate opportunities for observational learning. Of theoretical relevance is the conviction that the content of a subject predisposes us to think in a characteristic way and favours the development of certain specific values. The intervention proposed by

school administrators of confessional colleges is much more direct and visible. Indeed, for them, one of the key distinguishing features of their schools is a definite moral emphasis that is structured around a well planned curriculum of increasing cognitive complexity coupled with frequent teacher training. The approach or model of moral development adopted here seems akin to that of character education as the focus is on providing the maximum opportunities in the school environment for cognitive stimulation and observational learning. The whole school life, according to them, is organized around the mission that centers on building personality and strengthening character. Co-curricular activities are often cited as supportive of the moral education endeavour. One interesting practice was cited as giving students first hand experience in acting morally, by taking learning out of school and into real life situations of diverse nature, where they are expected to act out what they have learnt as explained below:

> *" Il y a des activités les élèves sont parties prenantes et nous avons des élèves qui sont regroupés en club. Durant le mois de ramadan nous avons une distribution de vivres aux nécessiteux et cela se déroule très bien.Il y a un apprentissage réelle au monde des adultes."*

(Students take part in the activities organised and some are members of clubs. During the month of Ramadan, we distribute food and medicine to the needy and it is quite successful. It is a real initiation to adulthood.)

Additionally, recognition is also given to the fact that students need to shoulder responsibility in order to grow and make moral decisions. Thus, school administrators claim that a holistic approach based on caring, judging and acting is adopted. Caring for students' welfare and that of the

staff is given prime consideration as described by one female administrator
:

> " Comme si chaque personne se sent responsable du bien
> être de l'autre.Un prof peut avoir un problème tout comme un
> élèves mais elle doit pouvoir se dire "a l'école il y aura
> quelqu'un pour m'écouter".

(Each person has to feel responsible for the welfare of others. A teacher can have a problem just as a student but she has to feel that someone will listen to her at school.)

7.5.2: Analysis

While practices varied from school to school it is clear that any model of moral education, consciously or unconsciously adopted, centers around the tripartite issues of caring, judging and acting. Adults within the school setting generally regard moral education as an important part of school life. Whether this conviction emerges from a considered view, from tradition or from a common sense perspective is examined in the next section. However, in the private and state schools, there is little or no provision made for direct or overt forms of moral education. Apart from the morning assembly, moral education is left entirely in the hands of individual teachers, who may in varying degrees and, according to their own convictions, attend to this aspect of schooling and education. Among the latter, the dominant view is characterized by a reluctance to incorporate this element in their teaching in a more organised and systematic way. The root causes have been summarized below:

- Overburdened syllabus

- Erosion of teacher's authority

- Clash of values between the school and society in general

- Reluctance of relevant authorities to commit themselves to a particular opinion and course of action.

- Lack of consensus among adults within the school.

These arguments are used to explain the quasi non existence of moral education and are based on two major assumptions. Firstly, the success of moral education programmes rests on a whole school approach and cannot be left in the hands of individual teachers. Secondly, a partnership between the home, school and community at large is crucial for the long term viability of any programme. While it is undeniable that for consistency and coherence, a whole school approach is one of the most useful models, it is also equally true that the kind of consensus that teachers seem to point at is neither feasible nor desirable. In an era where moral relativism prevails in the wider society and given the multicultural context of Mauritius, one can hardly see how within a single school, all teachers can see eye to eye on every matter of moral relevance. What could, and probably should, be targeted is a core set of values and principles on which consensus is possible. This is feasible to the extent that there could be a set of practices based on a common sense approach. The core values inherent in any democracy could be discussed and subsequently established without having the majority of staff contesting it.

Secondly, in section 5.2.1, while considering the processes of moral identity formation, it has been made clear that, the moral self makes a free selection of the values and beliefs offered by different models and does not need a uniform set of values and convictions. On the contrary, some degree of cognitive conflict is necessary to enable students to exercise

judgment and discrimination in moral matters. In addition, even in the likelihood that the school presents a single moral perspective, it is evident that the adolescents will encounter conflicting moral perspectives outside the school. Avoiding such conflicts within the school may not be a long term solution for enhancing moral judgments. Having said this, however, I do not wish to undermine the relevance and necessity of having areas of stability and conformity within the social and moral set up of the school. These areas will act as a root to enable future cognitive, social and emotional exploration. Otherwise, the risk of creating an atmosphere of complete moral relativism may well materialize.

What is also interesting to note is the reference of students to the existence of conflicts within the school set-up. While teachers talked about inter-personal conflicts of views on moral matters, students highlighted the intra-personal conflicts that teachers and other adults in the school exhibit when they preach one thing and do the opposite in practice. This is what damages their trust and erodes the moral authority of teachers. It would seem that adolescents do have the required intellectual resources to understand that different adults have different perceptions on moral matters and are aware that they can use this variety to build their own personal principles. Observational learning belonging to the socio-cognitive traditions is, therefore, a valid vantage point for understanding the myriad ways in which moral education takes place in the Mauritian secondary schools. Moral modeling has lost nothing of its relevance and appropriateness in our setting.

The practices, strategies and models of moral education reported in the previous sections, are grounded in single or multiple theoretical perspectives and derive generally from broad learning. The findings have revealed that practices in schools where there is an explicit managerial

commitment to moral education are built around a synthesis of the consideration, values clarification and social action models of moral education (Hersch et al: 1980: 9).

As discussed in chapter one, the values clarification model emphasizes self-awareness and self-caring and uses the discussion method to help discover and examine their values so as to achieve a more purposeful sense of self. However, in the Mauritian 'version' of this model, the teacher-pupil discussion is led by the teacher rather than by the pupils. Pupils may voice their opinions but in the end the teacher's viewpoint and set of values will be presented as being the most appropriate. This is an interesting point in the sense that, in one way, it overcomes one of the most poignant shortcomings of the values clarification approach, which is moral relativism. Discussion helps students to broaden their perspective by enabling them to move from an egocentric perspective to a more social apprehension of the issue. However, the success of this approach seems to depend on teachers' discussion and oratory skills rather than the soundness of the arguments. If teachers are not prepared to handle such classes and allow a balanced perspective, or are not prepared enough to be able to recognize moral arguments from non moral ones, such classes can end up achieving nothing but moral confusion. Therefore, the point that teachers have to be prepared to handle moral education classes, could not be more tersely made here.

Furthermore, the consideration model (Hersch: 1990:4), which is mostly oriented towards the issue of caring and becoming aware of other people's needs, is built on the assumption that moral behaviour is self-reinforcing. It is also premised, according to this model, that the school should become a caring community and respect the needs of each person. This model, which is largely adopted in the confessional schools, seems to be a natural

offshoot of the 'development of person' aim of education discussed in the first part of this chapter. It is also strongly rooted in their religious beliefs, the worldview thus generated and their concept of a human being. The kind of autonomy and respect that the administration shows to its staff in their personal negotiation of the teaching process is indicative of this underlying philosophy. The latter seems to be contrary to the more bureaucratic and impersonal set up of the state and some private schools where the contractual nature of the relationship between the teacher and administration (employer-employee) is highlighted.   I argue here very strongly for the need to revisit this essential partnership between the school administration and teachers as a necessary ingredient for building a cohesive approach to moral education. If the relationship between the teacher and the school remains purely contractual, as described in the findings, teachers will restrict their intervention to the minimum and under such conditions, it is not possible to contemplate a programme of moral education which has some potential for success.

What emerged from the findings from the teachers' views is that moral education has to be construed as a dialogue between teachers and pupils. One prerequisite for establishing dialogue are open ended social relations that become possible when social agents within the school are given opportunities to interact at an informal level, through the organisation of co-curricular activities. Indeed, the quality of the social environment determines to a large extent the socio-cognitive engagement of pupils and the opportunities for moral socialisation as established in chapter 5. Pupils' opinion also converges with the above mentioned point insofar as they discount the effectiveness of one-way talk on their moral perceptions.

Moreover, elements of the social action model (Hersch et al 1980:10) seem to have been incorporated in the practices of some Mauritian

schools. This model advocates citizen oriented action for change based on the belief that moral ideals have to be put into practice for them to have any significance for people. To a large extent it is based on the twin Deweyan principles that all knowledge stems from action and practice and that moral education cannot be dissociated from the experience of democracy. Within the school setting, the body of students and its representatives are normally expected to provide an arena for enabling students to participate in decision-making. However, the fact that in many schools, they function only as a rule enforcement body, seriously weakens their potential for engaging students in the experiences of democracy and moral independence.

Some elements of this approach have been successfully developed in terms of students' organization of co-curricular activities and establishments of links with the neighbourhood and community through anti-drug campaigns, the organisation of environmental weeks, blood donations and adoption of a primary school or hospital ward.

Indeed, moral education practices are varied and stem from a diverse tradition about learning and socialization. The picture that emerges from the Mauritian set up is one where most schools have developed an integrated approach to moral education, combining elements from various traditions and models. Even though most of them claim not to have any formal programme of moral education, each stakeholder is involved consciously or unconsciously in the process of moral socialization. However, how actively they are engaged will depend on their understanding and relevance of moral education in our context. This will be dealt in the following section.

7.6: RELEVANCE OF MORAL EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MAURITIAN SOCIETY

7.6.1: Findings

Perceptions about moral education vary greatly across and within categories of stakeholders. Responses seem to swing from one extreme to the other but it is interesting to note that generally students displayed the greatest resistance to the need for moral education in the school setting while adults generally seem to believe that some minimal form of moral education is necessary.

The s*tudents'* perspective seemed to be radically different from that of the parents.Their rejection stemmed either from an understanding of moral education as talk and direct instruction or from a belief that teachers or adults within the school have themselves little credibility to act as models whom they would wish to emulate:

> *" Ena enseignant faire banne zaffaire qui zotte meme zotte dire nou pas faire éna des fois zotte pé explique li capave gagne un coup de téléphone lor so portable li arrêté li servi so portable."*

(Some teachers do things that they tell us not do it. Sometimes during classes, they take their calls on their cell phones. They just stop explaining.)

Other students, more concerned about their exam results, argued that if moral education programmes meant taking up space on the time table it will eat up time on more important academic matters which are perceived

as the main "business" of the school as compared to moral education which is seen as peripheral.

They seemed to believe that parents and peers are the primary educators. Teachers only spend a few years with them whereas their parents and friends have a more long lasting influence.

> " Prof la dans un an li capave pé quitte l'école, c'est fini ca, prof la li vini li écrire lors tableau tandis qui parents la donne li conseil."

(The teacher can leave school at any time. It's over then, the teachers just write on the blackboard whereas parents offer advice.)

Moreover, their relationship with most teachers is often described as formal and strictly confined to academic matters. They felt that a real dialogue could only be established with a few teachers. In this bureaucratic model described, it is easy to understand why students would not understand the relevance of moral education because the image of the moral education that is firmly anchored in their minds is based on their prior experiences (see Section 7.5).

No student agreed with the inclusion of a moral education programme in the formal curriculum per se but quite a number displayed interest in having more activities with a moral content and perspective such as UNESCO clubs, sex education classes and civic rights discussion groups. Moral education thus becomes relevant to them when it is related to real life issues and where divergent points of view are possible. Therefore, the data does not present a rejection of moral education *in toto*. It rather shows

a marked dislike for those approaches that use the direct instruction method.

However, students' perception of the form of moral education does not preclude their positive opinion about the relevance that moral understanding has in their lives as adolescents and future adults. As mentioned above, they are fully aware of the basic moral principles and according to them, they have a notion of what responsibility and respect means. Some students even claimed that to some extent the school had enabled them to develop these values. The kind of moral experiences that they found stimulating, they argued, could not be conceived in the current set up and school agenda. Their perception is that the curriculum is already overburdened and that adding " a new subject" is not a welcome perspective.

However the perception that a moral education programme is not relevant is not a rejection of the relevance of moral education to education. Many students have highlighted the need for education to equip the person with a desirable set of attitudes and values apart from academic knowledge as exemplified by this comment:

> *"L'éducation n'est pas juste académique, il y aussi l'éducation morale et éthique pour savoir vivre en société".*

(Education is not only about academic achievement. Moral and ethical education is important to help us to live together)

There is a difference between instruction and education; education being the broader concept because of this moral attribute. Students further

argued that in a multicultural setting it is essential to develop tolerance and improve listening skills. The content is not as important as the skills.

