

The Impact of  
Psychosocial Deprivation  
on the Scholastic Performance  
of Grade 7 Learners

BY

K. Naiker

Student No: 205522658

## **DECLARATION**

I, Kalamathy Naiker, declare that this dissertation is my own. All sources consulted to make this work have been acknowledged. It is submitted to the Faculty of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Education (Psychology) degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus) and has not been submitted previously for examination in any other university.

---

K. Naiker

---

Date

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Firstly, I want to thank the Lord Jesus for this great achievement.

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”, (Philippians 4:13)

My Supervisor of this project, Mr H.N. Muribwathoho, for his guidance, encouragement, support and immense patience.

My husband, Tiny, my sons, Ashley, Kerwin & Jairus for your support and prayers.

My mum, for instilling in me the need to succeed academically.

Lynette Naiker, for typing, proofreading and the layout of my thesis. I am truly blessed with your expertise.

The grade seven learners who took part in the research.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this to my loving Mum, Karunagari Chetty, who has been a source of inspiration, continuous support and encouragement, and without whom I would not have achieved as much,

To my late dad Ramakrishna Chetty (who passed on thirty years ago), for all the hardships you endured to ensure the success I am today.

To my late uncle Vijay Pather who always encouraged education and assisted me with finance to start my university education.

To my late maternal grandmother Vathenygie Pather who always said “

“

“Pehwople kendeke ave yeveryathing pirom you padithe kannadeke ave youvir yedukaathiyen”

Meaning “ people can take away everything from you but they cannot take away your education”.

To my aunts, Devie and Agilandum Chetty for your unwavering support and mentoring.

To my aunt Praba, for being a mother figure and a role model in my life.

And,

My loving husband, Tiny, my adorable sons, Ashley, Kerwin & Jairus, for your love and patience and may all your goals and aspirations be fulfilled in the future.

## **ABSTRACT**

This research topic presents a discussion on psychosocial deprivation and how it impacts on learners academic performance. It is a case study guided by the following questions:

- To what extent does psychosocial deprivation influence scholastic performance of grade seven learners?
- How can the school counteract the effects of psychosocial deprivation?
- What forms of assistance do parents and teachers need in order to work together to benefit the learners?

This is a quantitative study underpinned by the ecosystemic perspective as well as the social constructivist theory. The sample size consisted of seventy learners taken from a primary school which was later reduced to twenty eight learners. The findings of the study were lack of motivation, absenteeism, learning disabilities, difficulties learning English as a second language, stressful family life, poverty and the like were some of the factors that affect learners and eventually results in their poor academic performance.

The learners' environment or neighbourhood is seen as one of the many social contexts that shape children's cognitive, social and emotional development. However the neighborhood context does not simply "imprint" itself on children, but can be mediated or moderated by other social contexts, in particular the family. Learners who struggle with schoolwork without receiving effective intervention often drop out of school and, as a consequence, have increasingly dire employment prospects. Many learners are invisible strugglers, falling through the cracks and being written off as not needing the extra effort and intervention that educators can provide. Schools, educators and education policy makers must strive to level the playing field by counteracting or minimizing the impact of socio-economic factors on learner's academic performance by doing the following:

- Supplying educational materials timeously.
- Preparing syllabi suited to the age, level and language of learners.
- Provide ongoing learner support with the help of guidance counselors and social workers.
- Provide nutritious programmes to supplement those with inadequate diets.
- Parents and teachers should work together to promote teaching and learning.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHAPTER 1: Background of study

1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 The purpose of the research and rationale	1
1.3 Objectives	3
1.4 Key research questions	3
1.5 Nature of the study	3
1.6 Significance of the study	4
1.7 Format of dissertation	4

### CHAPTER 2: Literature review

2.1 Definition of concepts	5
2.1.1 Psychosocial deprivation	5
2.1.2 Environmental deprivation	6
2.1.3 Socio-economic status	7
2.2 Poverty	8
2.2.1 Poverty line	9
2.3 Economic deprivation	10
2.4 Psychological well-being	11
2.5 Academic performance	12
2.6 Learner	12
2.7 Parental involvement	12
2.8 Review of related literature	12
2.8.1 Poverty in SA context	13
2.8.2 Impact of Poverty on behavior	16
2.8.3 Impact of poverty on academic performance	17
2.8.4 Impact of single parenting on academic performance	18
2.8.5 Impact of abuse on academic performance	18
2.8.5.1 Substance abuse	19

2.8.6 Impact of divorce on academic performance	19
2.8.7 Impact of social deprivation on academic performance	20
2.8.8 Impact of parental involvement on academic performance	23
2.8.8.1 The authoritarian parent	23
2.8.8.2 The permissive parent	23
2.8.8.3 Parental support	24
2.8.8.4 Parent child interaction	25
2.8.9 Effects of AIDS on learners	26
2.8.10 Grandparents as caregivers	27
2.8.11 Impact of family size on academic performance	28
2.8.12 Similar studies in other countries	29
2.8.13 Summary	30
2.9 Theoretical and conceptual frameworks	31
2.9.1 Introduction	31
2.9.2 Systems theory	31
2.9.3 The ecosystemic perspective	32
2.9.4 The ecological systems theory	33
2.9.5 The transactional model	36
2.9.6The social cognitive theory	37
2.9.7 Conclusion	37
CHAPTER 3: Research methodology	
3.1 Introduction	38
3.2 Site of study	38
3.3 Mixed methodology	38
3.3.1 Qualitative research methodology	39
3.3.2 Quantitative research methodology	39
3.4 The Research Process	40
3.4.1Permission from principal	40

3.4.2 Selection of respondents	41
3.5 Description of sample	41
3.6 Sampling procedure	42
3.7 Sample characteristics	42
3.7.1 Respondent's Gender	42
3.7.2 Respondent's Age	43
3.8 The research instrument	44
3.8.1 The questionnaire	44
3.8.2 Focus group discussions	45
3.8.3 Disadvantages of focus group discussions	46
3.8.4 Ethical Consideration	47
3.8.5 Anonymity and confidentiality	47
3.8.6 Privacy and informed consent	48
3.9 Thematic analysis	48
3.10 Trustworthiness of the study	50
3.10.1 Credibility	50
3.10.2 Transferability	51
3.10.3 Dependability	51
3.10.4 Confirmability	51
3.11 Summary	51
CHAPTER 4: Presentation of data and analysis of findings	
4.1 Introduction	52
4.2 Objectives	52
4.3 Key Research Questions	52
4.4 Thematic Analysis	52
4.3.1 Unemployment as psychosocial deprivation	53
4.3.2 Single Parenthood as psychosocial deprivation	54
4.3.3 General Poverty as psychosocial deprivation	55



4.3.4 Loss of Parents as psychosocial deprivation	57
4.3.5 Substance Abuse as psychosocial deprivation	58
4.3.6 Lack of Parental Involvement as psychosocial deprivation	59
4.3.7 HIV / AIDS as psychosocial deprivation	61
4.4 Summary	62
CHAPTER 5: Conclusion and recommendations	
5.1 Introduction	63
5.2 Summary of the study	63
5.3 Findings of the research	68
5.4 Limitations of the study	71
5.5 Recommendations for future studies	71
5.6 Conclusion	72
Bibliography	73
Appendix A	84
Appendix B	85
Learners Questionnaire	86
Appendix C	90
Appendix D	91
Appendix E	92
Biographical data	93



# **CHAPTER 1**

## **BACKGROUND OF STUDY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Research studies by Elsinga (2005), Harkness & Newman (2003) and Huston (1991), have found that there is a high risk of educational underachievement for children who are from low income housing circumstances. This often is the case for some less fortunate children in primary schools. These children are at a higher risk than other children for retention in their grade and in some instances end up not completing their high school education. Therefore, it is safe to state that children who live at or below the poverty level will have far less success educationally than children who live above the poverty line. Poor children have a great deal less health care and this ultimately results in many absences from their academic year. Additionally, poor children are much more likely to suffer from hunger, fatigue, irritability, headaches, ear infections and colds. These illnesses could potentially restrict a learner's focus and concentration (Wikipedia, 2009).

As a syndrome, poverty accounts for the higher rates of malnutrition and cultural deprivation seen in children living in city slums or poor rural areas. The effect of these factors on the development of the central nervous system is responsible for the incomplete expression of the genetically determined intellectual potential of the children. In turn, this results in sub-optimal intellectual functioning as measured in tests of intelligence (IQ) and in poor school performance (Cemca, 2008).

### **1.2 The purpose of the research and rationale**

The problem that will be investigated in this study concerns the impact of psychosocial deprivation on learners' scholastic performance. It also focuses on teachers' and parents' roles and responsibilities in improving their children's academic performance, in spite of their socio-economic conditions. In essence this study attempts to find answers to the following statement: the impact of psychosocial deprivation on scholastic performance of grade seven learners.

Based on my experience as a teacher I have found that amongst the grade seven learners, many of them are underperforming. I have taught literacy in the senior primary from grades four to seven and have found that at grade seven level the learners are struggling with basic sentence construction. I want to explore the reason for this. Studies by researchers (Oxaal, 1997) and (Bandura, 1997) have shown that

illiteracy reduces opportunities for employment, and in turn contributes to poverty, ill health and malnutrition. I want to explore the learners' experiences of schooling and to provide guidelines to improve their scholastic performance.

In addition to this I would like to mention that I had difficulties in many areas of my teaching since having to implement Curriculum 2005 and Outcomes based education. I was required to change my teaching philosophy, teaching styles and recording of both pupils and teachers tasks. Various resources had to be allocated and developed for the teaching of English. These new teaching styles were not taught to me in any of my in-service teacher training courses. Even more disappointing was the fact that the language and concepts associated with the new curriculum (particularly OBE) were too complex, confusing and often contradictory. Lack of resources is the biggest challenge for most schools as most learners cannot afford to pay school fees.

The learners in question came from a school situated in a low economic area with about ninety percent of learners coming from poverty stricken households. Some came to school on an empty stomach while others came without a proper uniform. The learners were coming from families and communities with a lot of substance abuse, specifically alcohol abuse. Many learners came from single parent households as a result of a high divorce rate among Africans. Many learners were also orphaned by HIV and AIDS.

Many parents or grandparents were in receipt of state grants and lived in houses developed for lower income families. The RDP houses were small and poorly constructed with inadequate drainage facilities. The dwellings were poorly planned. Most units were one bed-roomed, with one electricity point in the house, no doors between the rooms, poor cross ventilation and natural lighting. There are no facilities for parking of vehicles and no exterior lighting at night. There are a few essential services with the shops a considerable distance from the housing areas. Some of these areas have no sporting facilities and leisure parks. The community is rife with social problems, unemployment and a high rate of substance abuse. The Christian faith appears to appeal to families because of the direction it provides in terms of meetings and activities. It appears to create an infrastructure of support in terms of Women's groups and youth groups. This is what appeals to most families.

In addition to all of these, class sizes are increasing including the mainstreaming of learners with special educational needs. The teacher pupil ratio is approximately 45:1. Furthermore teachers have to face

challenges of teaching children who are linguistically, ethnically, socially and economically more diverse than the context for which have been trained.

The problems associated with psychosocial deprivation, has its repercussions in the classrooms where many learners exhibited emotional problems. With the increasing numbers of learners in the classrooms, very often the social problems of learners are often bypassed by educators.

Furthermore teachers are given very little support from the department concerning such diverse classes. Therefore there is a need for this study. It is for these reasons that I decided to investigate how such environments influence learners' scholastic performance.

### **1.3 The study will be guided by the following objectives:**

- To investigate the impact of psychosocial deprivation on academic performance.
- To provide guidelines to assist parents and teachers to work together and cooperate with each other for the benefit of children from socially deprived environments.
- To investigate how schools can provide the emotional support for learners despite their deprived social contexts.

### **1.4 The following are the research questions.**

1. To what extent does psychosocial deprivation influence scholastic performance of grade seven learners?
2. How can the school counteract the effects of psychosocial deprivation?
3. What forms of assistance do parents and teachers need in order to work together to benefit the learners?

### **1.5 Nature of the study**

This is a case study involving one school in KwaZulu -Natal. This research adopted both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. By using qualitative research, the researcher tried to describe and interpret the contextual variability of phenomena that surrounds the lives of the research participants, in this case 28 grade seven learners. By utilising qualitative research the researcher tried to access the experiences of the learners by exploring their personal worldview. The quantitative research methodology helped to

analyse the data obtained by objective forms of measurement. The researcher decided to use the triangulation data producing strategies namely; questionnaires and focus group discussions. Triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000: 112). McMillan (2000:155 ) states that questionnaires are used extensively because they provide the best way of obtaining information for a wide range of research problems; and by establishing a proper rapport with the subject, a skilled interviewer can enhance motivation and obtain information that might not otherwise have been offered.

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

The study intended to investigate the impact of psychosocial deprivation on learners well- being as well as on their scholastic performance. It is hoped that the findings of the study would help policy makers in ESS (Education Support Services) and Social Welfare Services to design policies meant to promote the well- being of psychosocially deprived learners.

The researcher used data collection methods of questionnaires and focus group discussions. The researcher also used literature reviews from varied sources such as the internet, newspapers, books, policy documents and journals. The researcher used methods of triangulating both the research instruments and sources of data. The quantitative data captured from the questionnaires were complimented by qualitative information obtained from their answers.

## **1.7 Format of the dissertation**

**Chapter 1-** deals with the background of the study. This chapter has provided the context and introduction to the study.

**Chapter 2-** This chapter presents the definitions of the concepts used in the study as well as the review of literature relevant for the focus of the study.

**Chapter 3-** This chapter provides a description of the research methodology, research instruments and the procedures employed to analyse the data.

**Chapter 4-** This chapter is dedicated to the data presentation, as well as the discussion and interpretation of the findings.

**Chapter 5-** This chapter concludes the study, indicates the limitations of the study and makes recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter will present the definitions of concepts used in the study as well as a review of literature relevant to the study. In the studies that follow various findings on psychosocial deprivation and its effects on academic performance are discussed.

#### **2.1 Definition of concepts**

In this study the terms poverty, low socio-economic status and economic deprivation will be used interchangeably to mean a similar condition. The term indigent will be used to describe learners and their families who are poor or destitute.

##### **2.1.1 Psychosocial deprivation**

This is the condition which occurs during childhood whereby children get less than appropriate psychological and social interaction, contact and experience. The term is generally used to characterize an aberrant home environment in which there is inadequate parenting. It is suspected of being one of the primary causes of mild mental retardation, since in many cases enriching the environment causes tested IQ to rise sharply to normal levels (Reber, 1995).

Much has been written on psychosocial deprivation. It tells us about childhood experiences and how it affects genetic potential. It further tells us about nature and nurture. Early neglect is characterized by decreased sensory input (e.g. relative poverty of words, touch and social interactions). It was found that sensory motor and cognitive deprivation leads to underdevelopment. Appropriate stimuli, as well as the physical or social environment, are necessary for the emotional, social and intellectual development of the individual (Online Medical Dictionary, 2007).

Psychosocial deprivation can mean physical deprivation (e.g. poverty, poor housing, malnutrition) emotional and social deprivation (e.g. inadequate linguistic stimulation, parental absenteeism, emotional stress, child neglect) both of which have an adverse effect on speech development. Abused children who live with their families do not seem to have speech delay unless they are also subjected to neglect.

Because abusive parents are more likely than other parents to ignore their children and less likely to use verbal means to communicate with them, abused children have an increased incidence of speech delay (Kapp, 1991).

### **2.1.2 Environmental deprivation**

Landman, Van De Merwe, Pitout, Smith & Windel (1990) argue that environmental factors set limits to education. The good work of the school will be counter-acted by unfavourable social settings; the presence of indolence, poverty, immorality and unemployment can affect the child adversely. The child does not only come into contact with his parents and teachers; the environment is an important influence in extending or limiting the child's education.

According to Pretorius (as cited in Kapp, 1991), the environment as a concept is defined as the dynamic and meaningful relationship between human beings and their particular geographical and physical world. The environmentally deprived child finds himself in an environment that makes it difficult in all respects for his latent, unique personal potential to be fully developed and for him to achieve accordingly. His experiential background will limit him with regard to the acquisition of learning.

There are many factors that can lead to environmental deprivation. In South Africa we are a heterogeneous population with many cultural differences and have eleven official languages. Children's problems are usually subdivided into developmental problems, learning problems and behaviour problems. In the case of behaviour problems, the child is initially identified because his behaviour is different, more intense and of longer duration than is normally expected from a child of that age. Development problems may be identified when a child's total development, or certain aspects of it (such as language or motor ability), shows a conspicuous delay in comparison with that of other children. Learning problems appear in teaching situations when for some reason or other a child experiences more problems in learning than is normal. However learning problems do not manifest themselves only in school teaching situations, but in informal teaching situations, as in the case of a very young child who learns informally at home (Kapp, 1991:122).



### 2.1.3 Socio-economic status

Poor socio-economic circumstances and an environment which is culturally poor and lacks opportunities may hamper the child's development and learning to such an extent that his potential cannot develop fully. Such children are not equipped by pre-school and extramural experiences to the extent required for optimal school achievement. They are thus not brought up in a way which prepares them for school and the consequence of this is usually poor school achievement (Kapp, 1991).

The term "socio-economic status" (SES), typically is used to signify an individual's, family's, or group's ranking on a hierarchy according to their access to or control over some combination of some valued commodities such as wealth, power, and social status (Huston, McLoyd & Coll, 1994). It is not based on an absolute standard or threshold, and its indicators, such as occupational status, educational attainment, prestige and power are clearly related to, but distinct from poverty status. Furthermore, the status of poverty is considerably more volatile than SES, because income shifts markedly from one year to the next (Huston et al., 1994).

Some children display behaviour problems when entering school, while the problems of others commence during their school years. This often results in unfavourable experiences at school. Playing and associating with friends enhances the child's cognitive development. This enriches perception, comprehension and knowledge. Without this stimulation, his life experiences remain poor and mentally he functions at a lower level than that of which he is capable. Deficiencies in his cognitive development may develop so that he experiences serious learning problems later on (Kapp, 1991).

A major contributor to family problems and breakdown in family functioning is the increasing economic stress facing households. Those living below the poverty line as well as poor single parent- families which are predominantly female-headed households are the worst affected. Family dysfunction sets in when poverty is combined with environmental stress (Huston *et al*, 1994).

Poverty is not a static condition and individuals, households or communities may be vulnerable to poverty as a result of shocks and crises (such as uncontrollable events which harm livelihoods and food security) and long-term trends (such as racial and gender discrimination, environmental degradation and macroeconomic trends). Vulnerability to poverty is therefore characterised by an inability to devise an appropriate coping or management strategy in times of crisis (Fraser, 1997).

## 2.2 Poverty

Poverty is the state or fact of being in want. People are poor if they lack enough income and resources to live adequately by the accepted living standards of their community. Poverty causes suffering among millions of people. People who live in poverty are less likely to eat the foods they need to stay healthy or to receive good medical care when they are ill. They have more diseases and die at younger ages. Underprivileged children may suffer from lack of nourishment for healthy growth during their important early years (World Book Encyclopedia, 1992)

Despite the obviously large number of people living in poverty, the definition of poverty has been the subject of some debate amongst policy analysts. Poverty means different things to different people, even to the poor. According to Krishna-Kumar, Gore and Sitaramam (1996), poverty connotes the notion of a poor state of economic well-being or a state of economic ill-being. It connotes a state of deprivation. Deprivation can be based on the comparison of an individual's economic state with either an absolute norm, in which case it is called "absolute deprivation", or a normative or relative norm, in which case it is called "relative deprivation" (Ngwane, Yadavalli & Steffens, 2001).

Despite formal definitions of poverty, May (1998) mentions that the perceptions of the poor themselves are a good way to derive an appropriate conceptualisation of poverty in South Africa. Poverty is perceived by poor South Africans themselves to include alienation, food insecurity, crowded homes, usage of unsafe and inefficient forms of energy, lack of jobs that are adequately paid and/or secure, and fragmentation of the family (May, 1998). Poverty may also involve social exclusion in either an economic dimension (exclusion from the labour market and opportunities to earn income) or a purely social dimension (exclusion from decision making, social services and access to community and family support) (May, 1998). Thus the experience of most South African households is one of outright poverty or of continuing vulnerability to being poor. Poverty is therefore characterised by the inability of individuals, households or communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living.

For all poor children, the effects of poverty are both direct and indirect (Fraser, 1997). Poverty affects children directly by reducing the quality of food, shelter, health care, education and transportation that a family can afford. Poor children live in less safe and more hostile physical environments. Poverty affects children indirectly by bringing out the worst in parents who struggle to manage in often-

impossible circumstances. When they are exhausted from low-paying jobs and enervated by the sheer demands of coping with inadequate resources, parents simply find it harder to be consistent in discipline, to be responsive to children's needs, and to provide a range of socially and educationally stimulating experiences (Fraser, 1997).

Poverty is not a static condition and individuals, households or communities may be vulnerable to poverty as a result of shocks and crises (such as uncontrollable events which harm livelihoods and food security) and long-term trends (such as racial and gender discrimination, environmental degradation and macroeconomic trends). Vulnerability to poverty is therefore characterised by an inability to devise an appropriate coping or management strategy in times of crisis (Fraser, 1997).

At the Seminar on Human Rights (2001), the United Nations reaffirmed that poverty denies one of choices and opportunities, as well as being a violation of human dignity. It means a lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society, not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or a clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow ones food or a job to earn one's living, nor having access to credit. It also means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It indicates susceptibility to violence and it often implies living in marginal and fragile environments, not having access to clean water and sanitation.

Thus, from a human rights perspective, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in February 2001 viewed poverty as: "A human condition characterised by the sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other fundamental civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights." (Seminar on Human Rights, 2001:178)

### **2.2.1 Poverty line**

Reduction of poverty and inequality has been a central concern of South Africa's government since 1994. Rising unemployment works to worsen poverty and inequality. The 1998 *Poverty and Inequality Report* (May 1998), was the first substantial post-apartheid publication using historical and contemporary data. Using a household poverty line of R800 per month, the percentage of poor in the population is put at 28,4% using imputed expenditure and 52,2% using census income. Using a per capita poverty line of R250 per month, the estimates for the population are 48,4% and 60,8%

respectively. This means that learners or parents of caregivers who fall into this salary bracket will have difficulty in meeting the requirements adequate for schooling such as buying school books, uniforms and affording transport to school.

Households were divided into five expenditure categories, of which the lowest two were below R600 per month (the very poor) and between R600 and R1000 per month (the poor). On this basis 16,5% of households were very poor and a further 24,8% were poor. In urban areas, the estimates were 10,7% and 15,4% and in rural areas 25,4% and 38,8% respectively. There is considerable variation by race and by province (Seminar on Human Rights, 2001).

When it comes to housing, 35% of South African households lived in traditional dwellings or shacks and 46% were living in three or fewer rooms. Forty four per cent of households had a tap inside the dwelling and 50% had a flush or chemical toilet. Many individuals belong to households with no wage or salary.

According to Simkins (2002: 24), the following indicators were taken into account to measure infrastructure and the extent of under-dwellings, flats, townhouses and backyard rooms with regard to the development in different parts of South Africa:

- (a) Formal housing (brick.);*
- (b) Electricity for lighting from a public authority or supply company;*
- (c) Tap water inside the dwelling;*
- (d) A flush or a chemical toilet;*
- (e) A telephone in the dwelling or a cellular phone;*
- (f) Refuse removal at least once a week by a local or district authority;*
- (g) Level of education of the head of household;*
- (h) Average monthly household expenditure;*
- (i) Unemployment rate (expanded definition);*
- (j) Average household size; and*
- (k) The proportion of children in the household under the age of five years.*

## **2.3 Economic deprivation**

The concept of deprivation is often used as if it were a single syndrome, which is actually incorrect because in practice there are always degrees of difference with regard to deprivation (Kapp, 1991). In

order to speak of a deprived child, is to speak of one with less opportunities and it means that there is a deficiency in the child's environment which restrains him in his adequate actualisation. Economic implies financial or anything to do with money matters (Kapp, 1991). Thus the child who is economically deprived is one who comes from a home with severe financial shortage, which results in fewer material possessions and resources. Financial constraints place heavy psychological burdens on parents and families and have its repercussions in the classroom. This research is based on the child who is deprived in all areas. Such a child may not be committed to lifelong deprivation as the term implies a possibility of improvement (Kapp, 1991).

Economic deprivation or a lack of income is a standard feature of most definitions of poverty. This in itself does not take account of the myriad of social, cultural and political aspects of the phenomenon. Poverty is not only deprivation of economic or material resources but a violation of human dignity too. Economically deprived children cannot afford school uniforms, they go to school hungry and they do not have the books that are needed in schools (Kapp, 1991).

## **2.4 Psychological well-being**

Well-being is a contented state of being happy, healthy and prosperous (The Free Dictionary – Wellbeing, 2010). Psychological well-being is a subjective term that means different things to different people. It means contentment, satisfaction with all elements of life, self actualisation, peace and happiness (Google Answers, 2009).

The well-being of children depends on the ability of families to function effectively. Families give their members a sense of belonging, create security, set limits on behaviour, and impart values as well as life skills. Families face new demands and challenges when attempting to deal with problems such as alcohol and drug abuse. (Department of Social Welfare, 1997)

Well-being describes our happiness, confidence, physical condition and general outlook on life. It is about feeling good and taking care of yourself; responsibilities that can often be neglected when juggling the rigorous demands of every day living in the 21st century. Well-being and healthy living go hand-in-hand. Healthy living goes beyond eating a balanced diet, taking regular exercise and avoiding illness. It also reflects the mental, emotional and social aspects of an individual's life (Myers, 2004).

## **2.5 Academic performance**

Academic performance refers to how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers. (Wikipedia, 2009). Academic performance also refers to the progress or the retardation of a child at school. Quite a number of factors contribute towards the academic performance of the child, for example a positive attitude shown by parents, self motivation of learners, attitude of the learner, home background, and the school itself (Campbell, 1991).

## **2.6 Learner**

A learner is a person who is engaged in learning. A learner is any person, whether a child or an adult, who receives education or must receive education in terms of The South African Schools Act, No.84/1996 as cited by (Madel, 2002). In this study, a learner is any child of school- going age who is attending school. This study focuses on learners aged between twelve and thirteen years.

## **2.7 Parental involvement**

Parents play a major role in the cognitive development and by implication the academic performance of their children. One of the major factors, namely parental involvement or lack thereof, can make profound differences in the child's academic performance. Factors relating to parental involvement which include parenting style of interaction, support and encouragement, parental praise and control, parental expectations as well as factors relating to home background such as structure of the family, family size, emotional aspects of the family, educational level of parents and socio-economic status of the family are said to have a profound effect on academic performance (Clark, 1983).

## **2.8 Review of related literature**

In this section the researcher is going to review literature on psycho-social deprivation and its effects on learners' scholastic performance and well-being.

Children may, for a variety of reasons, display emotional and behaviour problems. These can be caused by either extrinsic or intrinsic factors. Health problems and especially protracted illnesses, may contribute to the development of emotional and behaviour disturbances in children. Illness leads to

discomfort, pain and loneliness. Due to illness the child cannot always participate in the activities of his peer group. This makes him more introspective and dependent on the help and support of others. The child's psychological life may become unstable and even disturbed (Kapp, 1991).

### **2.8.1 Poverty in the South African context**

South Africa has undergone considerable political and social changes in the past few years. The second democratic and post-apartheid government, elected in 1999, is facing a number of challenges, like poverty, crime and unemployment. This post-apartheid government has committed itself to improving the lives of the people of South Africa and the eradication of poverty is one of its top priorities (Ngwane, Yadavall & Steffens, 2001).

A report entitled, "*Poverty and Inequality in South Africa*" (May, 1998), which was prepared for the office of the Deputy President, indicated that about 19 million people or just under 50% of the population in South Africa could be regarded as poor with most families earning less than R300 per month (May, 1998).

Poverty in South Africa is not confined to any one race group, but is concentrated among Blacks, particularly Africans (61%), Coloureds (38%), Indians (5%) and Whites (1%) (May, 1998). Three children in five live in poor households and many children are exposed to public and domestic violence, malnutrition and inconsistent parenting and schooling (May, 1998). It is reported that approximately 61% of South African children, majority of them Black, are currently living below the breadline (May, 1998).

Most of the poor in South Africa live in rural areas: while 50% of the population of South Africa is rural, the rural areas contain 72% of those members of the total population who are poor. The poverty rate (which is the proportion of people in a particular group or area falling below the poverty line, and which measures how widespread poverty is) for rural areas is 71% (May, 1998).

Poverty has generally been assessed in both absolute and relative terms by people's income or by their consumption of certain commodities (Ngwane et al., 2001). However, the limitations of such measures have highlighted the importance of recognizing the multifaceted nature of poverty. The capabilities of individuals and households are deeply influenced by factors ranging from the prospects of earning a living to the social and psychological effects of deprivation and exclusion. These factors include

people's basic needs, employment and reasonable wages, and health and education facilities. Included is the socially generated sense of helplessness that often accompanies economic crisis.

The main cause of poverty in South Africa is unemployment. The unemployment rate in South Africa is one of the highest in the world, 36% to 42% since the year 2000 using the broad definition. Even according to the narrow definition, which applies a job-search test, 25-30% of adults who wanted work and actively looked for it were unemployed. Moreover, the unemployment rates for different groups reveal great disparity in the incidence of unemployment. Given the importance of employment income in total household income in South Africa, the varying incidence of unemployment across different groups has important implications for the distribution of income and for the incidence of poverty. In a study undertaken by Kingdon and Knight (2004), they revealed that unemployment is very inequitably distributed in South Africa and certain groups are much more likely to enter it, and to stay in it, than others. Young uneducated Africans living in homelands and remote areas are most vulnerable to unemployment. There are two particularly striking features of South African unemployment: firstly, the fact that rural unemployment rates are higher than urban rates is atypical among countries and is explained by historical policies restricting mobility. Secondly, the majority (62%) of the unemployed have never held a job before, i.e., they entered unemployment from the time of entering the labour force. In his book Roberts (1974: 9-10), gives the following examples as the different types of deprivation:

#### Case One – Financial Deprivation

*When seven year old Andy's father died, the family was in a state of anguish and financial chaos. The father had postponed buying life insurance because of the pressing financial burden of raising three children. The sudden death meant that the mother had to find immediate employment. The two older children found part-time jobs to bring in extra money. Andy did not fully comprehend his father's death, but he did know that he never saw much of his family since dad "went away". Every one was busy –too busy to spend time playing with him. Gradually he lost interest in school, became truant and wandered through his neighborhood during the days he was not in school. He knew the family needed money but he was too young but everyone told him he was too young to get a job. Wanting desperately to contribute to the family's pressing needs, Andy started breaking into houses in the neighborhood, stealing small items such as cash and jewelry. Because of his small stature, he was able to enter people's homes by crawling through an open window. (Roberts, 1974:10)*



### Case Two – Psycho-social Deprivation

*Charlene's parents divorced when she was nine years old. The divorce proceedings were stormy with both parents wanting custody of Charlene. The decision of the court was that the girl will live with her mother but the father was granted liberal visiting rights. Charlene did not feel comfortable in either mother or father's home because each parent made derogatory comments about the other. Although the situation was far from palatable, it existed for three years until the mother remarried. Charlene despised her stepfather because she felt he was loud, vulgar and drank too much. One night when the stepfather was intoxicated, he sexually assaulted her. The girl came to the attention of the city's protective services agency after having ingested a nearly fatal dose of her mother's sleeping pills. She was withdrawn and haggard, and had a noticeable speech defect. She was terrified of meeting new people especially men. (Roberts, 1974:10)*

### Case Three Emotional Deprivation

*Mrs Johnson was the mother of five children ages nine, ten, eleven, thirteen and fifteen when she became pregnant for the sixth time. It was an unwanted pregnancy but she did not believe in having an abortion. She had thought her days of being a nursemaid to infants were over and she was totally unprepared psychologically to rear another child. When the infant was born he received very little in the way of affection and attention. The mother assigned many of the child-rearing duties to her oldest daughter aged thirteen.*

*The baby often cried for hours in his crib while the mother chatted with neighbors and the sister played with friends outside. Occasionally the infant was severely beaten. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson felt that the baby represented an additional financial burden. At the age of five the child was diagnosed autistic; he was totally withdrawn from his environment and uttered only guttural sounds. It was recommended that the child be institutionalized because the atmosphere in the home was not conducive to treating autism. (Roberts, 1974:10)*

The stories above are about different kinds of childhood deprivation.