The *parents* generally believed that moral education is important but most of them perceived themselves as the primary moral educators of their children. However, some parents highlighted that in a secular state moral education should fall under the purview of the private sphere rather than the public sphere of schooling. Their objections were reinforced in the light of the multicultural and multi-faith nature of our society which they believed complicate matters of morality. Chief among their arguments is the deeply rooted conviction that moral values are essentially personal values.

On the other hand, some parents, mainly those who regarded education as being process oriented, subscribed to the view that moral education is an important aspect of education that should be revived and addressed actively. As explained by one parent:

> " Pour moi valeur et caractère un dimoune c'est so la force
> morale. Li capave éna certificat mais si li faire banne zaffaire
> pas trop trop correct, mo demande moi qui certificat la ine
> servi li, qui valeur ça éna. En tas coume ca ena zordi jour,
> zotte bien éduqué soi disant mais zotte voleur menteur."

(For me the worth of a person can be gauged by his/her moral strength. He /she may have a certificate but can be up to no good. In that case, what's the use of the certificate? There are a number of such cases nowadays. They are apparently very educated but are liars and thiefs)

The true meaning of education is seen as being intimately related to its moral connotations and educating a child involves nurturing his/her moral

consciousness. The relevance of moral education is further enhanced in the current context of the moral degeneration of societies worldwide and parents pointedly referred to the erosion of values and morals as justification for reintroducing a more visible form of moral education in the schools. This is based on the belief that moral education is one of the ways through which students and young adults can be held accountable for their actions. Some claimed that, education as it is understood and provided in the school, is a "diluted" on account of the missing moral aspect.

It is also worth noting that while some parents questioned the legitimacy of moral education in the school context on the basis that consensus is not possible in multicultural and multi-faith societies, others use this very argument to support the inclusion of moral education in the school curriculum. Their assumption is that moral education that aims at teaching respect, integrity and tolerance is essential for multicultural living. They argue that the school is the ideal milieu for moral education because of its cultural diversity and the commitment to tolerance that it can encourage:

> " Dans l'école zotte faire camarades avec zenfants qui pas pareil couma zotte…mo pense sa li bon, zotte apprend beaucoup quichose…zotte vinne tolérant."

(At school, they make friends with children who are different from them…This is a good thing. They learn about new things. They become tolerant.)

What also underlies parents' perspectives is the belief that religions and cultures may differ in form but not in substance. Core values are universal and can be apprehended through reason and logic. A few parents, of Asian origin highlighted an interesting perspective. Moral education is

particularly relevant in the current social context with its emphasis on materialism and the obsession with instant success. Thus there is a need to restore the traditional values that have helped to shape the communities in Mauritius.

> *"Si ou guette zenfants zordi zotte ine perdi tout…zotte pas éna sa l'esprit couma dire longtemps..pou écoute, guette astère quand ou dans problème cotte ou trouve jeune dimoune aider fini sa l'époque la."*

(If you consider our youth, they have lost everything…they no longer have the same attitude…they do not obey. If you are in trouble, no one will help you…those days are gone!)

Young people, they claim, should cherish their traditional values as a means of counteracting negative Western influences especially in view of the overriding importance of the media.

The *teachers'* arguments for the relevance of moral education can be broadly classified into two categories: the macro factors that relate to the broad social, political and ideological positions and the 'meso' factors which are linked to the family and the community. Their line of thought reflects closely the position of writers like Ryan (1996:75:84) and Wynne (1986:6) whose arguments center upon the demise of the family and its traditional responsibilities coupled with the declining importance of agents of secondary socialisation. The phenomena of consumerism and the emergence of societies functioning on a purely contractual basis in all spheres of life are also contributing factors.

Teachers from all backgrounds agreed that there is a need to revitalise moral education in the school on account of the increasing realisation that families no longer provide the adequate support for children to be socialised into the moral traditions of the community. They argued that, not only are parents no longer available to engage in moral discourse with their children, but the disappearance of the extended family structure has also reduced the availability of role models within the family. The weakening ties that characterise modern society do not provide the required intellectual and emotional support necessary to cultivate understanding and attachment in the younger generations. Teachers argued strongly that the disappearance of grandparents and the quasi invisibility of working parents in the home, render youngsters increasingly vulnerable to the dual influences of the peer group and the media. They are the recipients of the individualistic culture and mindset propagated by the media primarily. This is illustrated by the following conversation:

" *Mais le problème c'est le système couma nou dire, banne parents zotte débordés par travail alors zotte ine démissioner. Oui ca li bien vrai. Nepli ena dialogue alors zenfant qui pou faire."*

(But the problem is the system itself, the parents are overwhelmed at work. They have abdicated.
This is quite true, there is no communication at home, what can the children do?)

What is interesting in the analysis provided by teachers is the relationship between the family's socialisation role and moral education and the fact that moral education has increasingly become a matter of importance at all levels, at home or school. According to the teachers, moral education

gains importance because it is a means to counteract the negative influences of the media and to a certain extent the peer group, by strengthening character and instilling habits of thought and behaviour reflective of principles and high ideals.

Teachers' reading of the issue of moral education and their understanding of its relevance in the contemporary context stems from a sociological and pedagogical analysis of children's situation at home and at school. I consider their views extremely insightful on account of their proximity with and involvement in the day-to-day reality of the children with whom they interact. Their often-privileged position as confidante is a window on the private sphere of children. Moreover, they have access to the children's world through the anectodal reports of the home and their social life.

What is of equal interest in the focus group discussion held with teachers is the emphasis laid on the increasing materialism of our consumer society which seemed to have coloured the perception of young people about ' the good life'. Their criteria of success appear one-sided, geared almost completely to the satisfaction of wants created by the media. This is illustrated by the following comment:

> " *Astère quand mo demande mo banne zélèves cotte zotte*
> *envie travail zotte tout cotte Rogers et Commercial. Prestige.*
> *Oui zenfant zordi pas pou alle mangé n'importe ou bizin Pizza*
> *Hut et Mac Donald.*"

(Now when I ask students in which firms they want to work, they unanimously refer to Rogers and Commercial[12]. It is a matter of prestige.

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[12] Rogers Company Limited and The Mauritius Commercial Bank Limited are two historically prestigious firm and bank respectively. They are owned and controlled by the French plantocracy.

Yes children today only know about Pizza Hut and MacDonald.)

The media projects a very Western lifestyle that centers around the consumption of particular products. The concept of success that is propagated through characters of popular serials centers on access to high profile jobs in well known firms and money. Both bring prestige and status. The absence of idealism and concern to change the world seemed appalling to teachers who wished to broaden narrow individualistic perspective to one that embraces 'otherness'. Surprisingly resistance seemed to emerge from unexpected quarters. Moral education at school is a means of counteracting the influence of parents, who themselves being convinced of the absolute necessity of 'the rule of the jungle', often present values that are relative in nature rather than universal. Some teachers even took the argument even further by highlighting the desirability of moral education for teachers, parents and students.

> *" Faudait pas cause ziste zenfant, parents alors…qui ou croire*
> *parent la trop bon…*
> *Moi mo pense parents parfois bizin plis moralité qui zenfants*
> *zotte même zotte pa éna manière. Qui valeurs ou croire*
> *parents éna cass c'est tout."*

(One should not include only children. What about parents? Don't you think they are responsible?
I think that parents need more moral education. They have no manners. What do you think they value? Money, that's all!)

The sentiment is common. Moral education requires firstly the formation of habits that can only occur in an environment where the behaviour is practsced and reinforced. The environment includes both the home and

the school. However, good 'homes' are rare although good houses are no longer a luxury to many Mauritians. Parents, they argue, seem to have forgotten what makes a good home and have instead provided large and comfortable houses only. Moral education is therefore a necessity for both students and parents.

Moreover, moral education, is the "last defense" against the constant and uncensored assault of the media on students' senses and perceptions. The contention of teachers is that the values and thinking projected by the media, especially by soap operas, are contrary to those held in a country that has a strong moral grounding and which aspires to the highest ideals and standards of behaviour for its students. Much of what they referred to in their discourse relate to the awakening of consciousness and media literacy in the Freirean sense and is strongly wedded to the idea of education for personal development as discussed in section 7.1.

The school administrators' perspective was also strongly grounded in the belief that moral education is an important aspect of the educational process especially in the confessional schools. While the perception of those administrators in state and private schools was strongly tied to their understanding of citizenship and the moral attributes of a good citizen, school administrators from the confessional schools linked their views to their religious beliefs.

The same line of thought expressed by teachers was expressed by school administrators. The relevance of moral education is often expressed as a response to social problems, especially those created when people do not respect the laws. Administrators in state schools, in particular, stressed an intimate relationship between the law and morality. Moral education at school becomes significant as a preparatory process to a full-fledged life

as an adult and as a citizen. They all deemed it crucial that agents of socialization should carry out some form of moral induction into the collective morality of a community. Without such an induction the process of education is not complete.

> *"It is part and parcel of life. We cannot achieve anything without imbibing our students with the necessary values of life. You cannot achieve with the absence of the necessary values, it works together"*

School administrators from confessional schools made an even stronger case for moral education. They claimed it may be more important than academic achievement. Their perception of moral education and its place in the curriculum seems to be a logical outcome of their concept of education as personal development.

> *" La grande philosophie de tous les lorettes c'est de mettre l'enfant au centre. Il faut que chaque membre de la famille soit épanoui. Je voudrais leur développement personelle intégral."*

(The philosophy of all Loreto schools is to place the child at the centre. Each and very member of the family (the school) must develop to its fullest potential. I would like them to experience complete personal development)

Alhough they referred in the course of their individual interviews to the general social climate and the need to prepare students to tackle with the moral dilemmas in an increasingly complex society and to equip them with the problem-solving skills, this was not the main reason for arguing that moral education is important. According to them, is the crucial point them

was that moral education is important for the person himself/ herself rather than for fitting into society.

7.6.2 Analysis

Stakeholders generally agreed about the need to revive moral education in its various forms at school and in other areas of socialization. The reasons given cover a wide range of issues spanning the decline of the family and the collapse of other social institutions as well as the cultural degeneration of the youth.

Participants provided an interesting vantagepoint for analysing the relevance of moral education in the context and an evaluation of the contemporary social context. An implicit assumption inherent in the argument is that education is inextricably linked to what happens in society. When we refer to the relevance of moral education, we seem to face the eternal issue of identifying cause and effect. Is the moral decline that characterises so many modern societies, the result of our lack of emphasis on moral education in our schools and families or have the changes in society been so powerful that they have altered our educational priorities and caused moral education to recede into the background?

Although it is not easy to point out the precise cause and effect, the fact remains that the moral education should be a priority for the following reasons.

Firstly, moral education has always been a perennial aim of education. We educate children so that they not only become intelligent and smart but also so that they become good people, capable of taking decisions for their own welfare and that of others. This is a point of agreement among all

adults. Educating morally sound and mature people is construed as the most important purpose of education especially in a stringent economic context characterized by intense competition for survival and increasing conflicts. Moral education is one of the few tools that we have left to equip children with the relevant intellectual and emotional resources to deal effectively and humanely with the problems they are bound to face at a personal or collective level.

Additionally, as cultural barriers collapse and with the increasing mobility of labour, moral education also becomes a form of multicultural education. As discussed by some participants, the need for it is further enhanced by the reality that young people face all over the world: their increased interaction with people of different perspectives and different worldviews. They will have to learn to accept other people's beliefs and opinions and learn to question their own. A sound programme of moral education should aim at building the cognitive and emotional skills necessary to engage in discussion with others and to come to terms with the solutions that may not be to their best advantage. Young people need to be able to empathize with and consider an issue from the perspective of others.