Childhood deprivation is defined as an act or series of acts which result in a child (between birth and eighteen years of age) being physically, morally, emotionally, medically, socially, and/or educationally neglected or abused. The physical and mental health of deprived children is endangered by the willful or

uncontrollable acts, or omissions to act, of emotionally immature, irresponsible, selfish or uninformed parents, guardians or caretakers. (Roberts, 1974: 10)

- The public image of childhood deprivation depicts a child willfully and repeatedly beaten by callous parents. However this picture is just the tip of the iceberg – a small fraction of the millions of children who suffer each year from deprivation other than physical beatings. Let us take the United States as an example. The prevalence of the problem is evidenced by the following statistics:
- *five million children suffer from malnutrition which affects physical and mental maturation;*
- *one million children each year are involved in official delinquency adjudications;*
- *more than six million children have been involved in divorce proceedings;*
- *300,000 children are permanently injured each year by physical maltreatment; approximately 50,000 die each year from abuse; more than 316,000 children are living in foster homes, group homes and child welfare institutions for neglected, dependent and emotionally disturbed children;*
- *five million children have moderate to severe mental health problems, while only about 700,000 receive some care from mental health facilities.*( Roberts, 1974: 11)

Although South Africa is a third world country, with a developing economy, some of the examples mentioned above are also prevalent in South Africa.

### **2.8.2 Impact of poverty on behaviour**

Some professionals, students and parents define a “deprived child” as one who is physically abused and battered, or one who grows up in poverty, filth and rat infested slums of an inner city. However many different types of childhood deprivation exist. According to Roberts (1974) no child by virtue of socioeconomic class, race, or religion is immune to traumatic experiences. Behaviour is deemed as the response of an individual or group to an action, environment, reason or stimulus (Google Answers, 2010). In this research the researcher holds the view that poverty does have an impact on behaviour as it affects their emotional well-being which further leads to their poor academic performance.

Pinkster (2009) takes this view further and confirms the link between poverty and behaviour. In a case study on children’s geographies, Pinkster (2009) reveals that the neighborhood is seen as one of the many social contexts that shape children’s cognitive, emotional and social development. Based on a case

study in a low income neighborhood in the Netherlands, this paper addresses the question of how living in a disadvantaged neighborhood context constitutes a risk for children and how they respond to the perceived negative neighborhood influences. However the neighborhood context does not simply 'imprint' itself on children, but can be mediated or moderated by other social contexts. In the context of this research it has been demonstrated by factors such as poverty, substance abuse and death by HIV/AIDS. Thus there is a link between this research and Pinkster's (2009) as it also demonstrates the effects of factors such as poverty, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS.

This is further demonstrated in a study by Boyle and Lipman (2002), which investigated the influence of neighborhoods and socioeconomic disadvantage on behavioral problems rated by parents and teachers. Family socioeconomic status, lone-parent family status, and percentage of lone parents in neighborhoods were strong, reliable predictors of behavioral problems. Fewer behavioral problems were assessed in children from well-off families living in disadvantaged neighborhoods, whereas more problems were assessed in children from poor families living in advantaged neighborhood. The researcher holds the view that there is a link between poverty and behavior.

### **2.8.3 The impact of poverty on academic performance.**

According to Scherer (2006) students who are not performing well in the schools academically is due to a lack of motivation, absenteeism, learning disabilities, difficulties with learning English as a second language, stressful family life, poverty, low expectations from adults, poorly trained teachers, ineffective instruction, disorganized schools, lack of instructional resources and the like. These are some of the factors that bother students and eventually results in their poor academic performance. Learners who struggle with schoolwork often drop out of school.

This is further demonstrated in a study entitled, *Children and poverty*, conducted at Princeton University (Gunn & Duncan: 1997). This article focuses on a recent set of studies that explore the relationship between poverty and learning outcomes in depth. By and large, this research supports the conclusion that family income has selective but, in some instances, quite substantial effects on child and adolescent well-being. Family income appears to be more strongly related to children's ability and achievement. Children who live in extreme poverty or who live below the poverty line for multiple years appear, all other things being equal, to suffer the worst outcomes. Children who experience poverty during their

early school years have lower rates of school completion than children and adolescents who experience poverty only in later years (Gunn & Duncan: 1997).

#### **2.8.4 The impact of single parenting on academic performance**

School non-attendance is higher in economically deprived children. The diverse problems of families and youth are inevitably intertwined with one another. According to Thurow as cited in Chiland & Young (1990), almost eighty percent of those living in poverty are women and children and half of those in poverty live in families headed by single parent women. This he describes as the Feminization of poverty, whereby the chain of social deterioration begins as children of single parents perform more poorly in schools than those with both parents at home. Their dropout rate is nearly twice as high and they constitute a large segment of children identified as school failures, school refusers and school dropouts.

Children born into poor single parent households are more likely than other children to be the children of teenage parents and are more prone to become teenage parents themselves. These teenage parents are unable to pass on adequate living skills to their own children in the future. Thus a new generation of school refusing children emerge (Chiland & Young, 1990). According to Haralambos and Holborn (2000), there are many causes for single parenthood. It could be divorce of a married couple, separation or the death of a spouse. Some single parents have never married. They got children outside marriage and the other partner disappeared. The state of single parenthood has an effect on some of the children as some of the single parents find it difficult to cope without their partners.

#### **2.8.5 The impact of abuse on academic performance**

Sexual abuse, child abuse and neglect are a serious and growing problem. This affects learners emotionally and ultimately has an effect on their academic performance. In 1994 the South African Police Services' Child Protection Unit dealt with 22 911 cases of child abuse, which represents a 36% increase over the previous year. The real extent of child abuse and neglect is unknown as a result of under-reporting, erratic research, an uncoordinated record-keeping system and the lack of a central register (White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997). More recent statistics show a dramatic increase in child abuse. There are 12 500 registered social workers in South Africa who deal with an average of 200 cases each per year (Solidarity Helping Hand, 2007).

Smith (1995) takes this subject further when she mentions that children in many ways want to protect their parents, although they are physically and sexually abused. Unhappy children she claims reveal their distress at school through fear, anxiety and often troublesome behaviour which is not easy to comprehend or to handle. Thus the teacher in the school situation sees that the child is underperforming, not realizing the extent of the child's problems.

As the rape of many women is escalating to high levels, Machel (2001) points out that those children who have witnessed the rape of a family member can suffer profound emotional damage. Alerting teachers, Landsberg (2005) points out that teachers have a duty to be alert to certain behavioural aspects, which indicate that a child has been abused. For example, signs of sudden and inexplicable deterioration of schoolwork, unexpected failure and incidents of truancy. One of the research participants from the research study by Mfecane, Skinner and Davids (2006) observed that parents tend to leave their children unattended while they are socializing in local shebeens where alcohol is sold, and this poses a danger to children such as rape and hunger.

### **2.8.5.1 Substance abuse**

Substance abuse has been a consistent problem across South Africa and the problem of excess alcohol consumption is well established. Findings from the study of Mfecane, Skinner and Davids (2006) show that there is an evidence of large increase in the usage of illegal drugs, especially with the opening of the country's borders following the establishment of democracy. Skinner and Davids (2006) further point out that the abuse of alcohol by parents/ caregivers heightens the problem for children. They are left on their own for no one to take care of them, since parents/ caregivers are always out enjoying themselves. Corroborating this Kuzwayo (2004) maintains that liquor robs families, particularly mothers and children, of the father's wages and that excessive drinking contributes greatly to the breakdown of family life.

### **2.8.6 The impact of divorce on academic performance**

Another factor that beset learners are the effects of divorce and single-parent households. Divorce is not simply a marital phenomenon but affects the entire family. William Goode's study as cited by Roberts (1974), estimates that one out of six children is the victim of divorce. The study reveals that the period of conflict can often extend for years prior to divorce, the median time being roughly two years. There

may be long periods of harmonious relationships, but they are interrupted by bursts of anger and conflict. Thus, children involved in divorce face about two years of pre-divorce turbulence before the legal divorce. When adults are unwilling to control their vengeful feelings, each lashing out at the other, the child becomes lost in the raging storm. He may feel trapped by the pounding waves of anger, afraid of being shoved back and forth and drowning. Whereas the adults are making a necessary split to achieve personal happiness, who is looking after the child's interests and happiness? Who helps the child who has a poor understanding of what is occurring to deal with the intense feelings of confusion, anger, shame and guilt which abound? Often, there is no one to help these children (Roberts, 1974).

Black families are traditionally extended, with a dominant father as the head. As a result of urbanization, nuclear families have formed within the high socioeconomic group. The high incidence of out-of-wedlock births have resulted in single parent families. Certain practices such as polygamy are acceptable. Some of the strongest influences changing traditional family life in black communities are poverty, poor housing, urbanization, high divorce rates, and a decline in traditional customs and values (Cherian, 1994).

### **2.8.7 The impact of social deprivation on academic performance**

According to Elliot (as cited by Smith 1995), social deprivation is manifested in many forms such as the lack of communication with significant adults, particularly parents; lack of peer contacts; lack of educational artifacts such as books, art materials, music and television in the home; lack of economic resources, which of course is a major determinant of other deprivations such as improper food, clothing, housing, lack of societal supports, including the unavailability or inaccessibility of medical and social services and transportation. Thus one can see that there are a number of phenomena associated with social deprivation (Smith, 1995). All these, needless to say, have a detrimental effect on academic performance.

Bramley and Karley (2007) state that the significant characteristics of many poor neighbourhoods together with the role of home ownership, alongside the other factors (notably poverty) plays a prominent role in school attainment. Deprived neighbourhoods are characterised by the clustering of social problems- crime, joblessness, poor health and these factors relate to the under-achievement of children at school. Bramley and Karley (2007) examined the relationship between both school and non-school factors and how they influenced educational attainment. They state that school factors include the

structural characteristics and human, physical and financial resources of schools as institutions, as well as more qualitative attributes such as “ethos” and “management”. Non-school factors are those that relate especially to the background of the child such as the child’s personal character and innate abilities, and the socio-economic and educational background of parents, but also wider environmental and cultural factors. Each of these dimensions represents an input towards educational attainment and is considered important in its own right.

In an earlier study Hedges, as cited in Bramley and Karley (2007), concluded that there is a consistent and positive relationship between school resources and educational achievement. Sparks and Glennerster (as cited in Bramley & Karley 2007) state that associations between non school factors and low levels of educational attainment have long been recognized. They believe that socio-economic position of parents such as employment, housing conditions, educational attainment, family structure and ethnicity play a major in academic achievement.

Agulnik and Hills (2002) stated that among non- school factors, prior attainment explains the greatest proportion of variance in educational attainment at pupil level and indicated a high correlation between socio-economic variables and prior attainment. It has long been known that social class, and associated factors such as parental, educational background, are important factors in affecting academic performance, especially children from poorer and lower socio economic backgrounds

Parsons (as cited in Bramley & Karley, 2007) has revealed that childhood poverty and educational experiences are very powerful influences on an individual’s life course. He further states that poverty is in itself a barrier to equal educational opportunity. A hungry or malnourished child is unlikely to be good at concentrating on work at school. Limited finances may mean parents may not be able to afford the toys, books, sports equipment, home computers and other learning resources that can aid success, and children from poor backgrounds may not be able to afford to pay to attend major trips and other enrichment activities.

Beresford (as cited in Bramley & Karley, 2007) found that the link between poverty and the likelihood of school failure or academic performance derives from the psychological and emotional outcomes of poverty and it’s effect on domestic and social lives. Beresford further states that the level of a child’s emotional well-being could affect interest in learning: for example, a charged emotional environment may cause children to be anxious, traumatized, unhappy, jealous or angry. Their study further revealed

that poverty generates psychological pressures and stresses which affect the quality of relationships and reveals how financial pressure contributes to the social isolation of families and curtails their participation in community activities.

According to Attree (2006), social pressures resulting from poverty impact upon children's ability to concentrate at school. The review found that, according to children's narratives, the costs of poverty are not only material but profoundly social. Despite the efforts to maximise their resources, many poor children experience a gradual narrowing of their resources. Lupton (2003) described how pupils from deprived backgrounds often have severely disturbed behaviour and on many occasions are aggressive towards other pupils and staff, finding it difficult to concentrate or get through the school day on a regular basis.

From the point of view of social capital accumulation, home ownership may impact on children's educational attainment through benefits derived from neighbourhoods of homeowners. This means that social factors such as the physical environment, residential stability and parenting practices can certainly have an effect on school attainment. As homeowners normally live in the same dwelling or location for longer periods as compared to those families that are rent and have to move continually, Harkness and Newman (2003) suggest that the social networks among home-owning families in a neighbourhood are likely to be more stable than that of those renting. In their findings they suggest greater stability would help strengthen the neighbourhood's social network, and a stronger network enables a variety of positive social outcomes, including participation in local collective organizations such as parent teacher associations. This in turn would lead to progress in children's education.

Stronger local social networks may also counter negative neighbourhood effects, for example crime, vandalism, drug abuse and other anti-social behaviour. Greater neighbourhood stability assists communities in resisting criminal and anti-social behaviour by the young. This occurs because children staying longer in a neighbourhood tend to be well known by adults in the area, which could in effect make the children more disciplined and well behaved (Bramley & Karley 2007).

Elsinga (2005) revealed in his findings that the neighbourhood image can also affect children's educational attainment. He said that living in a stigmatised neighbourhood can engender low self esteem and thus educational attainment in such areas are often low. Children may also be affected by cultural differences that may be related to ethnicity, class or neighbourhood peer groups. There is a negative



correlation between social deprivation and academic performance. The more socially deprived, the worse the academic performance.

### **2.8.8. The impact of parental involvement on academic performance**

Another link to psychosocial deprivation, affecting academic performance can be linked to the role of parental involvement and home background in relation to the child's academic performance. Dornbush (as cited in Monyela, 1999) suggest that the authoritative parents set clear guidelines and allow their children considerable freedom within reasonable limits. This promotes cognitive development by encouraging independent problem solving and critical thinking. Children who gain most from educational opportunity are those who come from homes where independent thinking and freedom of expression among all members is the rule. Parenting styles impact on psychosocial deprivation, learners' emotional well-being and consequently on their academic performance.

#### **2.8.8.1 The authoritarian parent**

The authoritarian parent on the other hand stresses on conformity and obedience and may reject their child if he does not confirm to their wishes. Darling (1993) found that under- achievers parents tended to be over restrictive and demanding. These parents provide well-ordered and structured environments with clearly stated rules. Parenting is a complex activity that includes many specific behaviors that work individually and together to influence learning outcomes. Consequences for Children are that parenting style has been found to predict child well-being in the domains of social competence, academic performance, psychosocial development, and problem behavior (Darling, 1993).

#### **2.8.8.2 The permissive parent**

Permissive parents create a climate in which the child himself is responsible for regulating his own behaviour. Although the child is well-cared for by his parents, they exercise little or no control over him. Patterson and Bank (as cited in Baumrind, 1971) have documented a significant relationship between parenting style and school success in early adolescent boys. Their results suggest that inconsistent and harsh discipline is associated with the lowest level of academic achievement. They further state that uninvolved parents make no demands, are indifferent to their children and may even reject them. Academic guidance provided by parents can be an important contributor to the cognitive development of

the child. When parents support learning, then the child is in a better position to raise his level of academic performance (Baumrind, 1971).

### **2.8.8.3 Parental support**

According to Jeynes (2005) high parental support results in better academic achievement. He found that when parents and their children are mutually involved in leisure activities requiring the use of intellectual functioning capacities, these children are more likely to become acquainted with concepts useful in the classroom situation. These findings were corroborated by Jonstone and Jiyono (as cited in Monyela 1999), who found that home activities, especially with respect to study, reading and listening as well as parental encouragement and support, appear to have positive effects on academic performance. They went on to say that home background of statutory school leavers were characterised by lack of parental involvement in school work. Thus one can deduce that psychosocial deprivation affects scholastic performance.

In a study of African American families living in poverty and their parents' management of their children's education within the home, at school, and in the community; it was found that by using parents' answers to open-ended questions, they examined the variation in parents' management of their children's education within the home, at school, and in the community, as a function of whether their children were experiencing academic success or academic problems. Within the home, parents of high achievers used more specific strategies to help their children with their schoolwork and had more supportive conversations with their children than parents of low achievers. At their children's school, parents of high achievers not only were more involved but had different reasons for their involvement than parents of low achievers. In the community, more parents of high achievers explicitly engaged their children in activities to support their achievement than parents of low achievers. Implications for parents, schools, and communities were discussed (Morrison & Vonnie, 2000).

Thus, one can safely state that parental involvement in the management of children's education is very important. As Morrison and Vonnie (2000) indicated learners who were not getting the full parental support due to the social problems of poverty were having difficulty and thus performing poorly at school.

Comparatively Swanson (1998), conducted a study at two South African schools, situated in very different socio-economic contexts - one affluent, one impoverished. The study examined the construction of disadvantage with particular emphasis on the role of the categories of race, class, culture and language. “Disadvantage”, in this (South African) context, is synonymous with “black”, conflating race, class, language difference, cultural difference, “experiential deficit”, poverty and educational difference. Evidently as Swanson (1998) pointed out disadvantage can produce academic failure. Thus the researcher once again is trying to show that there is a definite link between economic deprivation and academic performance (Swanson, 1998).

#### **2.8.8.4 Parent–child interaction in relation to academic performance**

According to Honing (as cited in Monyela, 1999) parents can manipulate the environment to raise the IQ of a child. IQ scores of children as well as their scores in standardized achievement tests tend to parallel the social, economic and educational backgrounds of parents. Children from the families of greatest advantage usually attain the highest scores. This is because such families are most likely to provide their children with experiences that enable them to do well on tests. Parent- child exchanges tend to point to differences in the abilities of parents to teach their own children effectively. More middle-socio economic class mothers, in teaching their children not only provide more detailed introduction to the learning task, but provide more verbal variety and more explanations or reasons for their corrections of the child’s responses. In contrast, low socio-economic class mothers predominantly use control such as threat or physical restraints when children were corrected and this in turn affected children’s performance negatively.

Redding (1993:11) said that “patterns of family life contribute to the child’s ability to learn at school”. Frazer and Walberg ( as cited in Redding, 1993) studied fifty children from lower socio-economic status and fifty children from higher socio-economic status and found that though the educational values of the two groups of parents did not differ, the way in which they promoted educational success did. In the working class families, parents turned over the responsibility for education to the teachers. They depended on the teacher to educate their children. In the middle –class families however, parents saw education as a shared enterprise and supplemented the school experience of their children. Wadkar (1989) has explained that there are indirect effects of socio-economic status on academic achievement. He pointed out that socio- cultural factors influence academic performance primarily through the orientation and attitudes that children bring to school. Parents who recognize education as a means of

upward social mobility, urge their children to stay at school. Wadkar further pointed out that very few working class parents subscribe to the view that education is valuable for its own sake. For lower class parents earning rather than learning is more important. Schooling has little relevance to them.

### **2.8.9 The effect of AIDS on learners**

In a study conducted by the Joint United Nations programme (2006), it was found that AIDS affected the psychological and emotional well-being of learners and consequently affected their academic performance. Children in households affected by AIDS are witnessing, or in some cases caring for, their parents or other caregivers dying of AIDS. This painful process is often compounded by the stigma and discrimination attached to HIV and to being an orphan. Children may be rejected by their friends and schoolmates or relatives. One teenager from South Africa described the effect: *“Even my friend told me she won’t eat with me again. One told me right to my face that I’ve got AIDS and should stop going to school and stay at home. I would feel terrible. Cry deep down. I would sit alone and cry alone. People would be staring at you saying nothing, even those who used to be happy when they see you were not anymore.”* (Gregson, 2005:790)

Orphans are found to be at a disadvantage in some countries. An analysis of data from eastern Africa shows that double orphans aged 6–10 are half as likely to be at the correct educational level as non-orphaned children; double orphans aged 11–14 are two thirds as likely to be at lower levels. Longitudinal evidence from South Africa shows that maternal orphans are at lower education levels than other children of the same age and also compared to other non-orphans with whom they live. Missed opportunities for education may begin prior to the death of a parent and even before the onset of illness.

According to UNICEF (2005), AIDS affects children long before parents die. The vulnerability of children orphaned by AIDS begins well before the death of their parent (or parents). The effects often commence with the onset of a parent’s illness and may include impoverishment; the emotional suffering, neglect and increased burden of responsibility associated with a parent’s illness; and the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV that can isolate and demean a child. Specific health and education repercussions experienced by children with chronically ill parents are described below. Combined, these effects may limit a child’s opportunities, immediately and over the long term (UNICEF, 2005).

As a result of AIDS homes experience declining wealth. As a household member falls ill, medical care and other expenses increase, while both ability to work and capacity to generate income are likely to decrease. In households affected by AIDS, more money is spent caring for sick members, leaving fewer resources for the children in the household. These adjustments can have a particularly harmful effect on children in poorer households, which have fewer resources to begin with (UNICEF 2005).

### **2.8.10 Grandparents as caregivers**

Most orphans caused by AIDS are being left to the responsibility of their grandparents who support them from their monthly grant from the government. They provide food and education for their grandchildren. Indeed grandparents play a major role in so far as HIV/AIDS are concerned. They firstly care for their dying children and then look after their grandchildren. In the worst cases grandparent's own children abandon their responsibilities as parents, leaving to the elderly people the tasks that they are not well equipped to handle due to their physical frailty and limited resources of supporting their grandchildren (Barbarin & Richter, 2001).

Varma (1993), states that bereavement counseling is frequently offered to adults who have suffered a loss but rarely offered to children. In case study one she mentions Sadie (not her real name) an eleven year old girl who has a brother with haemophilia. He does not have HIV- but her father and mother do. Her father is well. Her mother is becoming increasingly sick and depressed. Sadie is an intelligent child who watches TV. She knows that she and her brother may be orphaned in the next few years. She knows that her grandparents do not (officially) know about AIDS/HIV status of the family. She wonders if they will accept her and her brother when the inevitable happens. She would like to talk to her class teacher but HIV is "top secret" and she must never mention it. She takes time increasingly off school to help her mother. She knows she must not ask for help.

Thus one can see the vast challenges that many learners face. Needless to say that all these factors affect scholastic performance. Psychosocial deprivation is also closely associated with classroom misbehaviour and the underlying problems of these pupils are easily overlooked. This makes a humanitarian case for greater understanding of these children, especially when they attract attention and disrupt lessons (Varma, 1993).

### **2.8.11 The impact of family size on academic performance**

Increasing family size impacts progressively negatively on school achievement. This is partly due to the necessary reduction that such increases imply, for instance, in the attention that the children receive from their parents and the reduction in living standards, living space, learning resources and privacy that is associated with increasing family size (Jubber, 1988) as cited in Monyela (1999). Cherian (1994) undertook a study to determine whether there is a relationship between family size and the academic achievement of children from broken and intact families among the Xhosa speaking families in the Transkei. The result showed that academic achievement of both boys and girls decreased as their family size increased. Similarly, the academic achievement of boys and girls whose parents have divorced or separated showed a decreasing academic performance as their family size increased. Children in small families outperformed those in large families. These results indicate a significant positive relationship between family size and academic achievement.

This view is supported by Craft (as cited in Monyela, 1999) who established that children from small families at all social levels tend on average to perform better both in intelligence tests and at school. Craft stated that when one examines the home background of children who are “lagging behind” at school, one cannot help remarking how frequently they are members of large families. He said that not only is a large family more likely to live near the poverty line, and therefore being unable to pay for facilities such as books but also interruption by other children in the family may contribute substantially towards the deterioration of children’s verbal and academic skills. Parents cannot give as much attention to any one of the five or six children as they could to an only child.

Kelsall and Kelsall (1971) state that it is difficult to look after a big family with an insufficient income. Such a situation puts parents under great strain, where both parents are forced to leave their children alone at home for job hunting. In many cases, people with large families fail to provide their children with basic needs and it is harder for the unemployed. Furthermore, parents of large families experience great difficulties in providing regular reinforcement in problem solving concerning the behaviour of each child since they are many. Children from large families, therefore experience some difficulties of solving behavioural problems when they reach school since they are not well developed in this area. Overcrowding in many families are caused by some of unmarried or divorced women raising children as single parents. Most of them still live with their childhood families (Kelsall & Kelsall, 1971)

### **2.8.12 Similar studies in other countries**

In Malaysia a study was conducted by Ong, Chandran, Chen, Lim, & Poh (2010) to identify factors associated with poor academic achievement during the early school years. It was found that poor academic achievement in school may be the result of an interplay between child factors and the environmental milieu. Studies have shown that the effects of poor academic achievement during the early school years often carry over to the adolescent years, with a higher proportion of school dropouts, behavioural problems and even delinquency among this population. More recent studies have emphasized the importance of family involvement and the child's intrinsic motivation.

According to Ong, et al, (2010), a local study on early primary school children showed a weak but significant association between poor nutritional intake and academic achievement. However, these children were from low socioeconomic areas in Malaysia. The study further revealed that the parents level of education, unemployment, single parent families, family size, parental involvement in their children's education, poor nutrition and a conducive learning environment were factors that affected low academic performance (Ong, et al, 2010).

All Primary school students from seven schools that were randomly selected from the Ministry of Education's list of schools in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, were recruited into the study. Their scores in two core subjects (Mathematics and the Malay Language) from the Primary One examination records were used to determine their academic performance, as these represented the essential academic components and the Malay Language was the medium of instruction for all subjects. Another core subject, English Language, was not included in the selection criteria as it was a second language for most students. The conclusion of their study revealed that cognitive ability together with socio-demographic factors as well as nutritional factors contributed to poor academic achievement (Ong, et al, 2010).

A study was undertaken in Tennessee to explore the impact of socioeconomic status on academic achievement as measured by the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program Achievement Test. The quantitative findings revealed that the mean score of economically disadvantaged students was lower than non-economically disadvantaged students in math, language arts, social studies, and science. Once again it was revealed that socioeconomic status and psychosocial deprivation does affect academic performance (Pettigrew, 2009).

Trickett (2004) researched low income families in America. His findings were that poor children confront widespread environmental inequities compared with their economically advantaged counterparts. They are exposed to more family turmoil, violence, separation from their families, instability, and chaotic households. Poor children experience less social support, and their parents are less responsive and more authoritarian. Low-income children have less access to books and computers. Low-income parents are less involved in their children's school activities. The air and water poor children consume are more polluted. Their homes are more crowded, noisier, and of lower quality. Low-income neighborhoods are more dangerous, offer poorer municipal services, and suffer greater physical deterioration.

The findings are in agreement with Evans (2004) who concluded that psychologists are aware of the multiple disadvantages accompanying low income in America. The search for explanatory processes of poverty's impacts on children has focused almost exclusively on psychosocial characteristics within the family, particularly negative parenting. Poor children face a daunting array of psychosocial and physical conditions. Many adverse physical and psychosocial conditions do not occur in isolation. Psychosocial and physical environmental risk factors are potentially critical aspects of childhood poverty. He states that although the term environment within psychology typically means the psychosocial milieu, there is stark evidence of physical and environmental injustice among the poor in America. His conclusion was that poverty is harmful to the physical, socio-emotional and cognitive well-being of children, youths, and their families (Evans, 2004).

In a study undertaken by Dills (2006), it was found that family background has repeatedly proven to be a strong predictor of academic achievement. Her study seeks to document whether the gap between students from high and low socio-economic status affected academic performance. The findings were that students from the bottom quartile consistently perform below students from the top quartile of socio-economic status.

### **2.8.13 Summary**

In this chapter the researcher has reviewed literature, which is related to the subject of this study, namely psychosocial deprivation. A number of vulnerabilities have been explored through the use of the relevant literature, which were reviewed by following the sub-topics that form part of the research study.



## **2.9 Theoretical and conceptual frameworks**

### **2.9.1 Introduction**

This section examines the theories, models which may be applicable to the study. The theories used were the Systems Theory, the Ecological Systems Theory, the Transactional Model and the Social Cognitive Theory.

The study is underpinned by the hermeneutic/ interpretive paradigm. In social research, knowledge is concerned not with generalisation, prediction and control but with interpretation, meaning and illumination. Hermeneutic / interpretive epistemology in social and educational research focuses on social practices. We need to understand the meanings that we construct and are constructed by interactive human behaviour. The determination of meaning in the interaction of the part and the whole is called the hermeneutic circle of interpretation. The type of research strategy is that of phenomenology. This is a set of theoretical approaches that attempt to understand the way in which people experience the world they create and inhabit; the study of human experience and consciousness in everyday life (Haralambos & Holborn, 2000). In order to accomplish this, the researcher should be able to enter the subject's "life world" or 'life setting" and place himself in the shoes of the subject. This can be done by analysing conversations, participant observation and interviews (Haralambos & Holborn, 2000).

### **2.9.2 Systems theory**

According to Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana (2002), the systems theory has been applied in developing our understanding of families. In essence this system sees different levels of the social context as systems where the functioning is dependent on the interaction between all parts. Thus grandparents, parents and children may be seen as subsystems within a family. The family as a whole may interact with systems outside such as school church etc. The theory recognises interplay between biological, psychological and sociological factors in determining individual behaviour.

Models that focus on singular causal factors are inadequate for either the study or manipulation of developmental outcomes. The evolution of living systems has provided a regulatory model that incorporates feedback mechanisms between the individual and regulatory codes. By appreciating the workings of this regulatory system we can obtain a better grasp of the process of development. Systems theory stresses the need to understand development of the self in terms of the everyday environment in

which children grow up. Development therefore needs to be studied not only in the home, but also in schools, neighbourhoods and communities. With regard to the present study, the emphasis is establishing the role of the school and educators in the supportive development of children whose home environment already places them at risk (Donald, et al, 2002).

According to Bukatko and Daehler (1995), psychologists have long recognised that children live in vastly different circumstances but also that each child experiences a number of overlapping contexts. The environment of the immediate family is subject to enormous variation: single parent families, extended families, poverty and deprivation, number of siblings and overcrowding. Differences in the contexts of development extend far beyond a child's immediate family. However physical surroundings, access to schools, job opportunities, political systems, war and the cultural dictates of the community form and influence the way in which children are reared. Some of these circumstances will be more supportive of social and cognitive development than others.

The transformation from infant to child to adult takes place via a complex system of multidirectional levels of influence (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). The outcomes then, are the result of the interplay between child and context across time, in which the state of one affects the next state of the other in a continuous dynamic process. Contextual models, sometimes called systems are concerned with the effects of this broad range of biological, physical and socio-cultural settings on development. Bronfenbrenner (1989) and Sameroff (1987) have drawn our attention to human development as an interactive process. This understanding has been translated into research models that incorporate both multiple biological and environmental processes. The ecological systems theory directly explains the conditions under study and will therefore be used to underpin this study.