This discussion, points towards an interrelationship between moral education and citizenship education. The former becomes even more relevant in the context of an explicit agenda for preparing people to become responsible citizens. The narrow definition of citizenship education is limited to developing attributes such as the fulfillment of civic duties, the respect for democracy, its institutions and adherence to the law. The broad definition of citizenship involves a more active participation in the democratic life of a nation and an understanding of the moral and ethical consequences of decision-making for people we do not know but whose welfare may depend upon us. Citizenship, like morality, is based on the

twin principles of respect and responsibility and is premised on the belief that human beings are not only capable of overcoming their limited and personal concerns but also to be able to care *for* and *about* others. If moral education aims at preparing individuals to show compassion, empathy, integrity, responsibility and openness of mind towards their fellow beings, it then subsumes both citizenship and multicultural education and is as important.

Finally, the analysis provided by stakeholders dealt with the role attributed to the media. The values projected by the media are not what parents, teachers, and school administrators deemed fit or reflective of our moral consensus and heritage. Moral education, conceived in the broadest terms of character education, is a means to provide children with alternative moral solutions to dilemmas. The media, which is dominated by Western, humanistic and liberal values and deeply entrenched in a materialistic philosophy based on individualism and self-interest, is not considered a credible moral educator. Yet its influence on students is more powerful than any other agent of socialization because of its omnipresence and easy access to an impressionable audience. Moral education, through both overt and covert forms, within the school and family settings, is a means to balance the equation and ensure that succeeding generations obtain access to the diversity of the moral landscape that characterizes a multicultural society.

Although some parents expressed doubts about the possibility of reaching a consensus on moral values in a multicultural setting, there are also good reasons to believe that it is possible. Democratic societies are built upon moral principles that cut across cultures and agreement on such principles as embedded in the Constitution of Mauritius such as respect for others

and responsibility towards oneself one's family and country can be considered as universal core values.

7.7 THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL IN PROVIDING MORAL EDUCATION
7.7.1 Findings

The moral responsibility of teachers towards students is one of the overriding factors in determining the role of the school. The role of teachers is in the limelight because, for many Mauritian students, their school life is almost exclusively centered around their interaction with teachers and peers. Indeed the law requires that teachers should be of good moral character. Moreover, students expect teachers to adopt an approach which could be termed ethical caring (Goodlad et al 1990:5). By this, they referred to the essential quality of being able to establish a reciprocal relationship of trust and respect. Teachers should to be seen to care for both the academic and non academic well being of his /her students. As one student clearly specifies:

> " *Un prof li bizin faire so travail bien, li explique tout sa la pas juste ca li bizin mette dialogue faire rié et li bizin cool. Comme si so relation avec nou. On est ami avec lui mais ca ne veut pas dire qu'on le respecte pas. Li bizin conne so sujet, éna pas conne zotte faire erreur ou zotte dire alle guetté dans livres.*"

(A teacher must do his work correctly. He must explain well not only that he has to make us laugh and be 'cool'. He needs to develop a relationship based on frienship but that does not mean that we do not respect him/her.He needs to master his subject. Some teachers do not kmow their subject they make mistakes and tell us to refer to books)

Teachers' moral authority over students stems not only from the personal character of the teacher but also rests on their professional standing. This implies mastery of subject and pedagogical skills to engage them in worthwhile learning activities. Students are in a position to judge and respect those teachers who display professional commitment. They may not like particular personal traits but professionalism compels the respect for the teacher and the person. Students seemed to differentiate quite clearly between those teachers who are dedicated and those who "put up a show".

In addition, an overregulated and overcontrolled classroom is not conducive to creating an ideal moral atmosphere, nor however, is a *laissez faire* classroom. Most students seemed to be in favour of what can be approximated to the democratic classroom model where the teacher is authoritative rather than authoritarian as exemplified by the following remark:

> " *Zotte trop fatigue la tête, pas faire ca faire ca.*
> *Ena jour règles changé pour certains dimounes.*
> *Pas éna liberte, si banne la éna un certaine confiance nou*
> *aussi nou éna confiance."*

(They really drive us up the wall (with their instructions) "don't do this do that"
On some occasions the rules change to suit certain people
There is no freedom. If they trust us we can also trust them.)

Within a democratic environment, students learn about negotiation and about the rights of the teachers and students. Such classroom management styles ultimately lead to more effective moral learning,

because according to students, they understand the why of the rules and the respect of collaboratively established rules. The rules and regulations, as well as the code of discipline, students recognised, are an important part of the moral life of a school but in most cases, their rigidity, coupled with their obscure nature, limits this potential in practice. They argued that if the reasons for rules are not explained to them, the consequences not made clear and the application of sanctions perceived as arbitrary and unjust, their commitment will remain superficial and as a result, a consequentialist ethics would be adopted. The codes of discipline of many schools are described as archaic and in dire need of revision to respond more appropriately to their needs and expectations. However some students disagreed with this line of argument explaining that they have observed situations of *laissez aller* in the school administration but that the consequences were not as expected as indicated in the conversation below:

> *" Moi mo trouvé qui parfois c'est trop, zotte veillé tout ti zaffaire qui pas affecté nou l'éducation.*
> *Moi mo ti dans sa l'école la avant zotte tout mais mo trouve l'école la ine bien amélioré. Bizin discipline sinon éna tifi faire séki zotte oulé lers la éna violence, la vulgarité, l'ecole buissionière. Je suis d'accord avec le recteur."*

(I think that they [the teachers] overdo it, they look into all the nitty gritty aspects, even those which do not affect our education.
I was in this school before all of you but I find that things have really improved. We need to have discipline otherwise some girls just do what they feel like. Violence, vulgarity, truancy. I agree with the rector.)

The conflicting views described above show that some students understood that a minimum level of discipline is essential to the smooth running of a school but an authoritarian discipline can be as ineffective.

Furthermore, the role of the school in securing students' engagement is closely related to the nature of curricular activities. Students in general highlighted that co-curricular activities provided interesting opportunities for personality development and experimentation in responsibility and decision-making. However, they pointed out that the flexibility and participation allowed in the organisation of such activities could be extended to the more permanent features of school life.

Finally, in students' consideration of the role of the school, is the importance attributed to the socialisation opportunities given. Socialisation within the school setting and those activities organised around school life is perceived as contributing towards moral education. What they referred to frequently in the course of focus group discussions, is the moral significance and basis of their interaction with peers. Such interaction is based on attachment, common interest and goals, common values and ideals of life. The potential of peer learning in the moral realm is also not to be discounted as exemplified below;

> " *L'école le contact humain c'est très important mais il y un manque d'activités ici cotte nou joindre de façon relax ."*

(The human contact [with peers] is very important but there is a lack of opportunities here when we can meet informally.)

The *parents'* understanding of the role of the school is more formalised than that expressed by students, as it is based on expectations and ideals.

251

What was stated clearly by all parents is that the school has a moral mandate. The school is responsible for the transmission of knowledge, which includes ethical knowledge. Teachers cannot shirk from their modelling functions because they have been placed in a position of authority. Many parents however, argued that despite the fact that not all teachers are worthy of the authority given to them by virtue of their positions, they exercise an influence whether voluntary or involuntary on students. Fathers tended to rate teacher's professionalism highest, many mothers considered the teachers' ability to enter in a real dialogue with students, to get to know students' needs and weaknessses and to care for them as essential for modelling to take place. For them it is clear that the socialisation process is essential as it contributes to the development of trust and admiration. Teachers are expected to go beyond their prescribed duties. For parents, the school can fully realise its potential as a moral educator if teachers consider their supererogatory duties. Many parents deplored the bureaucratization of the teaching which impedes the accomplishment of its moral role as illustrated by the comment below:

> " Un enseignant doit avoir la vocation, mais aujoud'hui c'est plus comme ça. Il y a beaucoup d'emphase sur le côté académique et pour avoir le certificat. Ena prof bien devoués mais la plupart vinne faire ziste zotte duty zotte alle."

(Teachers have to be cut out for teaching, but today this is no longer the case. There is an overemphasis on the academic aspect and the certificate There are some devoted teachers but the majority only do the minimum.)

Parents with children in confessional schools also indicated what some called the 'soul' of the school, as one of the most significant aspects of its moral potential. What they were probably referring to is the school ethos,

the moral atmosphere of the school embedded in the hidden curriculum. The rules, regulations and the code of conduct are not as important as the way they are applied, as shown by the comment below:

> *" Li important to the extent li pas froissé et zenfants la vinne negatifs. Tant qui banne zenfants comprend qui faire zotte pe subir banne punitions li correct."*

(It [rule] is important as long as it does not hurt their self esteem and cause them to have negative feelings. As long as the children understand why they are being punished, it's okay.)

Parents expect that by demonstrating rigour, fairness and consistence, school discipline can teach very important values to students. Unlike the latter, parents did not question the necessity of certain rules but rather considered the spirit in which they were formulated and enforced.

While many parents acknowledged that co-curricular activities can encourage character development, they identified moral opportunities in the classroom interactions. This involves the quality of teacher-pupil discourse, the subject being taught and the emphasis on individual attention. The first mentioned is the way a teacher talks to his/her students. This reveals important values such as respect for others and tolerance, which the child can emulate. Additionally some parents referred to the moral value of literature, both English and French in helping students to develop insight into human nature and the consequences of actions.

> *" Moi mo totalement d'accord ek ca facon qui zotte ti insisté qui litérature, mo totalement d'accord avec sa inclusion*

literature dans subject combination, li intéressant zotte apprend beaucoup lors zotte même et les zotte."

(I totally agree with their [the school staff] insistence on including literature in every subject combination. I think it is very interesting. They [students] would learn a lot about themselves and others.)

The third issue is very relevant because it brings to attention the close relationship between pedagogy and moral education. The choice of paying individual attention to each student, is according to parents, a moral choice indicative that the teacher really cares in both a professional and personal way about the well being of his her/ students and that he/ she values them as people.

The *teachers'* perception of the school in providing moral education focuses on the provision of suitable role models and the role of the school as a community. The root of their disquiet is the current situation prevailing in many secondary schools where schools operate in *gesellshaft* mode, on a purely contractual basis and the relationship between the service provider (teachers and administration) and client (pupils and parents) is emphasized. They argued that ideally the school should act in partnership with parents on matters related to all aspects of education especially on issues of moral education because of the continuity and coherence needed to maintain a common moral discourse. One parent explains:

> *" Role parents bizin cause langage l'ecole, banne parents bizin vinne l'école au moins trois fois par années."*

(The task of parents is to speak the same language of the school. They have to come to school at least three times a year.)

The school's moral code is embedded in its rules and code of discipline as well as its ethos, vision, pedagogy, policy and hidden curriculum and through these myriad ways, impress upon students a particular set of moral principles and values that are eventually internalised. While most teachers agreed on above mentioned ways in which the school influences moral growth, there is some contention as to whether this role should be limited to the physical and legal boundaries of the school. One perception is that the school should go beyond its 'normal' functions and be actively involved in promoting values. The opposite view claims that the school's role is seriously constrained, not only by the legal and administrative parameters that act upon managers and teachers but also by an overly academic curriculum. As one of them elaborated:

> *" Bon moi mo pé cause dans college d'état nou pas capave faire plis, nou faire séki bizin tout simplement, ou capave gagne problem si ou faire plis!"*

(I am talking of state schools. You cannot do more than you are expected to otherwise you will get into trouble.)

The first view rests on the assumption that that schools "loom large in a culture's morality" (Goodlad et al 1990:267). They are one of the major sources of moral instruction and sites of moral struggle. Parents entrust their children to schools and teachers, who are the only adults spending long hours in the company of young adolescents and are compelled to care for them and are responsible for their empowerment. In order to fulfil this mission, the school cannot be constrained; it has to assume a supererogatory function. Teachers seemed to disagree as to the ways in which moral learning can be induced and promoted. While some were agreeable to the idea that direct and regular moral instruction should be a

part of school life, others favoured the indirect approach relying on the curricular substructure and spontaneous interjections of moral commentaries. Both agreed that the school should be a moral learning community and actively seek to create a positive moral culture that will encourage students to emulate adults.