### **2.9.3 The ecosystemic perspective**

The ecosystemic perspective emphasizes interdependence and relationships between different aspects of the environment. There is interdependence of organisms and the physical environment. There is interdependence of people and family members. There is also interdependence of learners and educators. These relationships must be seen as a whole. The ecosystemic model plays an important part in the family cycle because families are constantly subjected to an environment that changes and alters (Donald, et al, 2002).

The ecosystemic model plays an important role in the development of educational psychology theory as a whole. The individual is linked to his or her social context. How we think, feel, behave and develop as persons are linked to the social structures, forces and relationships that make up our environment. The ecosystemic perspective is a blend of ecological and systems theory views of human interaction between individuals and between different levels of social context (Donald, et al, 2002).

#### **2.9.4 The ecological systems theory**

The most extensive model of a contextual approach to development is the ecological systems theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), according to which the child's development must be viewed from a systems-ecological perspective. Bronfenbrenner (1979) looks at the child's world as a naturalist looks at nature, as an ecosystem. Like ecosystems, children develop in the context of a process of mutual accommodation. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1989) underscores the many levels of a child's surroundings that directly and indirectly interact with the individual to influence development (Bukatko & Daehler, 1995). Thus, the ecosystemic perspective has much relevance for understanding child and adolescent development more holistically and interactively.

The child's ecosystem may be visualised as a series of concentric circles. The most central layer, the *microsystem*, includes all those settings where the child lives or spends significant portions of his/her time: home, school, classroom, day-care setting and playground. The child influences and is influenced by the microsystem. Each of these settings is referred to as a subsystem. In the child's ecosystem, the major systems include the family, school and peer group. These are the systems with the most immediate and direct impact upon the individual. The microsystem comprises the personal qualities of others, the physical and material properties of everyday settings, and the activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus, what happens at home or in the peer group can influence how the individual reacts or responds at school. In this present study, the home circumstances of children living in poverty influences the child's performance at school both directly and indirectly.

Each subsystem within the microsystem can be viewed within itself as a system. The school system is made up of subsystems that include teachers, administrators, support personnel, school board members, and learners. The family system includes a marital, parental, sibling and often a grandparent subsystem. The peer system includes social friendships, academic friendships and sports and hobby friendships.

The child's microsystem becomes a source of developmental risk when it is socially impoverished. That is, the child's development suffers whenever the microsystem is stunted, be it because of too few participants, too little reciprocal interaction, psychologically destructive patterns of interaction or some combination of all. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), a microsystem should be a gateway to the world and not a locked room.

The mesosystems, the next ring, is concerned with the inter-relationships among the various settings within the microsystem. For example, expectations and events within the family such as access to books and learning to read or an emphasis on acquiring basic academic and socialisation skills may have a critical impact on the child's opportunities and experiences in school. When the households of divorced parents are in different neighbourhoods, regular and frequent moves back and forth between the two homes have an effect not only on family relations but also on the range and kinds of friendships with peers that the child can establish (Bukatko & Daehler, 1995). Bronfenbrenner (1979) maintains that the "product" of a healthy microsystem is a child whose capacity for understanding and successfully dealing with ever-wider spheres of reality increases. Such a child learns to have self-respect and self-confidence, and to be socially and intellectually competent.

The next layer of the system includes subsystems that the child does not directly experience but that affect the child because of the influence they exert on the microsystem. This layer is called the *exosystem*. It may include the parents' workplace, their friends, the school governing body, the parent-teacher associations and other groups. It examines the influence of events occurring in settings, which the child does not occupy, but which are occupied by other family members. An example would be the impact of a parent becoming unemployed. This could produce strains within the family, leading to the child's exposure to increased domestic conflict. It might lead to certain political attitudes being expressed, which could influence the child's attitude formation, or it might lead to a change in standard of living, which could affect the child's level of nutrition and potential survival. The parent who encounters a difficult problem at work may bring frustrations home and express them through angry exchanges with members of the family. The effect of all of these would depend in turn on the level of development of the child's physical, emotional, and cognitive capacities. Thus, context removed from the child's immediate environment can still have a powerful impact on development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Finally, both *microsystems* and *exosystems* exist in a larger setting, the *macrosystem*. By macrosystem, Bronfenbrenner (1979) refers to the larger culture or society in which the microsystem and exosystems function. The macrosystem is thought of as cultural blueprints that underlie the organisation of institutions, the assumptions people make about social relations, and the workings of the political and economic system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As an extension of the sociological theory, ecological-transactional models take into account the transforming effects of parents, children and environments on each other (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The model of the self is based on several theories describing social and cognitive processes that may influence children's self-perception. Accordingly, parents and significant others influence children's self-concept by labelling their behaviours and attributes, by communicating which specific areas of performance are important and by specifying the criteria by which performance should be evaluated. According to the transactional model of the self, the feeling tone accompanying verbal messages, the degree to which parents are nurturing and supportive, is the critical determinant of the children's sense of self-esteem.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) urges us to look at child development in the context of the relationships between and among these systems. When the relationships or linkages between systems are characterised by mutual trust, a positive orientation and goal consensus, healthy development results. Borich and Tombari (1997) confirm that conflict among these systems adversely affects child growth and development. They state that, seen in the above perspective, the actions of individual parents, teachers and learners (i.e. the subsystems) are viewed as products of the interrelationships among them. For example, the parent who never signs homework books may not be an uninterested and uninvolved parent as might be assumed. Dynamics within the family system such as poverty, loss of a job, illness, depression and marital conflict may explain the parent's apparent involvement in his or her child's education.

Homes that do not value schooling, do not have formally educated people or books, do not involve reading and other basic academic skills, and do not use the formal language used for instructional purposes, put the child at a disadvantage at school (Garbarino, 1992). It is an important start for parents to visit the school and even for teachers to visit the home. The central principle here is that the stronger and more diverse the links between the settings, the more powerful the resulting mesosystems will be as an influence on the child's development. The psychologist Kurt Lewin (1890-1947) was one of the first to recognise, that human behaviour was determined by a wide range of influences (Fogel & Melson, 1988). For example, a child's behaviour in school may depend upon such things as the child's feeling of

being liked or disliked by the teacher, how hungry the child is, whether the child is behind on his or her homework, how well a child does in a particular subject and the anticipation of after-school social events.

Fogel and Melson (1988), maintain that the teacher-child relationship is expected to differ in important ways from other social relationships. Unlike ties with parents or other children, a child's relationship with a teacher is expected to be less intense, personal or emotional. Teachers are expected to stimulate the learning of all the children in their classroom to an equal extent, not to have favourites and not to relate to a child in terms of an emotional bond. Despite this cultural norm, there is considerable evidence that teachers do not respond to children in the same way and that differences in teacher behaviour have impact on both the cognitive and social development of children (Fogel & Melson, 1988). Some of this evidence stems from a cognitive theory approach, focusing on how teacher cognitions and expectations about children influence their behaviour and affect the child. Other research draws on a learning and social-learning perspective, viewing the teacher as a reinforcing agent and model of desirable behaviour. In general, it appears that children benefit when the expectations of home and of school complement rather than conflict with one another (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For many children who come from impoverished backgrounds or whose families speak a different language and share different values from those of the school, severe discontinuities may exist between family and school life. Such children need extra help from schools, which need to be responsible to the broad diversity of family life that children experience.

### **2.9.5 The transactional model**

This model was developed by American psychiatrist Eric Berne during the late 1950's. He presented the transactional analysis to the world as a phenomenological approach. Most models of direct instruction focus on expected teacher behaviour. The transactional model of direct instruction lends itself to monitoring and feedback between educator and learner. For example the teacher provides an opportunity for students to recall what they have already learnt in preparation for the current lesson. The learner links the lesson to previous ones explaining what they did and why (Sameroff, 1987).

According to the transactional model, the development of the child was seen as a product of the continuous dynamic interactions of the child and the experience provided by his/her families and social context. An innovative aspect of the transactional model was the emphasis placed on the effect of the

child on the environment, so that experiences provided by the environment were not independent of the child. Socio-economic factors have consistently been related to cognitive and socio-emotional competence (Sameroff, 1987).

The transactional model broadens the perspective on child development to include the effects of the interplay among children and parents, neighbourhood, schools, ethnic and socio-economic environments. Thus it is relevant to this study as the researcher is trying to show the link between socio-economic deprivation and academic performance.

### **2.9.6 The social cognitive theory**

Bandura (1989) states that the influence of environmental events on the acquisition and the regulation of cognitive processes are based on prior experience. These determine what environmental influences are attended to, how they are perceived, whether they will be remembered and how they may affect future action. Bandura began to look at personality as an interaction among three “things:” the environment, behavior, and the person’s psychological processes (Sadock & Sadock, 2000).

Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (1989) believe that behaviour is seen as the outcome of the reciprocal influence of the individual and the environment. This means behaviour is inversely proportional expressing mutual action or relation.

According to the Social Cognitive Theory, children learn not only from direct instruction but also from their experiences, peer interaction and even the media. Thus learning is a social event. Thus the researcher has used these theories to show that there is a link between social deprivation and academic performance.

### **2.9.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter the researcher has discussed the key concepts and the theoretical framework as well as the theories relevant to the study. The next chapter will provide a description of the research methodology, as well as the research instruments and the procedures employed to analyse the data.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The researcher is investigating the relationship between psychosocial deprivation and scholastic performance of grade seven learners. In this chapter, the research methodology used by the researcher in determining this relationship will be described. This study adopted both qualitative and quantitative methods. The researcher also used the triangulation data producing strategies namely; questionnaires and focus group discussions. According to Cohen et al (2000), triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. Triangular techniques, in the social science attempts to explain more fully the complexity of human behaviour, by studying it from more than one standpoint and in so doing by making use of both qualitative and quantitative data (Cohen, et al, 2000).

#### **3.2 Site of study**

This is a case study involving one school. The school is a government controlled primary school in Newlands West in KwaZulu Natal. It is a low socio-economic area. Approximately ninety percent of the learners come from informal settlements. It is a primary school with mixed races of Africans and Indian learners of both sexes. The learner composition is 80% African and 20% Indian. There are no white and coloured learners in the school. The educators are predominantly of Indian descent and there are one thousand and two hundred (1200) learners in the school and the teacher pupil ratio is 1: 40.

#### **3.3 Mixed methodology**

Though mainly qualitative, the study will involve a quantitative analysis of the impact of psychosocial deprivation on learners.



### **3.3.1 Qualitative research methodology**

Qualitative research encompasses a variety of approaches to investigate the world. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), the principle of qualitative research is that it is concerned with the understanding of a real life event or situation. This approach enables the researcher to discover what people are up to, what is important and meaningful to them, how they adapt to change, and how they make sense of the world. More importantly, it is an approach where the investigator does not see the criteria, but where the perceived reality of the participants in the research situation forms the core of the study. The outcomes of qualitative research are, consequently, directly applicable only to the particular setting or event concerned. The approach does not deal with generalities, although it is significant to note the influential effect of much qualitative research both within the field in which it was conducted.

According to Silverman (2002) qualitative research cannot provide a mirror reflection of the social world, but it may provide access to the meanings people attribute to their experiences and social worlds. Qualitative research methods are diverse and multidimensional. It is the interpretive study of a particular issue. Qualitative researchers work from the assumption that our understandings of the world are always mediated, and as a result there is always an interpretative component in research. Researchers can never be totally objective and neutral. They use the concept of reflexivity (Berliner, David & Gage 1988). Reflexivity, given that in qualitative research the investigator is part of the research process, it is important that they reflect on and discuss explicitly the likely impact of their own beliefs, theoretical orientation, and involvement with the object of the study on both the process of data collection and the process of analysis (Breakwell, Hammond & Fife-Schaw, 1995).

One of the strengths of qualitative research is that it focuses on the respondents understanding and meaning (McMillan, 2000). It was important in this study for the researcher to understand the respondents' perception of psychosocial deprivation.

### **3.3.2 Quantitative research methodology**

Research methods can be differentiated according to whether data are submitted to a qualitative or quantitative treatment. A qualitative treatment describes what processes are occurring and details differences in the character of these processes over time. A quantitative treatment states what the processes are, how often they occur, and what differences in their magnitude can be measured over time

(Breakwell et al, 1995). According to Flick, Von Kardorff &Steinke, (2004) in quantitative research a central value is attached to the observer's independence of the object of the research. This means that the researcher does not rely on the subjective perception as a component of the evidence. Quantitative research relies, for its comparative statistical evaluation, on a high degree of standardization in its data collection.

By using the qualitative research methodology the researcher was able to gather information rich in the subjectivity of their actions, interactions, emotions, culture symbols and rituals. This helped the researcher get close to the experiences of the participants so that their experiences could be viewed from their own perspectives. The researcher was able to apply methods that were appropriate to the research questions. The quantitative aspect of this study was getting the respondents' own understanding of psychosocial deprivation and its effects.

### **3.4 The research process**

The following processes were followed to conduct this study.

#### **3.4.1 Permission from the principal**

Prior to the research permission was sought from the Department of Education. The Department of Education issued a letter permitting the researcher to conduct the research at the school. Before administering the questionnaire to grade seven learners, the researcher needed permission from the principal and therefore drafted a letter to the principal and the governing body of Primary School A. The letter [Appendix D] and a copy of the questionnaire [Appendix B] were personally delivered to the principal. Other copies of letters from the Department of Education together with informed consent letters were thus forwarded to the school authorities, who are, the principal and chairperson of the School Governing Body. Permission was granted without any delay. This was motivated by the fact that the researcher is a person known to some members of the governing body as she was previously an educator at the school. Arrangements were then made to administer the questionnaire.

### **3.4.2 Selection of respondents**

A questionnaire was administered to select a sample. This was the pilot study. Twenty eight learners were selected from the pilot study which comprised a group of seventy learners. The purpose of the pilot was two-fold: to modify the research instrument and to select learners that are psychosocially deprived and poor.

Borg and Gall (1989) state that a successful study depends on the skill in selecting groups that are homogenous with respect to certain critical variables. The researcher randomly selected learners from families of different socio-economic backgrounds. The sample was taken from a primary school. Two classes of about thirty five learners were given a semi-structured questionnaire. A semi-structured questionnaire was used so that the respondents would speak about their personal experience and a fixed response would not give the interviewer in depth insight about their experiences. By using semi-structured questionnaires the interviewer could ask for further elaboration of answers. This would provide the researcher with an adequate sample for reliable data analysis. This type of sampling procedure is purposive. The data was sorted and all matters pertaining to the study was treated in confidence. The learners' ages ranged from about twelve to about thirteen years.

Purposive sampling is particularly relevant when you are concerned with exploring the universe and understanding the audience. This means, using your common sense and the best judgement in choosing the right habitations, and meeting the right number of right people for the purpose of your study. In short, purposive sampling is best used with small numbers of individuals/groups which may well be sufficient for understanding human perceptions, problems, needs, behaviours and contexts, which are the main justification for a qualitative audience research (Cemca, 2008).

### **3.5 Description of sample**

The sample of learners, consisting of twenty eight learners was taken from the intermediate phase of grade seven learners. Their ages ranged from twelve to thirteen years. These learners were, in one way or another either socially, economically or emotionally deprived. The researcher worked with twenty eight learners from an initial group of seventy.

### 3.6 Sampling procedure

The researcher started with seventy learners and was not so sure that these learners were psychosocially deprived until she had administered the questionnaire. She selected twenty eight learners whom the researcher felt were the most deprived. These learners were going through tough challenges for example, orphaned children, HIV/AIDS, unemployment, etc. The procedure used was purposive sampling. According to Cohen, *et al*, (2000) in purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality. The researcher in this study chose the purposive sampling since learners share a common experience of being psychosocially deprived and residing in the same area and having a common view of life.