On the other hand, many teachers argued that because of the erosion of the school's authority and the rise of alternative systems of learning, that is private tuition, the school finds itself in a position where its functions and roles are becoming narrower and more vulnerable to criticism. One teacher warned of the legal implications if teachers and schools try to "trespass" those narrowly defined functions by narrating an anecdote:

> *" Ena un prof dans mo l'école, éna un tifi dans so classe reste pres cotte li. Deux trois jours tifi la pas vini alors quand li pe retourné li alle demander qui ine arrivé. Ala lendemain parents vinne l'ecole et la police demande qui faire ou vinne rode mo tifi so lacase!"*

(There was a teacher in the school where I worked who went to enquire about the absence of one of his students on his way home. The next day the parents came to school with a policeman to ask the teacher why he came to their place!)

In the light of this and because moral education may be a contentious issue in a multicultural society, these teachers displayed strong reservations as to expanding the moral mandate of the school beyond the minimum intervention as warranted by the discharge of the academic and official duties.

Interestingly, teachers also explored in detail the role of the school in partnership with parents. There is a unanimous recognition that the role of the school cannot be construed independently of parents and the influence of the home background. Most teachers, after having expressed their disquiet as to the quasi indifference of parents to the moral education of their wards, highlighted the need for continuity between the home and school. The school has to work in partnership with parents. Communication between these two socialisation agencies reinforces moral learning, facilitates transmission, and ensures that opportunities for moral socialisation are available and diversified.

Some teachers who rejected the direct approach discussed the necessity of a holistic and broad based approach whereby all the learning activities and experiences organised by the school have a definite moral connotation. This is illustrated by the following comment:

> *" Li coume ca moi mo ine vivre sa 7 lors 7 dans collège confessionelle pas éna li lors time table, li dans l'environment la, à travers dialogue, l'assemblée, à travers banne sorties avec nou profs, à force banne zenfants tendé sa banne valeurs la li mette li en pratique."*

(That's the way it is, I have experienced it everyday in a confessional college. It has nothing to do with the time-table, it's in the environment, through the dialogue, the excursions. They hear about the values so often that they practise them automatically.)

What they seemed to suggest is that all activities, whether pedagogically motivated or not, have strong moral underpinnings because their basic aim remains tied down to responsibility, caring, trust and empowerment. All

educational decisions are thus, by extension, moral decisions. One cannot conceive of the role of the school in providing moral education outside the wider educational agenda.

The perspective of school administrators about the school's moral function is heavily influenced by two clear lines of thought. On the one hand, the moral mandate is anchored in the democratic tradition whereby the school is saddled with the task of preparing future citizens by socialising them into the common moral solutions of a democratic state. On the other hand, the role of the school can be located in the more universal agenda of human development and happiness through moral upliftment. Whatever the underlying philosophy, the importance of the school discipline code functions in much the same way as a country's laws by defining the minimum moral standards expected in interactions among individuals. By adhering to the school code and through observational learning the student internalises the moral principles embedded in them. Additionally, the school code reflects commonly held and cherished values and is symbolic of the community spirit.

While the code represents the formal moral structure of any educational institution, the informal or hidden moral agenda becomes explicit through the culture of the school. The confessional schools have capitalised on the informal but yet powerful aspect of schooling. It is argued that when parents enrol their children in such schools, there is an expectation and a desire that moral education will form an important part of the school culture. School administrators explained that community spirit is an essential prerequisite for moral education to take place in schools. Defined as an awareness of being part of a larger collective, community spirit enhances attachment to the school and the values that it upholds. It also ensures that the members will feel committed to the mission and develop

the emotional resources necessary to create the desire to do good and the will to convert it into action. According to some school administrators, the role of the school is clearly not limited to preparing future citizens but to prepare individuals so they are capable of showing empathy, integrity, respect, a strong sense of responsibility and of being happy. The following comment illustrates the point:

> *" Il faut qu'ils soient capables d'être heureux, de prendre des responsabilités, si on est pas bien dans sa peau on a la paix au coeur. Ils doivent pouvoir démontrer le respect tout ca."*

(They [students] have to be happy to shoulder responsibility, when one feels good, one feels peace in one's heart. They have to learn to show respect.)

There is a strong consensus among this category of stakeholders that schools are responsible for moral education to a great extent. Implicit in the task of educating is that of morally preparing students for responsible adulthood. This implies creating:

(i)   a positive disposition towards work and effort
(ii)   respect for self, other persons and democratic institutions
(iii)   a willingness to shoulder responsibility for self and others and the capacity for empathy and sympathy
(iv)   a desire to be helpful to others.

Even the school administrators who believe that the school's role is confined to preparing students for citizenship and who discount the moral function implicitly recognised that the first three mentioned fall under the purview of the school.

Most of them also generally agreed on adopting both the direct and the indirect approach, that is, a combination of formal instruction and the curricular substructure to create opportunities for moral learning as shown by the following:

> *"Yes, I believe it cuts across the curricula…it has to be taught via the teaching of all subjects and all school actvities. You cannot give sermons as if you are priest, students do not listen anymore!"*

Those from confessional schools argued that moral instruction should be a formal part of the school curriculum as illustrated by the comment below:

> *" Moi je crois qu'on peut mettre un ou deux classes par semaines où les élèves et les profs peuvent parler et discuter sur des choses qui sont important pour les élèves."*

(I think that we can devote one or two classes per week when students and teachers can talk and discuss things that are of interest to students.)

Similarly to the views of certain parents, a few school administrators considered the teaching of literature to be powerful instrument whereby discussion about moral values can be initiated.

7.7.2 Analysis

The findings suggest that there is wide consensus among stakeholders that the school is an important agency for providing moral education. There is always the possibility of moral development (in the sense of improvement) at a given age. Adolescents, like adults, can become more

altruistic, sensitive, thoughtful and wise, and more skillful in giving expression to their morality. The need for moral education certainly exists.

Much emphasis is laid on all three dimensions of school's role: transmission, socialisation and the developmental function. Differences emerge on the relative importance given to each of these. Views vary widely but it is interesting to note that students assigned greater significance to the socialisation and developmental function. Their perspective is akin to the understanding developed by Dewey (1916:113) on the moral role of the school. They are especially responsive to the way in which learning is carried out and the opportunities for continued communication and inquiry. Schools are expected to help develop a mature morality by providing stimulating classroom experiences and using a more flexible pedagogy that fosters dialogue and recognises the learning capacity of every learner.

The standpoint of students is indicative of an important issue that has so far not been raised in the discussion: pedagogy as a moral tool. Blum (1999: 125-143) argues that the pedagogy used by the teacher is portent of a moral message. A pedagogy based on differentiation places value of the knowledge and recognises the value and contribution of each student. The pedagogical approach used by teachers is indicative of the underlying values that guide practice within a school. As highlighted in section 7.2 and 7.3, observational learning is the cornerstone of the moral learning process. This implies that all adult behaviours are observed and interpreted whether they have explicit moral content or not. Teachers' discourse during classroom interactions as well as their relationship with pupils and their classroom management style reflects moral choices which pupils can quickly decode and emulate. Students seemed to believe that methods of teaching that respect divergence of view, rely on independent

and autonomous learning, are cognitively stimulating should be used more frequently. This is in line with what the socio-cognitive perspective on moral education. The school's role is to teach values through the curriculum by choosing ethically 'rich' content such a literature and science as well as those subjects which relate to the acquisition of life and social skills.

Stakeholders in general seemed to be favourable to ad-hoc programmes that target specific skills such as short courses on conflict resolution or human rights. Those programmes are necessary supplements to the moral input built in the curriculum. Students, because they are at a stage of cognitive and social expansion, seek opportunities to assert themselves socially.

The functionalist approach is also frequently applied in many schools and is still relevant to our educational context. The perspective of adults generally can be largely interpreted in the light of Durkheim's understanding of the moral role of the school. Their emphasis on school discipline and respect for the values embedded in the school code and symbols as well as deference to authority is true to the functionalist tradition. The practice of moral discipline understood in terms of creation and enforcement of rules, can only be conceived as the first stages of moral education because these serve to initiate children into the moral culture of society. For adolescents who are cognitively capable of moral reflection, it does not seem to be a totally satisfactory approach. Not only do they expect consistency and a school culture that is reflective of a moral community which cares for its members but also the availability of role models to inspire moral behaviour. What they seem to indicate is the creation of a democratic community rather than the more conformist

Durkheimian approach which relies on immersion in a group and demands that the individual yields to the collective.

However, Durkheim's (1961:10-11) approach is not necessarily antithetical to what Dewey (1916:81-100) propounds. Firstly, the conformity implicit in morality in its mature form is the result of individual reflection and based on enlightened acceptance brought about by a realisation that the moral solutions proposed by adults may well be the best alternative for social life. The school has thus to be the site of moral struggles because community life creates situations where conflicts are bound to occur, but it is also the site of moral reconciliation. The role of the school and adults is to guide students to consider the complex issues that they may not be aware of due to the limits of their social experience. The school is thus the site of negotiation, trial and error and moral reconciliation.

The school is also vested with the responsibility of developing the parallel cognitive frameworks necessary to support recognition of a moral issue as distinct from conventional or personal ones and examining, from a rational point of view, moral questions. It seems that teachers are conspicuously aware of the need to rely more and more on students' ability to reason about moral issues and make moral judgments.

The moral role of the school has also to be related to the activities of the school within the larger community apart from making full use of the moral life of the classroom. If students are to develop a notion of their adult responsibility in the future, they need to be given opportunities to experiment with decision-making within the classroom but also beyond the school walls. Interaction with the community also serves to foster independence in students and reinforce the values of the school. It will engage students in learning activities where practice and theory merge.

For schools to carry out their moral mandate successfully, they need to integrate curriculum, policy and daily life with strong leadership and support from parents, teachers and the community at large. Additionally, moral education conducted within vibrant faith communities that share a cohesive and consensual understanding of right and wrong that is not only spoken of, but lived out in the day-to-day programme has increased chances of success as shown by the evidence gathered from confessional schools.

7.8 CONCLUSION

The findings from this chapter clearly make the case for re -examining the ways in which moral education can be catered for in our schools. Despite the fact that stakeholders understanding of morality and moral education may vary, there is more or less consensus that the school should be vested with the responsibility of creating positive dispositions and attitudes in pupils, pro social and moral behaviour as well as a strong sense of responsibility. The task of educating implies *de facto* moral education. As in Peters' (1966:28) analysis, all steps of the education process involve moral decision-making. From the selection of curriculum content to pedagogical decisions, teachers, administrators as well as all adults involved in education have to decide about right and wrong or good and bad.

In addition, the school is the only institution that has the formal task of educating students. It is mandated by society to carry out this responsibility almost single handedly. In no other institutions are adults in such ongoing interaction with young people and have authority to organize learning activities in what way they deem fit. The schools' moral role is becoming

even more vital at a time when children receive little moral teaching at home and the moral influence of religion is also absent from their lives.

Expectations of the school in terms of moral education are mostly expressed in the form of greater and more diversified opportunities for learning and interaction from both teachers and students. In the past, moral education programmes have often given almost exclusive attention to the general needs of society, especially the adult world. Inadequate recognition has been given to the needs of adolescents, their concerns and their fears which are in large measure legitimate, and moral education programmes must be tailored to meet their needs.

A just and truly *moral* education must promote the development of the adolescents and other members of the school alike. But another, practical reason is, that unless we meet students on their own ground we will not achieve our goal of empowering the students through moral education because we will not engage their attention or enthusiasm. We will grossly overlook a fundamental educational principle, namely, that one must meet them at their own development. As far as possible students should be allowed to enter adulthood in their own way, so that their need for identity and relative autonomy are met. There is also a strong case for moral education programmes conceived along more interactive and action oriented lines.

In the next and final chapter of this report, a brief overview of the study and its most important conclusions are presented. Guidelines have been developed for implementing a moral education programme at secondary level.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The role of the school in providing moral education cannot be overestimated in the current contemporary context. It has been established in chapter five that the moral education mandate of the school is coherent withfits in its more generally defined tripartite roles of the transmission, socialization and development of a value system in society. Today, more than ever, in the mauritian context there is a pressing need to revisit in a fundamental way, our expectations of education and schools. One set of reasons pertains to wider changes in society and the need for schools to assume take on board fresh challenges. The second set of reasons can be attributed to both philosophical and pedagogical premises with respect to our understanding of the concept of education as it relates to the preparation of children to become active members of the society.