### 3.7 Sample characteristics

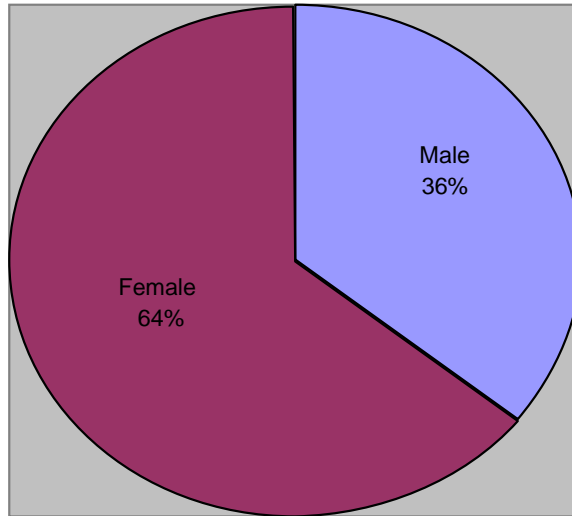
The following is a diagrammatical representation of the sample characteristics

#### 3.7.1 Respondent's Gender

**TABLE 3.1: Respondents' Gender**

	No of Participants	%
Male	10	36
Female	18	64

**Figure 3.1. Respondent's Gender (N=28)**



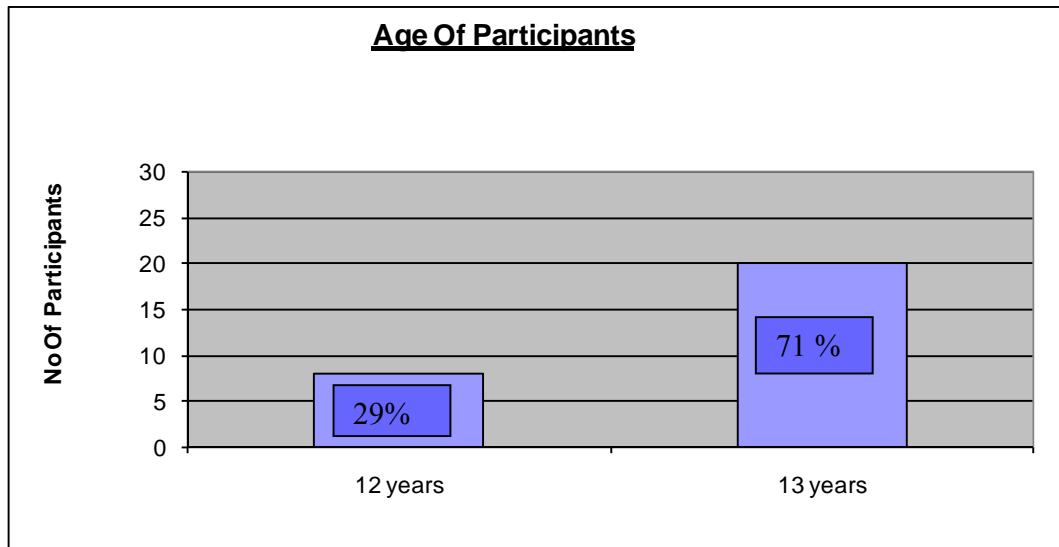
According to Table 3.1, 36% of the respondents were male and 64% of the respondents were female. This corresponds with the demography of the school with the school enrolment of 1200 learners, 786 of whom are female.

### **3.7.2 Respondent's Age**

**TABLE 3.2**

	No Of Participants	%
12 years	8	29
13 years	20	71

**Figure 3.2. Respondent's Age (N=28)**



As indicated above, 71% of the learners were thirteen years old and 29% were twelve years old.

### **3.8 The research instrument**

The researcher felt that the respondents would provide more information about the challenges they experience. The researcher used the questionnaire as well as the focus group interview.

#### **3.8.1 The questionnaire**

Because of the sensitive nature of the topic under investigation, the researcher found the questionnaire to be the most suitable instrument that would measure the key issues pertaining to the study (Appendix B). The questionnaire is one of the primary types of research instruments used to obtain information from respondents. As Best and Khan (1986) put it, a respondent may answer questions of an embarrassing nature more frankly and willingly than in a face to face situation with an interviewer.

According to McNeill (1992), a questionnaire is a list of questions to be asked by the researcher. It is prepared in such a manner that the questions are asked exactly in the same way of every respondent. On the other hand, Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994) define a questionnaire as a set of questions dealing with some topic or related group of topics given to a group of individuals for the

purpose of gathering data on a problem under consideration. According to Dave (1990) the length of the individual questions, the number of response options, as well as the format and wording of questions are determined by the following:

- The choice of the subject to be researched;
- The aim of the research;
- The method of data collection; and
- The analysis of data.

The questionnaire was the primary method used by the researcher as a tool to gather data. According to Anderson (1998), questionnaires may be used to collect self-report data on attitudes, preferences or background information. According to Fife-Schaw (1995), the questionnaire is probably the single most common research tool in the social sciences. The advantages are its apparent simplicity, its versatility and its low cost as method of data gathering. For many research topics, questionnaires provide data which are of a good enough quality both to test hypotheses and to make real-world policy suggestions. The cost advantage of questionnaires means that many more people can be sampled for a given budget than might otherwise be possible.

The responses to the specific questions on the questionnaire were examined. The data for this study was gathered by means of the questionnaire. The research findings from this study are presented in the form of graphs and tables.

### **3.8.2 Focus group discussions**

The secondary method for this research project was that of focus group discussions. The focus group was used to complement the questionnaire. The group interview is essentially a qualitative data gathering technique that finds the interviewer directing the interaction and inquiry in a very structured or unstructured manner, depending on the interviewer's purpose. Discussions in this research project were of great importance since they addressed some issues that were not covered by the questionnaires as primary data gathering tools. According to Kreuger, (as cited by Lewis, 1995), a focus group is defined as a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions in a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment.

Through focus group discussions, participants shared their views of the way the description did or did not resonate with their own experiences. Hence, the researcher opted for this method of data collection with the aim of getting various views and shared experiences from the participants.

Focus group interviews give insight into the experiences and reactions of the learners to socio-economic challenges such as unemployment and poverty. According to Lewis (1995), focus groups get participants to talk about problems or unfulfilled needs they have in certain areas. This provided the researcher with a “lived” account of integrated education in this particular school. This helped to identify pitfalls to build a framework for educational reform and improvement in providing quality education for all. Due to time constraints focus group research proved viable as it would have been time-consuming gaining inputs from learners individually. Taking learners out of academic lessons, expecting them to stay after school or giving up their lunch breaks were not viable options. Therefore the guidance lessons were used. According to Greenbaum (1998), the focus group technique holds that the input from any single participant in the group is relatively unimportant. In accordance with this standpoint, the most effective way to evaluate the focus groups is to try to identify the issues generally agreed upon within the group, considering the group’s general feelings about experiences. Analysis of focus group research, then, should focus on the big picture rather than on individual comments, and it is the responsibility of the moderator to base his or her conclusions on the overall sense of the participants about the issue or topic under discussion, and not to focus on the atypical comments of individuals (Greenbaum, 1998).

If focus groups are well conducted it is more likely to elicit sensitive information on atypical or taboo topics. The interviewer must maintain confidentiality and never disclose information that could harm or stigmatize the respondents.

### **3.8.3 Disadvantages of focus group interviews**

The researcher felt that to structure a random sample is a complicated task. The responses of the participants are likely to be different from the responses of those that did not participate. Skilled moderators are difficult to find. The moderators themselves can cause significant biases if they fail to delve deeply into specific areas. The researcher has less control over a group than on a one- to- one interview. Time can be lost due to irrelevant issues on the topic. The data may be tough to analyse because the “talking” is in reaction to the comments made by other group members. The focus group



was not large enough, therefore the data was not representative of the whole population (Wikipedia, 2010).

In this case the researcher felt it would have been easier to talk on a one to one basis rather than a group, hence the interview. The learners were somewhat reluctant to disclose answers to some personal questions. They felt that they will be stigmatised in some way. To allay their fears, the researcher encouraged the learners to answer the questions without any reservations, as everything will be treated as confidential. If the research was published the learners would remain anonymous.

### **3.8.4 Ethical Consideration**

Because action research is carried out in real-world circumstances, and involves close and open communication among the people involved, the researchers must pay close attention to ethical considerations in the conduct of their work (O'Brien, 1998). In the research the researcher adhered to the following suggestions:

- The researcher made sure that the relevant persons, committees and authorities had been consulted, and that the principles guiding the work were accepted in advance by all.
- All participants were allowed to influence the work, and the wishes of those who did not want to participate were respected.
- The development of the work remained visible and open to suggestions from others.
- The researcher accepted responsibility for maintaining confidentiality.
- Decisions made about the direction of the research and the probable outcomes are collective
- The researcher was explicit about the nature of the research process from the beginning, including all personal biases and interests.
- There was equal access to information generated by the process for all participants (Richard Winter as cited in O'Brien, 1998).

### **3.8.5 Anonymity and Confidentiality**

Anonymity and confidentiality of participants are central to ethical research practice in social research. Where possible, researchers aim to assure participants that every effort will be made to ensure that the data they provide can not be traced back to them in reports, presentations and other forms of

dissemination. The primary method researchers use to preserve anonymity and confidentiality is the use of pseudonyms for participants and also for the location of the research (Crow & Wiles, 2008). In this research the names of the learners were never used. They were told by the researcher that if this work were to be published no mention would be made of them. The name of the school was not mentioned and confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process.

### **3.8.6 Privacy and Informed Consent**

Consent from parents, guardians or other representative is generally necessary in relation to research. Researchers need to negotiate a delicate balance in providing information. They clearly need to provide sufficient information to enable participants to make informed decisions about participation. Informed consent and related concepts have a key role in much privacy research and are an integral part of much data protection legislation (Wiles, Heath, Crow & Charles, 2005).

In this research a learner/parent consent form was issued to the participants (Appendix C). They were told that all information would be treated in confidence. They would remain anonymous and were free to withdraw at any stage of the interview. They were promised that this will not disadvantage them in any way.

### **3.9 Thematic analysis**

The following themes emerged when conducting this research. The themes were about psychosocial factors which were found to have a negative effect on the learners' academic performance. The following are the themes used to analyse data:

#### ***Unemployment:***

This theme is about the effects of unemployment on learners and how that impacts on their scholastic performance. A respected body of research documents that when families sustain income losses during their children's early years, children are more likely to perform poorly in school and to complete fewer years of education later on (Human Resource News, 2010).

### ***Single parenthood:***

This theme is concerned with whether or not having a single parent disadvantages children socially and academically. Even when they have the same academic abilities, children in single-parent families are three times more likely to drop out of high school than children from two-parent families. Because they are the primary and frequently sole source of financial support for the family, single parents have less time to help children with homework, are less likely to use consistent discipline, and have less parental control, and all of these conditions may lead to lower academic achievement (Online Resources, 2010).

### ***General poverty:***

This theme is about how poverty affects academic performance. Poverty makes teaching and learning difficult for children who hurt physically or mentally, those who are hungry, lack proper clothing, or live in unsafe environments.

### ***Deceased parents:***

This theme is about how the loss of parents can affect academic performance. There are several reasons why school attendance may be lower for the children whose father or mother is dead than those parents who are alive. The children whose parents are dead are more likely to have more responsibilities. In some instances children are members of child-headed households.

### ***Abuse (physical, verbal, substance):***

This theme states that abuse in any form is detrimental to the learners' well-being and their academic performance. The effects of child abuse and neglect (maltreatment) has been known to increase the risk of lower academic achievement and problematic school performance.

### ***Lack of parental involvement:***

This theme states that support from parents is the most important way to improve academic performance and the lack of parental involvement is the biggest problem facing schools. The more intensely parents are involved, the more beneficial will be the achievement.

### ***The effects of HIV/AIDS:***

This theme states that as AIDS ravages communities, schools lose teachers and children and are unable to access quality education. The trauma children experience as they lose their friends to AIDS often catches up on their capacity to concentrate in class. Stigma targets children who have HIV in their family and are sometimes discriminated against by their peers, making school life uncomfortable (Asiimwe, 2007).

## **3.10 Trustworthiness of the study**

McMillan (2000) suggests that validity refers to the appropriateness of the interpretation of results by looking at the extent to which the results obtained for a sample of individuals may be generalized to the population to which the research hypothesis applies. This can only be valid depending on a multiple of factors. The researcher used methods of triangulating both the research instruments and sources of data. The quantitative data captured from the questionnaires were complimented by qualitative information obtained from their answers.

Krefting (1991: 214) argues that qualitative research is often evaluated against “criteria appropriate to quantitative research and is found to be lacking”. Taking this into account, Krefting (1991) further argues that in order to determine the trustworthiness of qualitative research, different criteria need to be used. The author specifically highlights four criteria which can be used to assist researchers to ensure that their research is trustworthy, these being; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. In the sections below the criteria will be explained, followed by how the researcher applied them to ensure trustworthiness.

### **3.10.1 Credibility**

According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006: 62) “credible research produces findings that are convincing and believable”. In this study the researcher used methods of triangulating both the research instruments and the sources of data to increase the credibility. The participants were unknown to the researcher and the participants for the focus group interviews were carefully selected as those who were poor.

### **3.10.2 Transferability**

Krefting (1991: 216) claims that “research meets the criterion of transferability when the findings fit into contexts outside the study situation that are determined by the degree of similarity or goodness or fit between the two contexts”. To ensure that the findings could be transferred to other contexts of a similar nature, the researcher ensured that the data was carefully selected. The questions were carefully planned and accurately worded in the questionnaires. This would allow others to understand the context of the research, which in turn would assist them to identify what applied to their specific situation. This view is further supported by Krefting (1991: 220) who claims that “it is critical that researchers provide dense background information about the informants and the research context and setting to allow others to assess how transferable the findings are.

### **3.10.3 Dependability**

According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006: 64) dependability refers to the “degree to which the reader can be convinced that the findings did indeed occur as the researcher says they did”. The questionnaires answered by the participants provide evidence that the findings are a true reflection of the learners’ experiences at school and home. The researcher also ensured that the methods of data collection and analysis were clearly explained.

### **3.10.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the “degree to which the findings are a function solely of the informants and conditions of the research and not of other biases, motivations and perspectives” (Krefting, 1991:216). To ensure confirmability the researcher tape recorded the focus group interviews.

## **3.11 Summary**

In this chapter the theoretical framework as well as the theories relevant to the study were discussed. The researcher has also discussed the research strategy, which included the research design, research methodology and data collection methods. The next chapter will present the findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the researcher will present the results of the study. The objective of this chapter is to discuss the data collected from 28 respondents that completed questionnaires. The study is summarized and recommendations are given. The responses to specific questions on the questionnaire which generated data will be examined. The research findings from this study are presented in the form of graphs and tables.

#### **4.2 Objectives:**

- To investigate the impact of psychosocial deprivation on academic performance.
- To provide guidelines to assist parents and teachers to work together and cooperate with each other for the benefit of children from socially deprived environments.
- To investigate how schools can provide the best services for learners despite their deprived social contexts.

#### **4.3 Key Research Questions**

1. To what extent does psychosocial deprivation influence scholastic performance of grade seven learners?
2. How can the school counteract the effects of psychosocial deprivation?
3. What form of assistance do parents and teachers need in order to work together for the benefit of the learner?

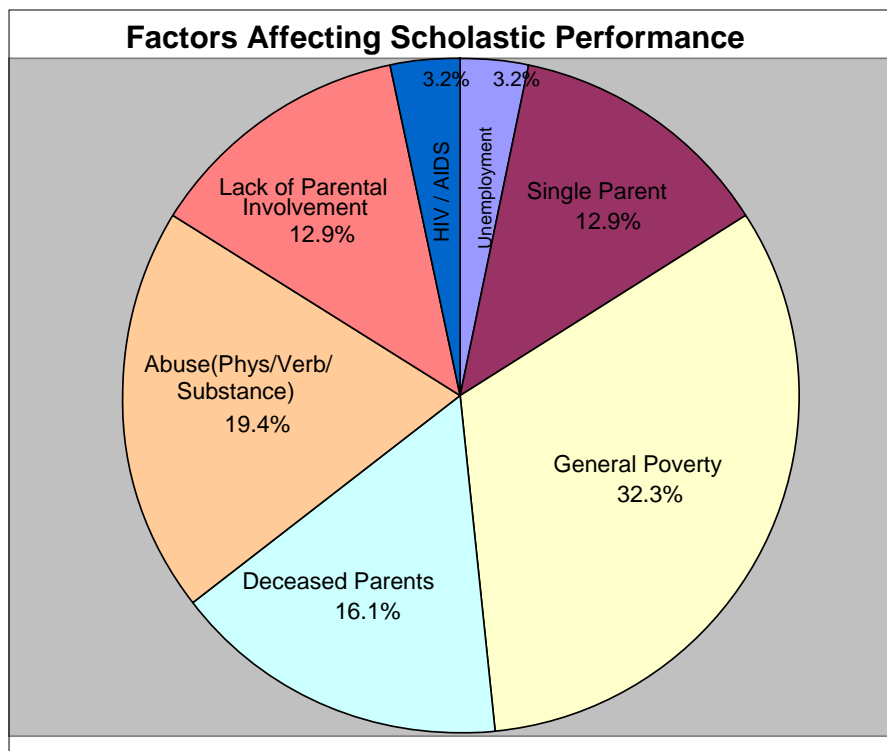
#### **4.4 Thematic analysis**

The following themes emerged from the data and each theme will be discussed. Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 provides a representation of factors which impact on learner's general well-being and scholastic performance.

**TABLE 4.1 – Types of Deprivation**

	Percentages
Unemployment	3.2%
Single Parent	12.9%
General Poverty	32.3%
Deceased Parents	16.1%
Abuse(Phys/Verb/Substance)	19.4%
Lack of Parental Involvement	12.9%
HIV / AIDS	3.2%
TOTAL	100

**Figure 4.1**



### **4.3.1 Unemployment as psychosocial deprivation**

According to data generated approximately 3,2 % of the learners from the sample group were affected by unemployment. They relied on the school feeding programme, as one learner said “*we have no money*

*to buy bread and therefore do not bring lunch to school*". Another learner said, *"I often feel very tired and my head aches, my teacher does not understand my problem and she thinks that I am lazy"*.

Due to the learners' parents being affected by unemployment, they have a low self esteem and this affects their scholastic performance. They have a social stigma of not paying school fees. They are rejected by peers who have a higher social status. They also have insecurities about the future. Some of the learners in the focus group interviews stated that they had to walk long distances to the school. *"I walk to school, it is far"*, *"sometimes I come to school late"* and *"there's no money for transport"*. *"We do not have electricity"*, and *"we cannot waste the candles."* *"When the candles get finished, I cannot finish my homework, as there is no money to buy more candles"*.

Food shortages typically impacted the youth within lower income families and their chief concern tended to be whether or not they would have adequate amounts of food to eat. Such issues concerning food shortages, due to both physical discomfort and mental distraction, have been found to dramatically alter students' performances in the areas of reading and mathematics. Among children between the ages of 6 and 12, reports found food insufficiency at the root of many scholastic problems including: lower mathematics scores, grade repetition, absenteeism, tardiness, ongoing visits to therapists, psychologists and increased levels of anxiety and aggression, psychosocial dysfunction, and social interaction difficulties (Andrews, 2009).

#### **4.3.2 Single parenthood as psychosocial deprivation**

Although growing up in a single-parent family is frequently viewed as a risk factor for a child, single-parent families are now fairly common in South Africa. According to the Family Deficit Model (Google Answers, 2010), single-parent families have a negative impact on children simply because they do not have a nuclear family structure. Research using the Family Deficit Model begins with the assumption that single parenting is bad for children, and the results of these studies typically support this assumption (Google Answers, Single Parenting & Children's Academic Achievement, 2010).

In the data analysis 12, 9 % of the learners were affected by single parenthood. Some of the learners stated that they had to take on the role of parents by helping with the younger siblings. It was difficult to complete homework as they had to prepare meals and help with household chores. They were affected financially, since only one parent was working. One learner stated that he could not go on the school



excursion as his mum could not afford the money. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that these learners have two or more siblings.

There is a lack of the mother or father figure. They are made to feel insecure by learners in functional families. Sometimes the children take the place of parents, to rear the siblings. Their home is not conducive to learning. They can be manipulated by bullies. As a result they become aggressive to compensate for their insecurities. Learners have to work to supplement their income. They have less time to give their off their best to school.

Schwartz (as cited in Monyela, 1999) studied the relationship between father-absent homes and academic achievement in children. The study revealed that boys and girls from father-present homes were found to score higher on standardized reading tests than children from father absent homes, regardless of the child's age when the father became absent. Schwartz (as cited in Monyela, 1999), further states that girls missed more schooling and the lack of supervision during early dating, which is common in father-absent families and is an important determinant of teenage pregnancy.

### **4.3.3 General poverty as psychosocial deprivation**

Due to lack of nourishment and going to school hungry, there is a lack of concentration. Learners tend to fall asleep during lessons or on the other extreme they may be very restless. They may be stigmatised due to an improper dress code. They may turn to drugs for example, sniffing glue. They may truant school. Poverty is an issue that more and more of our nation's children are coming face to face with. The price that children of poverty must pay is unbelievably high. Each year, increasing numbers of children are entering schools with needs from circumstances, such as poverty, that schools are not prepared to meet. Some of the factors related to poverty that may place a child at-risk for academic failure are: very young, single or low educational level parents; unemployment; abuse and neglect; substance abuse; dangerous neighborhoods; homelessness; mobility; and exposure to inadequate or inappropriate educational experiences (Pellino, 2007).

General poverty affected 32,3 % of the respondents. Due to poverty many learners went to school on hungry stomachs. They were unable to concentrate on school work. They depended on the lunch club to feed themselves. Ten of the learners in the study came from the informal settlements. Learners in the focus group stated, *"It's not easy. I have to work. I get up early. I get up at 4:30 in the morning*

*because I must get water to wash myself.” “I must get wood in the morning to light a fire” and “I try to do my homework first.... My mother wants me to clean the house”. Another learner said “In the morning I have to get firewood and fetch water. I must boil water to bath. This takes time and most of the time I am late for school”.*

Children born in poverty generally achieve at lower levels than children of middle and upper classes. The causes are numerous and are related to both the social environment in which poor children live and the education they receive in school. Factors such as the quality of student learning behaviors, home environment, past experiences with education, and teacher attitudes are among the many influences on student achievement.

High-mobility is a symptom of poverty and its surrounding social factors. Children of poverty may live in places that rent by the week or even day. They may move from town to town as their parent searches for work or runs from problems (such as an abusive spouse, criminal record, financial responsibilities). They may live in homeless shelters or battered women’s shelters that only allow brief stays. They may live on the streets. The conditions they live in and their day-to-day life experiences can have a significant effect on their education and achievement. Moving is a very emotional event for children. Combined with the multitude of other issues faced by mobile and homeless children, the impact on their emotional, social and cognitive development can be overwhelming (Pellino,2007). Skinner and Davids (2006: 3) point out that poverty has a great impact on children since they are deprived of proper clothes, adequate nutrition, access to services and proper housing. This can affect the schooling of children. One of the learners confirmed that “ *I wish to get the job so that I can renovate my home*”.

School attendance is often irregular. Transfer to a new school becomes the norm. Aside from the differences from the general school population due to other aspects of their poverty, mobility compounds the difficulty these children have making friends. They may behave hostilely or be totally withdrawn due to past attempts to make friends. With regard to both the academic and social aspects of school, they may figure, “Why bother? I’m just going to move again.” They also often come to school with no records from their previous schools; and it may be difficult for schools to track the records down. Teachers have no idea what these students have learned. It is challenging for schools to place these children in classrooms and get them additional services they may need. Even if placement is successful, these children will likely move again within the school year. It is also challenging to help these students to learn at least something of value while they remain at school (Pellino, 2007).

#### **4.3.4 Loss of parents as psychosocial deprivation**

According to data in table 5.1, 16,1 % of the learners were affected by having no parents. They depended on social grants and lived with grandparents or extended families. One learner claimed that there was a lack of space for doing homework. These learners also relied on the feeding scheme or school nutrition programme. Children are forced to take on premature responsibility. This can lead to child-reared households. They may steal to support their siblings and themselves. They may regard school as not important. They become aggressive due to insecurities. One of the social issues facing children of poverty is emotional trauma.

The emotional climate can often be very stressful and emotionally depriving. The lack of emotional nurturing can lead to feelings of alienation, inadequacy, depression and anxiety. Aggressive or impulsive behavior and social withdrawal can also result. Emotional security and self-esteem are often lacking. There is a craving for attention and a need to belong (Ciaccio & Brophy, as cited in Pellino, 2007). The characteristics that are lacking in the poverty environment are those that help foster effective learning and academic success. Emotional draining and negative self-status can literally zap the motivation to learn out of children.

Deprived by poverty, the lifestyle of the greatest percentage of poor families in South Africa shows visible signs of the demoralizing influences as the young people fail to maintain reasonable standards of self respect, home management and sexual morality (Landsberg, 2005: 28). Some children show signs of being undernourished and they have impaired social and intellectual development, which contribute to their schoolwork being neglected (Veldsman & Buthelezi 2001: 130). Thus the loss of parents or caregivers can affect the learners from performing optimally in school.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1989), the environment is not a static force that affects children in the same way. Instead, it is dynamic and ever changing. Expanding on this statement, Bronfenbrenner (1989) maintains that important events such as the death of a mother, the disappearance of a father, moving in with a grandparent produce new conditions that affect the child's development. The death of parents because of pandemic diseases like AIDS has left children under unfavourable conditions. For example, learners, especially girls drop out of school to take over adult's roles at home (Guest; 2001).

### **4.3.5 Substance abuse as psychosocial deprivation**

Approximately 19,4 % of the learners were affected by parental substance abuse. Learners claimed the area they lived in were rife with problems and not conducive to study. One learner said *“my granny runs a shebeen, this is the only form of money we receive”*. *“Sometimes customers become abusive and they do not pay”*. Unfortunately, a plausible reason for lack of parental involvement in a child’s education is parental substance or alcohol abuse. In a research study conducted by Winters (2007) on the relationship between parental substance or alcohol abuse and children’s academic achievement. It was found that parental substance or alcohol abuse increases a child’s risk for behavioral problems, social-skill deficits, and low educational attainment. Very little current research has focused specifically on children of substance abusers who, against the odds, achieve academically.

The problems of drug and alcohol addiction are worthy of attention as they create concomitant social, economic, and psychological consequences for everyone involved. Substance and alcohol abuse can have deleterious effects not only on the individual user but on immediate family members as well. Abuse of alcohol or drugs by one or both parents has been observed to create high levels of family dysfunction. Children of alcoholics and substance abusers are typically exposed to disorganization in the home, including negligent and/or abusive parenting, financial hardships, and possible social isolation in attempting to conceal the disease from family and friends. Parental substance and alcohol abuse threatens the achievement of the child’s full potential by exposing them to a stressful, chaotic, and often frightening home situation (Black & Fillmore, as cited in Winters, 2007).

Bacalso (2009) stated that children whose parents take illegal drugs often lose interest in school. They are very likely to receive failing grades, drop out or get expelled from educational institutions. Lack of parental guidance and exposure to violence may create psychological disorders that affect school performance. Children may also feel confused and insecure because of their drug-addicted parents. They may feel frightened and threatened as they frequently witness domestic violence. As a result, they may work below their potential because of fear, confusion and tensions at home. Parental drug abuse impairs children's growth. Children may demonstrate low self-esteem, a disruptive attitude, behavioral problems, depression and anxiety. Traumatic experiences from addicted parents may hinder their social, emotional and behavioral development. They may separate themselves from their parents and from peers, which may lead to difficulties with social interactions (Bacalso, 2009).

One learner said “ *My father hits my brother and I when he is drunk, we cannot do our homework as he puts the lights off. Now we are failing to concentrate to our studies. We are failing to do our homework and assignments, because father beats us. Therefore we stay away from school*”. Another learner said, “*I have a problem at home. When my mother is drunk, she scolds insults and beats me. She drinks alcohol and smokes tobacco. When I come from school she is drunk .There is no food to eat.. She tells me to do the house work and forces me to look after her baby while she goes to the bar. I do not have the chance or time to do my school works. This prevents me to have full attention on my schoolwork as I am always tired.*”

#### **4.3.6 Lack of parental involvement as psychosocial deprivation**

In the data analysis it was found that 12,9 % of the learners claimed their parents were always working and could not attend parent meetings. Research indicates that when parents show an interest in their child’s education by getting involved, students adopt a mastery goal orientation to learning where they are more likely to seek challenging tasks, persist through academic challenges, and experience satisfaction.

Developing positive relationships with parents and families of low socio-economic status and getting them involved with their children’s education and school activities is a challenge. In order to address this challenge it is first necessary to understand the dynamics of parenting in the context of poverty. Parenting is a critical process affecting many developmental outcomes for children living in poverty. Parent ability is weakened by living in poverty conditions and by the emotional and psychological stress associated with living in poverty (Kaiser & Delaney, 1996).

Parenting is the means through which children experience the world. Because the parent-child relationship is the primary context for early behavioral, social and cognitive development, negative effects on parents due to poverty factors in turn have a negative effect on the development of the child. Children rely on their parents to mediate their environment, respond to their needs and provide emotional stimulation and support. Due to poverty related stresses, the parent may not do this, and the child’s development could be delayed or be otherwise negatively affected (Kaiser & Delaney, 1996).

Conditions required for families to be successful are often lacking in the environment of poverty: stability, security, emotionally positive time together, access to basic resources, and a strong shared belief system. Thus, family relationships suffer when individuals live in poverty. Parents exhibit less

capacity to be supportive and consistent in their parenting, provide less vocal and emotional stimulation, are less responsive to their children's needs and model less sophisticated language. Parenting style is more punitive and coercive and less consistent (Kaiser & Delaney, 1996). Overall, parental support and involvement in school activities is lower among poor parents. This does not necessarily indicate a lack of interest. It reflects issues related to poverty such as time (especially if they work shifts or more than one job), availability and affordability of child care and/or transportation, as well as possible negative personal experiences between the parent and his or her own school when growing up (Kaiser & Delaney, 1996).

Although death contributes towards absent parents in the lives of children, some parents are not dead, but are absent in the lives of their children for various reasons. A learner stated, *“my parents live and work in Johannesburg. I am the elder child and I look after my younger sisters. They come at the end of the month to see us. Most times there is no one to help with our schoolwork. Sometimes we forget to sign the school letters of poor school performance. This makes my teacher angry”*.

The importance of strengthening and supporting parents and families cannot be emphasized enough. Areas of positive functioning need to be supported in programs that help families and children work to build or re-build their lives. Preventive programs can also help families of poverty. Any of the programs can build on the children's strengths while simultaneously providing needed services to families (Schmitz, Wagner & Menke, as cited in Kaiser & Delaney, 1996). Research shows that most parents, regardless of their socio-economic status, love their children and want them to succeed. Many of these parents need to learn strategies that can help them cope and help their children get a chance at breaking the cycle of poverty (McGee, as cited in Kaiser & Delaney, 1996).

Parents should know that they are welcome to observe the class and spend time helping out in the classroom, lunchroom or during activities. Parents should be encouraged to view student work, accomplishments and portfolios when they come to school so they can become more aware of their child's abilities and talents and can discuss them with their children in a meaningful way. Parental involvement sends a message to all children, not only the child of the involved parent, that school is important. Parental involvement can also be contagious, especially when other children observe positive interaction among the teacher, student and parent.