With respect to the former, there is little ground to refute the argument that schools are called upon to embrace some of the roles that were traditionally given to the family because of the changes in socio-economic conditions. One of these important roles is that of providing for moral education especially in view of the manifest degeneration of social morals and the erosion of values that characterise the Mauritian society. A key finding of the study is that stakeholders **expect** schools to assume this role **fully** and through a **diversity** of means.

As regards the latter, the school cannot overlook its role in providing moral education because such a function is firmly embedded and implicit in its

broader task of *educating* children for citizenship. The argument that schools have to educate towards moral responsibility resonated profoundly in the course of interviews across different categories of stakeholders. Educating people for respect, responsibility, integrity and empathy is often construed as one of the most important aim of education in all societies and is particularly relevant in a multicultural society like Mauritius.

The factors giving rise to the study

- The kind of society envisioned in the future is dependent on the quality of education provided at the moment in our schools. The realization that quality education cannot be conceived solely in terms of academic achievement has started to dawn upon various stakeholders. Increasingly the general opinion is pointing towards a broader understanding of the concept of education inclusive of some form of character education.

- The members of both the civil society, religious bodies and the political elite have expressed increasing dissatisfaction regarding the Western philosophy of life, its concomitant emphasis on individualism and self-interest and its subsequent degeneration in terms of the social relations and moral values. Concurrently, education has come to be increasingly regarded as a vehicle for social and moral transformation.

- The role of the school needs to be fundamentally revisited especially in the context of educational reforms in Mauritius. Much of the debate about reform in education has so far centered only on engineering issues and has almost completely overlooked the fundamental philosophical questions that are tied to a society's vision about its future and the kind of education it wishes to provide to its members.

- Parents, teachers and students have expectations about the learning experiences that the schools can and should provide which have never been uncovered. Additionally, consensus about our common vision of education has not been reached is a matter of serious concern in a democratic society where expression and discussion form the cornerstone of democracy.
- In a multi-cultural and multi-religious society, there is a great need to clarify what we consider to be the role of the school with respect to moral education in view of the diversity of moral positions that may co-exist.

The above-mentioned issues highlight the importance of such a study in the contemporary Mauritian context. The study has clearly revealed that there is general consensus among stakeholders that the school needs to reconsider its moral mandate in a post industrial society seriously. Furthermore, the teacher's role has to be recast in the light of the professional expectations of the teaching corps and the pupils as well as parents and other concerned stakeholders.

8.2 A SUMMARIZED OVERVIEW OF THE INVESTIGATION

Chapter one established both the local and international context of the study and defined the aim, objectives as well as the main research question, namely what do stakeholders consider to be the role of the school in providing moral education? The terms used and the concepts to be developed in the study were also explained.

A historical overview of major events economic, political and social events was provided in chapter two with particular emphasis on the evolution of education and certain issues that have dominated educational debates in

Mauritius. Such an exercise highlighted the confusion that prevailed at the primary education level regarding moral education, religious education and its perceived connectedness with the question of oriental languages.

Chapter 3 considered the theoretical underpinnings of moral education looking at its philosophical, psychological and sociological roots and their implications for the educative process. Chapter 4 described and analysed the specific multicultural experience of Mauritius in the light of commonly held perceptions about morality and education in general.

Chapter five deals exclusively with the transmission, socialisation and developmental role of the school. The socio cognitive perspective developed by Bandura (1991) was used as the predominant theoretical framework. Chapter six reaffirms the conceptual framework for the study while, at the same time, outlining the research design, methods, the sample and the data collection instruments.

The basic research endeavour was to determine stakeholders' perceptions of the role of the school in providing moral education in Mauritian society. The literature review of chapters three to five was used as a basis for analysing the data from the empirical study. These are interpreted in the light of the conceptual framework developed in the course of the literature review. In order to be able to answer the main research question, namely, *What is the role of the school in providing moral education in a multicultural context?*, the following aspects of the research problem were addressed in the light of stakeholders' experiences and expectations:

- The role and function of education
- The nature and meaning of morality in a multicultural context
- Moral learning in the school

- The role of teachers in providing moral education
- The changing role of the school in the contemporary context
- Perceptions about the nature and relevance of moral education

The exploration of the above mentioned issues would lead to a holistic understanding of the different dimensions of the 'moral' role of the school- an understanding that was significantly reinforced by an integration with the theoretical framework provided by Bandura's socio cognitive approach to learning. Table 8.1 provides a summary of the literature compared with and linked to the empirical findings:

Table 8.1 Findings from Literature compared to Findings from Empirical Study

Findings from the Literature	Findings from the Empirical Research
Education is conceived as the ***development of persons***. By this is meant the intellectual, social, moral, physical and emotional development which prepares the individual for adult life in society and equips him/her with the necessary resources to be able to lead a ***fulfilling life.*** It is both ***product*** and ***process*** oriented and aims at the development of ***personality*** and ***character***.	The data from the study reveals that perceptions about education are heavily influenced by changes in society and stakeholders' understanding of what is meant by ***'meaningful and successful lives'.*** The notion of educating for **citizenship** and ***social integration*** as well as educating for ***employability*** is strongly present in stakeholders' discourse across categories. However, dissonant voices still consider ***character*** as an important concern of education.
Morality relates to a set ***of principles and values*** that are used to make judgements about behaviour. The cognitive view emphasizes the relevance of ***intellectual resources***. It is distinct from matters of religion and social conventions.	In the multicultural Mauritian context, stakeholders use a variety of resources as the basis for making moral decisions. The distinction between ***morality*** and parallel frameworks of ***social conventions***, ***religion*** and ***spirituality*** is often blurred because faith and culture help to ground perceptions about right and wrong in a particular concept of life and living. Moral decisions are made in the crucible of culture and religion in the Mauritian context.

Moral learning is the process through which the child **understands, acquires and internalises values** under the tutelage of adults and peers. It depends primarily on **vicarious capability** and the **availability of role models** in the social environment of the child.	The findings of the empirical study reveal that according to stakeholders **observational learning** is preferred channel for moral learning to take place. However, there is also a strong **cognitive** element in the interpretation of stakeholders as much stress is laid on the **ability to reason** as determinant **of sound moral judgements**
The process of moral learning is seriously jeopardised because with the **demise of the family** as an important agent of primary socialisation and the **degeneration of social and moral mores** coupled with the rise of secular societies, fewer role models are available within agents of primary socialisation.	There is consensus among adult stakeholders that because schools are vested with the responsibility of '**educating'**, they have a role to play in helping to counteract the widespread moral decline currently witnessed in society. The moral aim englobes both the **citizenship** and the **multicultural aim** of education. **Teachers** are construed as important **role models** and moral educators by adults but **not** by the students themselves.
The **eco-psychological** (person-process-context) perspective offered by Brofenbrenner (1986) highlighted the importance of the **interaction processes** of the learner in the meso system represented by the school.	The moral unity of the schools as a community was highlighted as well as the relevance of **moral socialisation**. The school is a prime moral educator because of the opportunities it offers for **social interaction** and hence, **moral dialogues** and exemplars.

The **transmission role** of the school is considered to be one of the most time honoured functions of the school because morality and values are **consciously** taught and expressed through the rituals, spontaneous interjections of teachers and the rules and regulations of the school.	The value of the transmission role of the school is strongly **discounted** by the students but emphasized time and again by parents and some school administrators. Teachers have highlighted the **ineffectiveness** of the **direct or indirect moral instruction** because of the decline of the moral authority of teachers and adults The reason being that the latter do not exhibit **consistency** of moral behaviour.
The **developmental** role of the school is not purely construed in a **Kolhbergian** terms as the enhancement of the cognitive powers of reasoning. But it is rather construed in terms of a **socio- emotional and cognitive** approach related to **perspective taking** and the development of **emphatic skills.**	Participants revealed a more **cognitively oriented perspective** with a strong grounding in the belief that developing moral reasoning competencies is the most important aspect of moral education. However, a few **dissonant voices** especially from female participants revealed a greater emphasis on **emphatic skills and caring.**
The school's **hidden curriculum** and the **school ethos** are portent moral educators since they implicitly reveal the **moral commitments** of adults in the child's immediate social environment.	The findings support very strongly the influence of the hidden curriculum and the school ethos in shaping the **moral judgements** and **beliefs** of students. The role of **peers** in moral education should also be seriously considered.

8.3 DEGREE TO WHICH THE AIMS HAVE BEEN MET

The main of this study was to describe and analyse the perception of stakeholders about the role of the school in providing moral education. The research findings and their interpretation have offered meaningful insights into the expectations of parents, teachers, students and school administrators. In an analytic descriptive mode, the perceptions of stakeholders have been presented and explained in a historical and cultural perspective and the implications for the role of the school clearly indicated. Furthermore, these findings have been integrated and used to develop holistic guidelines for implementing a moral education programme at the secondary level. The ramifications in terms of teacher training have also been dealt with in various sections of the findings and interpretation.

The study has limitations in terms of the size of its sample. However, the twin issues of subjectivity and validity have been efficiently dealt with to produce valid conclusions. The theoretical framework adopted has supported the research orientation and directed attention towards significant themes for data analysis and interpretation. All these methodological and conceptual precautions have made the findings plausible and contextually relevant and contributed to the achievement of the aims of the study.

8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has clearly established the need for educators to rethink about the introduction of a moral education programme at both the primary and secondary level. Schools today, if they wish to successfully fulfil their educative mandate, have to be actively and pro-actively involved in moral education. The guidelines proposed below have been framed on the

premise that some form of moral education would have already been provided in the primary school and have already prepared students with the skills, attitudes and dispositions for moral education at the secondary level.

8.4.1 Guidelines for Developing a Moral Education Programme at Secondary School Level

The moral crisis that characterises both the mauritian society and more importantly, the neglect of the moral mandate of the school point to need of developing a comprehensive and holistic moral education programme at all levels of education. Such an endeavour will help ensure democratic survival as a society and protect our children from the negative influences caused by a blind adoption of values and norms that are purely materialistic and individualistic in nature. The wish to reform Mauritian society and ensure the continuity of harmonious social relations rests on the assumption that both the process and product of education are moral in nature. Such an aim can only be achieved if sufficient attention is given to planning for moral education in our schools.

The findings and analysis of the previous chapter support an integrated programme of moral education embedded in the curriculum. There seems to be consensus among stakeholders that an eclectic approach is more appropriate than selecting a single approach to meet different age groups and students' needs. Additionally, both the teachers and students' perspective revealed a decided preference for collaborative and democratic approaches that are in line with the perspective provided by Kohlberg (1986:24) regarding the Just Community approach (see section 3.5.2.2) and Dewey (1897: 77-80) (see section 3.3.2) rather than the more

direct and controlled line advocated by Wynne (1988:424-26) and Ryan (1987:3-97) (see section 3.3.1).

The strategy proposed in this chapter is holistic in nature. It considers the perspective of all stakeholders in education and defines their roles in relation to what goes on in the school. The strategy is not only constructed for the school but is also based around the school in the sense that, at its core, it views school life and the peripheral activities as an area of intervention. I strongly argue for a moral education that merges with in the daily learning activities of students rather than a programme that is conceived as external to the current curriculum.

As with all comprehensive strategies, this one looks at both the fundamental and the practical changes that will have to operate at the level of all those who are directly and indirectly involved with the school. Thus the focus will be on teachers, students, school administrators and the parents as well as on teacher training, teacher supervision, and the use of other human resources to help implement the moral education programme.

Table 8.2 : The Existing Administrative Structure of Education in Mauritius

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Government Policy regarding Education          │
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                           │
                           ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│       Ministry of Education and Human Resource        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐
│ Permanent         │   │ Schools Standards │   │ Permanent        │
│ Secretary         │   │ and Management    │   │ Secretary        │
│ Primary Section   │   │                   │   │ Secondary        │
│                   │   │                   │   │ Section          │
└──────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘

             ┌─────────────────────────────┐
             │     Regional Directorates    │
             └─────────────────────────────┘
                           │
                           ▼
             ┌─────────────────────────────┐
             │       School Inspectors      │
             └─────────────────────────────┘
                           │
                           ▼
             ┌─────────────────────────────┐
             │     School Administrators    │
             └─────────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────┐      ┌───┐
│ Teachers and Students │        │     Parents      │      │ C │
└──────────────────────┘        └──────────────────┘      │ O │
                                                          │ M │
                                                          │ M │
                                                          │ U │
                                                          │ N │
                                                          │ I │
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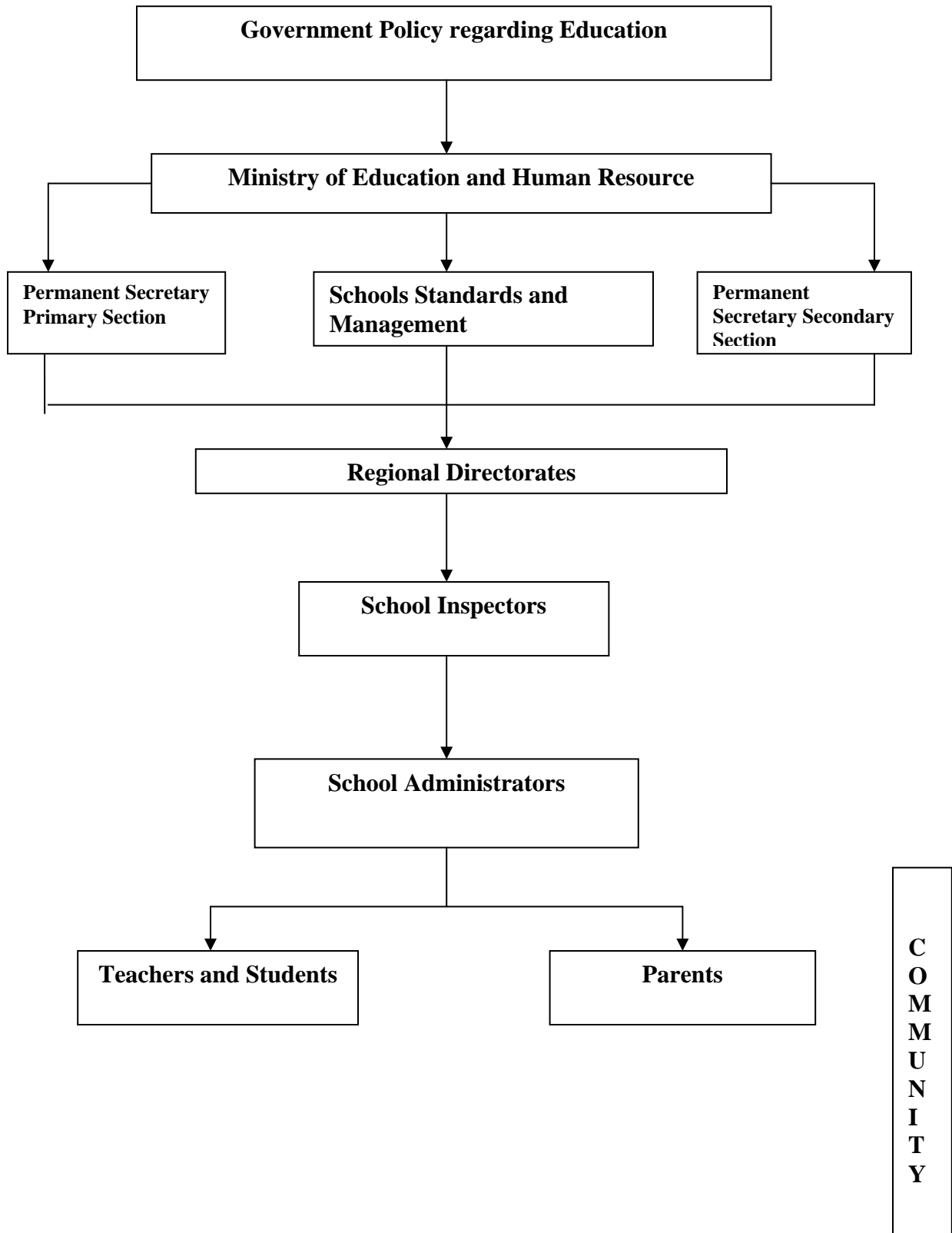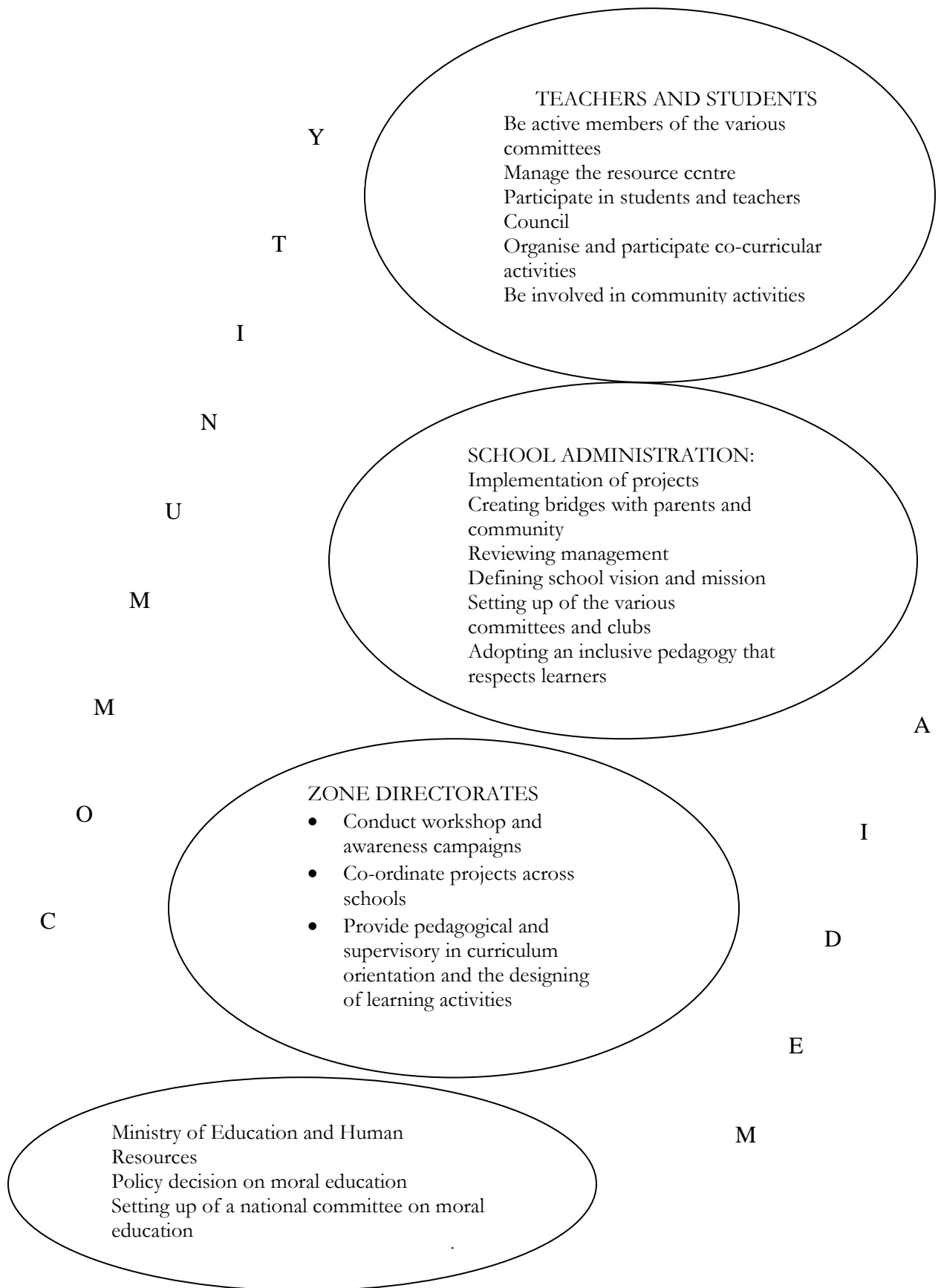
As the situation stands today, the role of the community in school life is virtually non existent. The common perception is that the schools are independent entities of their own and that whatever happens in the school is influenced by factors which are beyond the control or influence of the community at large.

However, as established in the previous chapter, it is clear that no change in education can be successful without taking the parents and the community at large on board as partners. However, the integration of stakeholders outside the school will require co-ordinating and readjusting the work of not one, but various ministries because ducation is affected and affects the family, the community and society at large.

The approach adopted considers various levels of intervention simultaneously. On the one hand at the top of the hierarchy is the Ministry of Education of Human Resources; on the other hand, at the grass root is the classroom. The strategy therefore will involve the:

  (i)   adoption of policy at the national level which will facilitate and pave the way for the implementation of the moral education programmes
  (ii)   collaboration at the level of various ministries
  (iii)   re-organisation of the learning activities within the school
  (iv)   review of school management policies
  (v)   extension of the school day to accommodate more extra mural and curricular activities
  (vi)   reorientation of the pedagogical approach
  (vii)   restructuring of teacher training
  (viii) creation of bridges between the school and the community and school and parents

Figure 8.1: Four Tiered Process for Providing Moral Education

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TEACHERS AND STUDENTS
Be active members of the various
committees
Manage the resource ccntre
Participate in students and teachers
Council
Organise and participate co-curricular
activities
Be involved in community activities

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION:
Implementation of projects
Creating bridges with parents and
community
Reviewing management
Defining school vision and mission
Setting up of the various
committees and clubs
Adopting an inclusive pedagogy that
respects learners

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ZONE DIRECTORATES
- Conduct workshop and
  awareness campaigns
- Co-ordinate projects across
  schools
- Provide pedagogical and
  supervisory in curriculum
  orientation and the designing
  of learning activities

Ministry of Education and Human
Resources
Policy decision on moral education
Setting up of a national committee on moral
education

279

Both the community and the media are expected to play a supportive role by cultivating an interest within the larger society of the activities of the school and a greater awareness of the policy decision and their intended outcomes. The media can also initiate debates and provide discussion forums with all relevant stakeholders in order to receive suggestions and help develop a sense of community ownership of the programmes. The community should be made aware of the significance of its function as a collectivity and learn to work in partnership with the schools on the various ' out of school' projects.

8.4.1.1 The Adoption of a Policy Decision

It is recommended that the Ministry of Education and Human Resource should make moral education part of its agenda of educational reform. In the same way as quality and equity are the twin driving forces of educational reform and underlie such reforms as the abolition ranking at the Certificate Primary Education and the introduction of prevocational classes at the level of each secondary school. The moral education aspect of each decision at the level of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources should be emphasized.

The usual practice at the level of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, has been the ad-hoc adoption of programmes and its formal inclusion in the curriculum through the time-table and in many cases, the production of an accompanying handbook for teachers and students. Not only is this additive approach burdensome to teachers and students, but it is also counterproductive in the sense that neither teachers nor school administrators feel any ownership of the programme. I therefore propose that before the formal adoption of a policy, the Ministry should carry out a series of workshops across all the four zones inviting teachers, school

administrators, parents and the students to present the underlying philosophy of this policy decision and to receive the suggestions of all stakeholders before officially preparing and drafting the policy proposal. I also suggest that the Ministry of Education and Human Resources should use the media as a partner and that debates and discussions should be organized at a national level so that the policy is the outcome of a national consensus and perceived as such.

The policy decision should:

(i)   involve the adoption of a holistic and integrated approach to moral education

(ii)   reflect national commitment towards extending the aims of education to include moral development

(iii)   identify the areas of intervention within and outside school and the various non-governmental organisations as well as the socio-religious groups and community centers.

(iv)   define the prerogatives and responsibilities of a Standing Committee which will look into the moral education curriculum at the secondary level.

The Standing Committee should consist of representatives from

(i)   the Ministry of Education and Human Resource (One)

(ii)   the Ministry of Arts and Culture (One)

(iii)   the Ministry of Youth and Sports (One)

(iv)   the Private Secondary School Authority (One)

(v)   the Bureau de L'Education Catholique (One)

(vi)   Non-governmental organisations with an interest in moral and values education(two or three)

(vii)   Living Values Organisation (One) and

(viii)   Teachers from secondary schools (Four)

(ix)   Students Council of three secondary schools (one private, one confessional and one state)

(x)   Parents from Parent-Teacher Association (one private, one confessional and one state)

The standing committee should:

(i)   co-ordinate the work of the various sub committees

(ii)   develop a national strategy for the inclusion of moral education in the existing curriculum

(iii)   co-ordinate the activities of the three above- mentioned ministries with respect to moral education

(iv)   monitor the implementation of moral education programmes both within and outside schools.

8.4.1.2 Collaboration at the Level of Various Ministries

In view of the adoption of an integrated approach, I propose that an inter-ministerial committee be set up to co-ordinate the work of four ministeries: the Ministry of Education and Human Resource, the Ministry of Arts and Culture, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and the Ministry of Women, Children's Right and Family Welfare. These are the four Ministries which deal primarily with children and adolescents and often already work in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources on projects.

The current situation is one where Ministries work separately, each dealing in different ways with similar issues. To avoid duplication and the waste of resources that this situation necessarily entails, and since moral education will require intervention in various spheres, it is proposed that the inter-

ministerial committee be vested with the responsibility of identifying projects that could be carried out in partnership. Such projects can include programmes of parental development at the community level.

It is also proposed that in each ministry a person be designated to handle the projects that are run in partnership with other ministries. This officer will act as a liaison officer for each Ministry and identify the resource person within the Ministry.

8.4.1.3 Reorganisation of Learning Activities within the School

The introduction of moral education within the current school set up will imply revisiting in a fundamental way the implementation of the curriculum (Lickona 1991:1-27). The most common practice is to organize learning activities around the prescribed syllabus and in some cases the prescribed textbooks. Thus, much emphasis is placed on the content to be transmitted rather than the learning experiences. It has been established in the previous chapter that moral education is more effective when the learning experiences provided to students cater for their needs and make them feel valued (Noddings 1994:111). In the light of this finding, it is therefore of crucial relevance, to consider curriculum implementation more in terms of experiences, skills and attitudes to be developed as purely content and knowledge to be transmitted.

Additionally, the previous chapter highlighted the fact that for a learning experience to be successful, the three aspects, that is, the cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects must be integrated (Lickona 1991:23). Learning activities have to be structured around the tripartite aspects of learning. I therefore propose that teachers of various departments be invited to reconsider the way learning activities are organized within and

across their departments. The selection and implementation of learning activities has important moral implications. Learning experiences are meaningful to students if they make students feel valued as knowledge producers and not merely receivers of knowledge (Van Der Ven 1998: 93). Thus, I propose that at the lower secondary levels an integrated approach should be used because issues and topics overlap. Teachers of different departments can then work collaboratively to teach concepts and ideas that are related.

With more hands on learning and project work, learning can ultimately be liberated from the confines of instrumentality. Subject content can become 'alive' as it relates to the real life experiences of the child. If, as Dewey (Boydson 1972:54-93) believed the pedagogical choice of teachers has moral implications, then these choices should be more thoughtfully and deliberately made and not become a matter of routine. To facilitate the communication amongst teachers, it is proposed that the first thirty minutes of each school day be allocated to teachers to enable them to plan the details of common lessons collaboratively.

The above-mentioned changes should be agreed upon by the management (the school principal and school manager) and teachers. Most teachers make decisions, not only on the basis of their professional knowledge and convictions but also taking into account management policy (Hersch 1990:2-12). Thus, it is important to recognize that the organisation of learning activities depends to a large extent on the philosophy and outlook of the management, as well as the facilities provided by the management in terms of resources for teachers to be able to carry out their activities. Hence, I also propose that a resource center be set up at the level of each school to facilitate the reorientation of learning activities. The Center can provide the teaching and learning resources in

helping teachers to adopt a variety of new teaching strategies. Resources such as teaching aids can be purchased out of allocated funds or from parents' contributions. Since most teachers have followed or are following training courses, they can supply this resource center with relevant materials and aids and use the resource center as a means of disseminating what they have learnt form their training courses. It is also proposed that a Resource Centre Committee be set up at the level of each school and that membership on this Committee should be on a temporary basis. It is also important to have students as members of the Committee.

8.4.1.4 Review of School Management Policies

The desired changes described above require school management to play a supportive role for both teachers and pupils. There is a pressing need to revisit management policies in favour of a more flexible and dynamic approach that fosters democratic principles and values. It is therefore proposed that, in view of making management more inclusive and participative, the following be set up at the level of each school:

(i)   Teachers and Students Council
(ii)   Discipline Committee
(iii)   Welfare Committee
(iv)   Clubs (Environmental, Human Rights, Living Values, Literature, Society for the Protection of Animals)

The Teachers and Students Council will provide teachers and students with opportunities to take collective decisions with regard to school activities (Lickona 1991: 23). It will also increase interaction outside the formal teaching and learning situation of the classroom, enabling teachers and students to develop a stronger relationship. The Council should be

responsible for dealing with matters of relevance to the whole school and those pertaining to particular classes.

The teachers and students council should contribute to the devolution and decentralisation of power not only in administrative matters but also with respect to pedagogical planning. This will improve students listening and their perspective taking skills. It will also help enhance their self-esteem as they will feel valued if their suggestions and ideas are taken into consideration. An important benefit of the teachers and students' council is the continuing challenge it provides for putting respect and responsibility in practice (Ryan and Mac Lean 1987:43-55). This is a real experience in democracy where students participate in group decision-making processes.

An additional gain is in pedagogical terms. Children collaboratively plan their learning with teachers. The locus of control over classroom and other learning activities are shared between teachers and pupils.

The Discipline Committee should have for objective not only to ensure that the Code is respected by one and all, but also to see to it that all members of the school feel ownership of the Code and participate in its elaboration.

The Discipline Committee should consist of representatives of various levels of classes and the Discipline Master[13] as well as the Section Leaders[14]. Members can be co-opted (parents can be co-opted members) depending on the issues being addressed. The Discipline Committee should meet fortnightly and consider all issues related to the School Code, Rules and Regulations.

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[13] The Discipline Master is the teacher in charge of overall discipline in the school

[14] The Section Leader is responsible for a particular section, that is, all the classes of the same level. For example the Section leader of Form III would be responsible for all Form III classes.

The Welfare Committee should have for mandate to monitor the facilities provided at school and work towards improving the welfare of all stakeholders within the setting. Matters related to canteen, sports and recreational facilities, and safety should be taken up by this committee. This Committee should be chaired by the Rector or Deputy Rector and should comprise of teachers, school inspectors, parents and senior students.

I also propose that schools should establish various clubs catering to the diverse needs of adolescents. All students should be required to be a member of one club. Each club should run on the lines of participatory democracy and should be assigned three teachers. One member of the school administration should also be attached to the club in order to facilitate the communication between the administration and the club. Clubs are an essential part of school life and serve to broaden the perspective of students by engaging them in activities that relate to their lives as citizens. By being involved in the day to day running of the club and other Committees, students will learn to shoulder responsibility, learn about procedure, develop respect for institutions and master the skills of dialogue, negotiation and consensus.

8.4.1.5: Extension of School Working Hours to Accommodate More Extra Mural and Curricular Activities

Most secondary schools in Mauritius have eight classes of 40 minutes each. These are all subject classes which cater basically for the academic development of students. There is a need to diversify the nature and the scope of learning activities (Leming 1994:130). However, in the context of the current curriculum, it is not possible to restructure the time-table to accommodate non academic activities. The normal school hours can be

extended to one extra period, which could be devoted to non-academic activities from Monday to Thursday, and two periods on Fridays. It is proposed that these classes should be devoted to creative activities at the school level. Since it has been suggested that each student should be a member of a club, three extra classes could be allocated to club activities while Friday afternoons could be devoted to extramural activities. These could be related to the activities of the clubs. We propose that the clubs should be attached to a non-governmental organisation like Nature Watch (Environmental), National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers (NATRESA), Living Values or Scouts Club. This will enable students to benefit not only from the wide array of activities organised and to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. It will also prepare them to participate in the civil society.

Extra mural activities could possible include a number of hours dedicated to social or community services in the neighbourhood of the school for form IV and Lower Six students (equivalent to 9^{th} and 11^{th} class) . These can be accounted on a trimester basis and a minimum of 10 hours of service could be required for each student. Such service should be performed in recognized organisations which could be mandated to issue a certificate to students.

Students could also be requested to choose a different organisation every year. The organisations could be social, governmental, non-governmental or international branches of organisations such as Amnesty International. The onus of responsibility to find placement for community service should be on the students and the parents. This will be a means of getting parents on board and at the same time creating a link between the schools and the community.

I also propose that students be rewarded with a more detailed Leaving Certificate[15] describing the nature of student's involvement in extra mural activities and his/ her special contribution to school life and community involvement. Additionally, all staff, teaching and non-teaching should be members of at least one club on a yearly basis. Their role is not to control students but to guide them in the organisation of activities and in liasing with parents and the community.

In moral terms the students will develop group identity and a feeling of being a valued member of the group as well as responsibility to and for the group or club. Service to the community is an important aspect of moral growth.

8.4.1.6 Reorientation of the Pedagogical Approach

The above-mentioned propositions are necessary but not sufficient conditions for a successful moral education programme at the secondary level. One aspect, which should not be underscored, is the potential use of pedagogy as a form of moral education. Pedagogical reform should also be strongly oriented towards the adoption of an approach based on differentiation, where due recognition is given to the uniqueness of each student and his/her individual needs as a learner. In that context collaborative learning strategies, of which co-operative learning is a core component can bring significant gains in enhancing learning and students' motivation. The implementation of collaborative and co-operative modes of interaction within the classroom situation is reflective of the underlying epistemological and moral positions of the teachers (Blum 1999: 125-143). Adopting an open- ended attitude towards knowledge and learning is an

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[15] The Leaving Certificate usually testifies the good moral character of the students and summatively describes any outstanding achievement during school years.

indication that teachers value students' input in the process of teaching and learning and that all students, irrespective of the nature of their abilities, should contribute to knowledge in the classroom.

I therefore propose that, as a matter of policy regarding pedagogy in secondary schools, the Government as well as the Private Secondary school Authority (PSSA) and The Bureau of Catholic Education, should unanimously declare and actively promote co-operative learning as a means to :

  (i)   build community in the classroom,
  (ii)   improve self-esteem and attitude towards the school,
  (iii)   reduce the negative impact of a highly elitist system,
  (iv)   develop a culture of tolerance and respect for others.

I also suggest that the Regional Inspectorate be made responsible for carrying out workshops and seminars for teachers as frequently as possible to help teachers develop the skills for using co-operative learning in their subject teaching. Additionally, an Action Research Unit could be set up under the aegis of each Regional Directorate. This Unit should develop action research projects, based on collaborative models of teaching, for school clusters and have the responsibility for monitoring the projects and disseminating information about best practices. It would also be useful if the Unit could be linked with the Resource Centres of all schools.

Furthermore, at the level of each school, I also suggest that all the Heads of Department should meet on a monthly basis after school hours to discuss pedagogical matters and to derive a common vision as regards collaborative learning and more learner centered pedagogy. Parents should be made aware of the decisions of the school in the matter. I

propose that instead of relying only on the traditional Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, it is desirable to set up a system whereby each individual Section leader together with concerned teachers, will have flexibility in calling parents without going through the more formal process of calling a meeting for the whole school. It is not only administratively easier to call a meeting with 100 parents than with 750 parents, but it will also provide a better opportunity for parents to contribute and teachers to focus more specifically on issues pertaining to a particular level.

8.1.4.7 Restructuring of Teacher Training

Pedagogical reform at the level of the school will have important repercussions at the level of teacher training. The programmes of teacher education should be revisited and refurbished to include an important component on collaborative strategies and on moral education. It is proposed that the issue of moral education be addressed at three levels or more precisely in terms of three different modules:

- (i)   Principles of Teaching and Learning
- (ii)   Philosophy and Sociology of Education
- (iii) Educational Psychology

While the last two-mentioned modules are run by the Education Studies Department, the Subject Departments also address pedagogical issues in the different courses they offer. By enhancing the elements of critical reflection not only by stressing on the technical aspects of teaching but by also broadening discussion on issues related to education generally, teachers will have to reconsider the crucial role they play as role models and moral educators (Haydon: 1997:65).

In the Principles of Teaching and Learning module, emphasis is currently laid on collaborative strategies. However, this module would be even more effective if it is treated in a more practical rather than theoretical way. To increase transferability of concepts, ideas and practices developed during teacher training courses, it is proposed that the Mauritius Institute of Education establishes or 'adopts' an experimental school. This will enable teachers to use the knowledge developed in real classroom situations under the supervision of their tutors. Additionally, the school management can be redesigned along the lines discussed in Section 8.4.1.4.

Furthermore, the foundations courses, Philosophy and Sociology of Education should be reintroduced across all courses especially in initial training courses in order to provide them with the necessary background knowledge to develop a personal understanding and philosophy of education. Without an underlying philosophy teachers will not have the conviction and motivation to change their practices.

Teachers must be made to recognise the opportunities for moral learning available throughout the curriculum (Bottery 1990:41). The choice of materials, the selection of textbooks and other curriculum materials impinge on the values that we display as adults. With the adoption of a secondary school, teachers and teacher educators should develop action research projects. Such projects provide an opportunity for both teachers and teacher educators to observe the long term effect of these changes on the school and the students.The findings could later be disseminated and models of good practices extended to other schools.

It is also proposed that, as a matter of policy, teacher education should no longer be perceived as a one time or ad-hoc entreprise but should become an ongoing process of professional growth and development. The
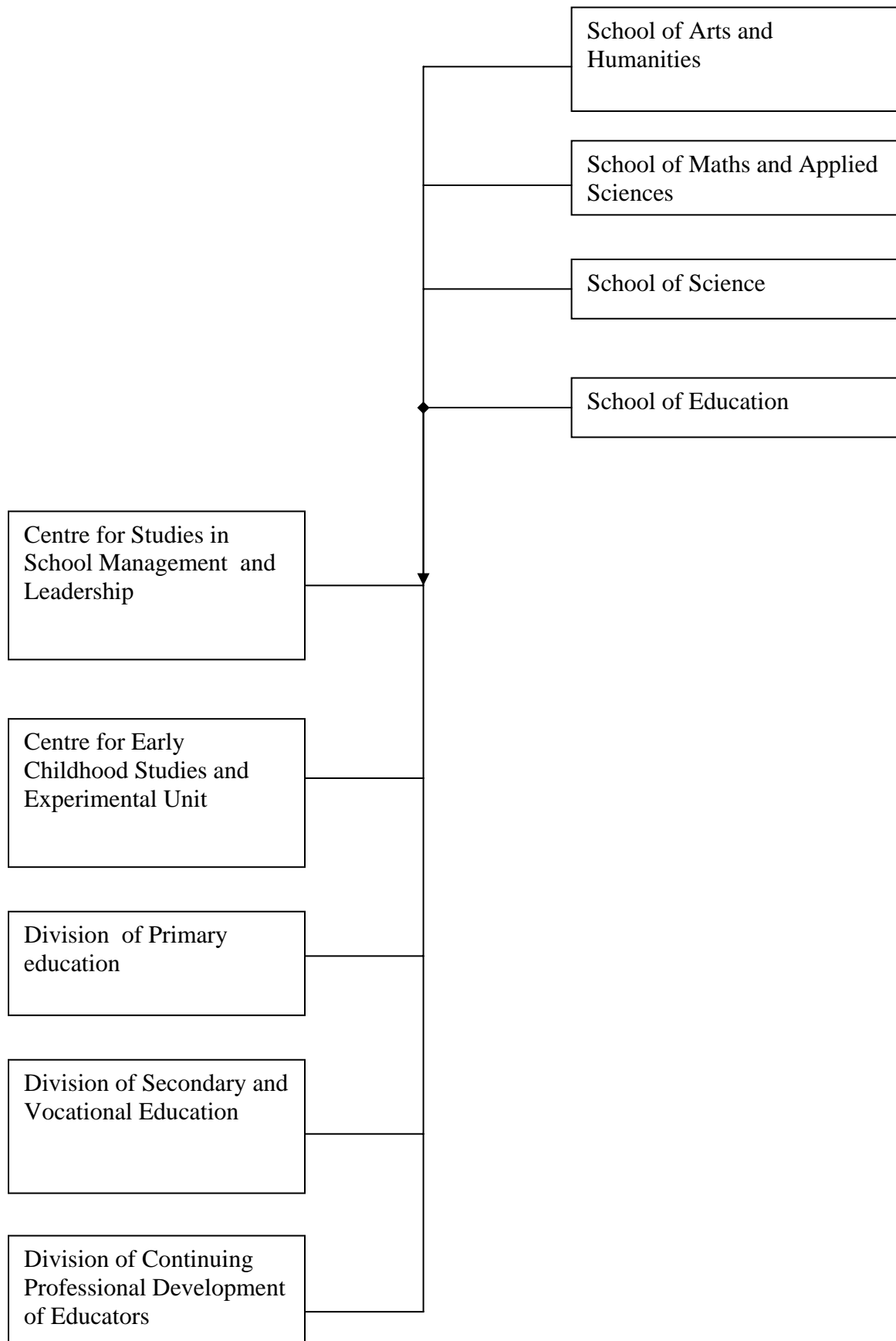
Mauritius Institute of Education, which is the sole teacher training institution mandated by the State should review its structure in order to provide ongoing professional development rather than being primarily focused on initial teacher training. As the situation stands today, for secondary school teachers, four undergraduate and only one post graduate courses are currently proposed, namely:

(i)   Teacher's Diploma
(ii)   Teacher's Diploma(Pre Vocational)
(iii)   Bachelor of Education
(iv)   Post Graduate Course in Education
(v)   Master of Arts in Education

It is therefore proposed that more opportunities be provided for diverse needs and interest of teachers in the form of short term courses on the campus. One short-term course can, for example, be offered on Conflict Resolution techniques, Sex Education or Team Teaching. These courses can be run collaboratively by the Mauritius Institute of Education in partnership with other tertiary institutions, both private and public. Some courses would be fee paying in view of the fact that expertise may be required from foreign institutions. In such cases, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, the Bureau of Catholic Education as well as the Private Secondary School Association, should work out modalities for sponsoring teachers to attend such courses.

It is also proposed that the Mauritius Institute of education be restructured in terms of the following Units and Divisions as presented in Table 8.3:

Table 8.3: *Restructure of the MIE from Schools to Divisions and Centres*

	School of Arts and Humanities
	School of Maths and Applied Sciences
	School of Science
	School of Education

Centre for Studies in School Management and Leadership	

Centre for Early Childhood Studies and Experimental Unit	

Division of Primary education	

Division of Secondary and Vocational Education	

Division of Continuing Professional Development of Educators	

The current structure is based on a philosophy which reflects the emphasis given to didactics and subject teaching as separate from studies in Education. It is proposed that the staff of Institute be re-allocated under the Centres and Divisions so that their expertise could be more optimally used at one specific level of the education system. The Centre for Continuing Professional Development of Educators will comprise only a core administrative and academic staff since a number of its courses would be run by staff from the other Divisions and Centres and staff would also be recruited from other tertiary institutions for specific modules.

One added advantage of the proposed model is that teachers would benefit from an integrated perspective that would be more likely to result when a group of teacher trainers who, whatever their subject discipline, focus primarily on one level of education and develop a common vision of education at that particular level. More importantly, the issue of moral education can be addressed in some detail at the level of the Centre for Educational Management and Leadership as well as the Division for Secondary Education.

8.4.1.8: Creation of Bridges between the School and the Community and School and Parents

The role of parents and the community at large cannot be underestimated because the long term success of any moral education programme depends on factors outside the school. Parents have, on the one hand to be supported in their role as primary moral educators. The community, on the other hand, should collectively assume responsibility for the education of its children by helping parents to carry out their roles and encouraging parents to support the school (Lickona 1991:400).

In concrete terms, various actions can be taken at the level of the school. Firstly, the school can develop or sponsor parent education programmes or workshops that can help parents to deal with specific problems they encounter in dealing with adolescents. Such topics as sex education, discipline and monitoring homework should be discussed. Secondly, the school can invite parents to participate in school activities such as school fairs and field trips. Lastly, parents and teachers should be given the opportunities to meet socially. A family day can be organized at the end of each trimester to provide an opportunity for positive interaction.

Additionally, the links between the school and the community could be strengthened by using the ethical expertise that is available in the community. Conversely, the school has also to be seen as actively participating in the life of the community and contributing to solve its problems and helping it to progress. In that line of thought and as suggested in section 8.4.1.5, the various clubs set up at the level of each school should organize at least thrice yearly activities that would involve students in the service of the community. As Lickona (1991:414) argues, it is crucial to generate positive publicity for the school to win the collabaroation and goodwill of the community.

The guidelines provided in this chapter have been developed with a view to provide a coherent and cohesive approach to moral education in the secondary schools of Mauritius. Aspects of both the planned and unplanned curriculum have been taken into consideration in order to attend to the legitimate expectations of each stakeholder in the school. I strongly believe that, unless we understand moral education as being embedded in what can appear as the most mundane and insignificant aspect of school life, and develop an approach that seeks to impute a common moral

purpose to all learning activities, we will have only partly fulfilled our mission to make moral education an important educational priority.

8.4.2 Recommendations for Further Research

The present research was carried out in an exploratory mode and was meant basically as groundwork for not only informing policy decision but to also provide a spring board for further research. In this perspective the following recommendations are made:

- A pilot study could be carried out on the implementation of the guidelines proposed in the previous section. This could also take the form of action research where all the partners at various levels could be taken on board. Action research would allow for the required flexibility to modify actions as per the needs of the situation and to devise a fully fledged programme that reflects the aspirations of the stakeholders.

- The teachers' role with regard to moral education could be further investigated in the form of single or multiple case studies. The relevance of teacher-pupil dialogue could be analysed as well as the impact of teachers' approach to teaching on their relationship with students and their moral influence on pupils. Such studies should be longitudinal in nature.

- An assessment of the training needs of teachers in terms of moral education could be carried out. This study could be used to determine accurately the skills teachers require to be able to deal effectively with moral issues in the classrooms and schools.
- A survey of the teaching strategies used by teachers dealing with moral, civic or human rights education could enlighten us further with

respect to examples of good practices. Such good practices can be included in the teachers' handbook to be developed as an aid.

- An investigation into the moral educative value of literary texts would also help teachers teaching literature to become aware of how they can use their subject as a vehicle for equipping students with the skills required to make moral judgements and how they can integrate cognitive with emotional learning. This could be supplemented by an action research on the use of drama for teaching emphatic skills.

- A sociological study of the media in Mauritius could be useful in unveiling the values that are being transmitted to the public and its impact on the value systems of young adolescents. The findings of such a study could then be disseminated to parents, teachers and other stakeholders so that they can be in a position to create an awareness among adolescents.

- An in-depth evaluation of the Living Values Programme, Education for Life and other such programmes dealing with values/moral character education in achieving the moral education aim is necessary. An exposition of the participants' experience of those programmes and the means of implementation in classroom situations can shed light on future initiatives in this regard.

8.5 CONCLUSION

The present study clearly established that the school has a definite and inevitable role to play in providing moral education in a multicultural society. However, this role has constantly evolved over time and the manner in which moral education was carried out previously no longer

caters to the expectations and aspirations of all stakeholders. With rapid technological, economic and cultural change, schools will have to develop a variety of means to morally stimulate adolescents and make them committed to moral action.

The success of our nation's endeavour to educate our young people in the democratic tradition that respects and nurtures the cultural diversity we have inherited hinges precariously on our ability to transmit this rich moral heritage and our common moral solutions to the future generation. It requires of us adults to display the imagination, resourcefulness and creativity to stimulate young people into the ongoing process of moral action and reflection. Our schools have thus to be restructured afresh, its partnership with parents, inspectors, non governmental organisations revived and our traditional and teacher centered approach reconsidered in a bid to ensure currency and relevance in our moral education programmes. The study has contributed in generating understanding of the situation in our schools. However, its long term contribution to education in Mauritius can only materialise at the time of a concrete policy decision on the part of concerned authorities to make moral education one of its priorities in the Mauritian educational agenda.