### 4.3.7 HIV/AIDS as psychosocial deprivation

Approximately 3,6% of the learners claimed that their parents were affected by HIV/AIDS. If the parents or caregivers have AIDS the learners are very depressed and have the fear of death. If the learners have AIDS they are sometimes stigmatized by teachers and peers. There will be frequent absenteeism as they are affected by physical symptoms e.g. diarrhea. They lack motivation and inspiration to perform well at school. It is within this context of catastrophe, challenge and loss that South Africa's education departments struggle to maintain their balance. Until Government's impact assessment is completed, experience in the region, information from other sectors, demographic analysis, and anecdotal information provide clues about how HIV/AIDS is likely to compromise education quality in South Africa (UNAIDS, 2006).

HIV/AIDS will have a traumatic impact on learners. Children are being abused and young women are subject to violence. Many live in families that are overextended and are under pressure to contribute to family incomes as poverty deepens. They are losing parents, siblings, friends and teachers to the disease. Many will have to move long distances to find new homes. For others, there are no homes at all. As a result, learners are increasingly absent from school and distracted (Coombe, 2000).

Children are directly affected in a number of ways. They may live at high risk of HIV; they may live with chronically ill parents or adults and be required to work or put their education on hold as they take on household and care-giving responsibilities; their households may experience greater poverty because of the disease; and they may be subject to stigma and discrimination because of their association with a person living with HIV. Children can also become orphans, losing one or both parents to AIDS-related illnesses.(UNAIDS, 2006).According to Guest (2001: 157) as parents or adults die, family life changes at home. For example children begin to lack the basic needs and they become more vulnerable even to infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Children will leave school to care for their dying parents. Some children will be forced to leave school for job hunting after the death of their parents. Once again it can be seen that academic performance will be jeopardised.

One 12- year old learner said, *“I was living with my mother at home. My mother became sick and she died. We are thus left with my younger brother. I’m suspecting that my mother died of HIV/AIDS, as she was very thin and she had lots of sores on her body. At school, we are disturbed as we find ourselves thinking about*

*our mother.*” This shows that children these days have a good understanding of HIV/AIDS and how they impact on their communities and their own livelihood.

#### **4.4 Summary**

In this chapter, the researcher has presented the research findings. Findings were organised into themes. In each theme, responses from all research participants were used as evidence and support of the research study. In the next chapter, the researcher will discuss the conclusion and recommendations.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the study is summarized and recommendations for further studies are given.

#### 5.2 Summary of the study

The study focuses on the relationship between psychosocial deprivation and academic performance of grade 7 learners. This is a case study on learners of School A in Durban. This research adopted both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Triangulation data producing strategies were used, namely questionnaires, and focus group discussions. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data. The researcher had observed fluctuations in children's academic performance. The researcher wanted to know more about the learner's family background so as to establish what situations influenced the learner's performance. A questionnaire was administered to a class of 70 learners and 28 were selected purposively into the sample. The researcher organised the discussion according to the following three key research questions that were presented in chapter One.

##### **5.2.1 To what extent does psychosocial deprivation influence scholastic performance of grade seven learners?**

There are multifaceted problems that lead to school children not performing optimally. Problems intersect with one another to increase the vulnerable state of children. However, poverty is the main driving force behind many problems that are faced by the children. In order to alleviate poverty, some of the parents are forced to leave their families for employment opportunities so as to earn income for their families. Such a situation infringes on the children's right to be loved and protected by their parents. As a result, it is impossible for some parents to have time for bonding with their children, as they spend most of their time away from their families.

Another contributing factor to the absence of parents in the lives of children is the death of parents caused by AIDS-related diseases. It is still poverty, which contributes towards the spread of pandemic

diseases. People living in poor contexts, often do not have access to medication and they cannot afford a healthy lifestyle since they cannot afford to buy healthy foods.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) in his ecosystemic theory regards the family as being the microsystem. The study reveals that children are disadvantaged and vulnerable because of various social ills and the most of these social predicaments to which children are affected, stem mainly from family circles (microsystem). The environmental problems within the family, such as poverty, epidemic diseases like AIDS, substance abuse by parents and others have a negative influence on the relationship between parents and their children. Learners from poverty-stricken families are left behind in their academic progress, as they lack the stamina during learning sessions, because of social burdens they have to carry. Learners with sick parents at home end up taking care of their sick parents instead of receiving the love and care from their parents. In some instances when their parents die the learners have to take care of their younger siblings. This affects their school attendance. Orphans also find it hard to concentrate on their schoolwork as they grieve for their dead parents.

In his study, Donald et al (2002) stated that the mesosystem, which is the second level, includes the peer-group, school, church and the neighbourhood. This level can also be called the local community. In this community shebeens and spaza shops are run as businesses at the residences. The research study on hand reveals that some of the parents, both male and female involve themselves in substance abuse that makes some of the children to experience domestic violence. Many children who experience domestic violence at home are unable to do their school-work at home and in school.

Children find it difficult to concentrate on their studies due to trauma and their schooling is thus affected (Barbarin & Richter, 2001). Donald et al, (2002) maintain that the home situation and what is happening within peer groups and neighbourhoods can influence the way children respond to school. Bronfenbrenner (1979) believes that a child's development is likely to be strengthened by strong supportive links between the mesosystem (the school) and the microsystem (the family). This link was not evident in the study. Responses from some learners who participated in the study point out that learner's parents/care-givers give them little time to do their school work at home. The research study on hand reveals that some of the parents are not living with their children due to employment that is far away from home. In such situations, children are living alone with no one to supervise and assist with homework and other educational demands that need to be met by parents so as to strengthen the academic development of their children. In this position, there is no clear connections between the

teachers and parents about the education of the child and thus the educational development of the child is handicapped (Duminy & Steyn, 1980).

According to Donald et al (2002), all different levels and groups of social contexts as systems, function as the whole and interact with each other. For example, a school is a system with different subsystems comprising of the staff, learners, curriculum and administration, which interact with other outside systems such as the family or local communities. Pettigrew and Akhurst (1999) maintain that the exosystem, which consists of settings such as parents' place of work, siblings, peer group, local education, government bodies, community organisations and welfare services, does affect the child's development.

### **5.2.2 How can the school counteract the effects of psychosocial deprivation?**

The schools and communities can reverse the negative impact of psychosocial deprivation in the following ways:

- The school counselor/guidance teacher can help to counsel learners who have problems at home. Home visits are in this case important. Althouse (1981) maintains that the home visits may occur before or during the school year. Visits give teachers a more complete picture of children. Home visits are a productive way of cementing the relationship at home and at school.
- Teachers should be alert to the potential dangers of labeling. They must allow for the possibility that disadvantaged learners may have inadequate diets. Teachers should try to supply experiences that such learners may have missed. Use every possible means for motivating disadvantaged learners to do well in school. Give them specific assignments, arrange for abundant practice, supply immediate feedback and stress over-learning. (Biehler & Snowman, 1993)
- The Department of Education should arrange for feeding schemes for all disadvantaged learners.
- The current social welfare programmes must focus on learners living in informal settlements and must be adequate enough to meet the needs of abandoned children and children affected by HIV/AIDS.
- Social workers should be working more closely with families that have children who are living under the guidance of caregivers to see that child support grants serve their purposes.

- Teachers should be the first people to identify learners who are living with their siblings, where parents are absent through death. Teachers should make contact with social workers for adoption programmes.
- There should be projects within the communities as well as at school, which will deal with counseling.
- Offer acceptance, assistance and support to students and their families
- Provide all students with a rigorous curriculum.
- Have high expectations for all students.
- Make students responsible for their own learning.
- Help children to succeed.
- Create an environment and use activities that foster mutual respect, resilience, self-esteem, self-regulation and self-efficacy.
- Develop relationships with students to identify their needs (emotional and intellectual) and identify their individual learning style.
- Emphasize that each student is unique with value, talents and abilities.
- Promote awareness and acceptance of diversity. Encourage students to recognize similarities as well as differences.
- Provide developmentally appropriate, meaningful learning activities and use thematic or integrated instruction, cooperative learning, inquiry and authentic learning (Pellino, 2007).

### **5.2.3 What form of assistance do parents and teachers need in order to work together for the benefit of the learner?**

Societies pay dearly for the educational neglect of their youth. School failure often foreshadows delinquency, substance abuse, teenage pregnancies, and heavy involvement in other high-risk behaviors that jeopardize the chances of having a productive and satisfying life. All too often, the heavy demands of work life leave little time or energy for family, recreation, and civic life. Schools carry a broader social responsibility in educating a society's youth. Good schooling fosters psychosocial growth that contributes to the quality of life beyond the vocational domain. Many parents impose on their children stringent academic demands that are difficult to fulfill. Accomplishments that fall short of those standards are devalued and lead to unpleasantness at home. A similar drama is played out in schools, where academic deficiencies displease teachers (Bandura, 1997).

In recent years, numerous efforts to improve children's school achievement have focused on building partnerships with families. However, the word "partnership" implies shared interests and mutual support. While teachers need various types of assistance from parents in meeting the needs of children in their care, teachers' support of families in the difficult task of parenting is likely to have the longest-lasting impact on children's success. Children's healthy development is the concern of parents and teachers alike. The collaborative efforts of teachers' support of families as well as the reverse has contributed to children's success in school and in life (Gestwicki, as cited in Barbour, 1996).

The parent-participation programs that link parents to the socio-cognitive development of their children help to improve the school climate. Parents assist at all levels of school activities as teachers' aides and as assistants in the libraries, resource centers, cafeterias, and playgrounds. They also develop a social program for the year that promotes the children's educational development and reestablishes close relations between the home and school. The parents thus gain a sense of control and responsibility for the academic and social life of their school. As parents are made to feel wanted and important, estrangement gives way to growing parental involvement in the life of the school (Barbour, 1996).

Rebuilding connectedness among school, home, and community with a common sense of purpose and shared responsibility for the intellectual life of schools is crucial in restructuring schools for academic success. The family plays a key role in children's success in school. It is often said that parents are the first teachers and the home is the first school. Parents continue to exert influence on their children's academic progress, especially in their earlier years of schooling. Parents contribute to their children's intellectual growth in a variety of ways. They prepare their children for school, place a value on education, convey belief in their children's scholastic ability, set standards for them, establish regular homework habits, help them with their schoolwork at home, encourage language development and comprehension through reading, keep track of their academic progress, reward their efforts, support school-related functions, assist with school activities, and participate in school governance or community advocacy groups for school improvement (Epstein, as cited in Barbour, 1996).

The following steps can be taken to build supportive partnerships.

- **Get to Know the Parents**

Parent questionnaires can supplement personal contact and highlight parents' questions, concerns, needs, and interests.

- **Communicate With Parents**

Convey information to parents through means such as handbooks, newsletters, or notes sent home. Communication can also take place during home visits, phone calls, classroom visits, conferences, or brief conversations during drop-off or pick-up times.

- **Consider Parents' Practical Needs**

Flexibility in scheduling conferences, school events, and various opportunities for participation increases the likelihood that parents will become involved.

- **Be Aware of Community Resources**

Teachers can help families learn about and use resources and services available within the community. Families face many challenges. Support given to parents goes a long way in mediating the stresses many families experience and in facilitating their abilities to nurture their children. Partnerships between teachers and parents produce mutual benefits, but greatest of all are benefits to the children for whom they care (Barbour, 1996).

### **5.3 Findings of the research**

In this chapter, the researcher has presented the research findings. Findings were organised into themes. In each theme, responses from all research participants were used as evidence and support of the research study.

The findings of this research were discussed in conjunction with the aims of the study in chapter 1. This chapter therefore focuses on the discussion of each finding for all the aims mentioned in chapter 1. During the empirical investigation the responses to the questionnaire were studied. The data which was gathered by means of descriptive statistics showed that there was a relationship between psychosocial deprivation and academic performance. It was further found that learners were able to pass their tests and projects, but still found difficulty in reading, spelling and sentence construction. This is due to the fact that through the outcomes based education (OBE), learners were able to get good marks by doing learner-centered activities such as group work and projects. Thus they were able to pass the grade, but were still unable to read effectively.

The findings related to poverty that may place a child at-risk for academic failure are: very young, single or low educational level of parents; unemployment; abuse and neglect; substance abuse;

dangerous neighborhoods; homelessness; mobility; and exposure to inadequate or inappropriate educational experiences. The rise in the number of children in poverty has contributed to making our classrooms more diverse than ever before. This, indeed, makes both teaching and learning more challenging.

Teachers may have difficulty reaching a student's parent or guardian. They may also find the student does not complete assignments, does not study for tests, or does not come to school prepared to learn because of poverty related circumstances in the home environment. These children may be unable to concentrate or focus. They may be unwilling or unable to interact with peers and/or adults in school in an effective manner. These issues not only have an impact on the learning of the child of poverty but can also impact the learning of other children.

According to the respondents there is a high correlation between general poverty and academic performance. A number of respondents found that they learned to cope by talking about their situations to caregivers, social workers, family members and teachers.

Similar findings by Du Toit (1994), revealed that there is a strong link between school performance and socio-economic status of the community. The worse the socio-economic status of a particular community, the greater the chance that children will not realise their true potential due to negative environmental influences. In the findings of a study done by Madzamba (1999), it was evident that homes that are devoid of basic amenities such as water, electricity and a conducive atmosphere for studying made academic achievement difficult. Due to economic deprivation these children are faced with low self image and low motivation for achieving academic goals.

The responses for abuse (physical, verbal, substance abuse) are correlative, that is having a mutual relation in bringing about negative effects on academic performance. In the findings from the interviews one respondent said that her stepfather accused her of wasting his electricity and therefore she was unable to complete her homework. The learners agreed that the many types of abuse had a negative impact on academic performance.

According to the findings there was an even correlation between the status of single parenthood and a lack of parental involvement. These themes or variables were interrelated. The existing of one entailed the existence of the other. These findings were corroborated by Ogunbanjo (2007), who emphasized

that the main findings contributing to underachievement among learners include a lack of parental support, supervision and guidance. In a similar study the findings of Reglin as cited in Du Toit (1993), stated that it would be possible to improve the performance of demotivated, underachieving children from the lower socio-economic status levels of society if family members cared about or showed interest in their child's academic progress and in the academic and social events of the school.

The findings from interviews with learners revealed that a few learners stated that there was a lack of communication with single parents. The mother comes home with a new man or the father comes home with a new woman. The children are confused, what happens at home disturbs the children at school. The learners had to accept the new step parent. In some cases the parents work far from home. They come back on Fridays or at the end of the month. The young children take full responsibility in the absence of the parents. They have excessive home chores. When parents come late from work, the learners do the cooking, cleaning and looking after the younger ones. The learners are tired and do not complete their homework.

In the interview findings a learner stated "I copy my homework from my friends so that I will not get into trouble with my teacher. She thinks I understand the maths but I think I am going to fail". Another learner stated "people say I am reading, but I do not know what I am reading. Others say I am studying but I do not understand". The study done by Butler Por (as cited in Tlale, 1991), stated that if parents were indifferent to their childrens' work, then children cannot experience the joy of learning. If there is no enthusiastic reinforcement from parents, learners will have no incentive to work hard.

On the whole the respondents were equally divided along the categories of HIV/AIDS and unemployment. The learners strongly agree that these two factors had a detrimental effect on academic performance. In the findings one learner said "I dunno what will happen to me and my brothers but we have to cope somehow. First my mother died and my brother, he was maintaining us, now he died. We only have grandmother who is sixty years old and unemployed". Another learner stated "I did not go to school for two weeks. My mother had a temporary job and I had to stay at home to look after the baby. We need the money as there is nothing to eat". Richter (2004) commented in her findings that AIDS affects childrens' psychosocial development. Poverty is the undeniable background to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and stigmatisation prompts affected learners to stay away from school. Impoverished parents feel disempowered and are unable to enrich the lives of their children or to encourage them to remain at



school and do well. They feel time at school is wasted. They should rather be earning an income to provide for the needs in the home (Madzamba, 1999).

In the findings for the theme of deceased parents, the respondents agreed that deceased parents created many difficulties in maintaining optimal academic performance. A response of a learner was “My grandmother cannot read and is unable to help me with my homework. She cannot tell if the corrections are right or wrong”. This is reiterated in the findings of research done by Ogunbanjo (2007). There is a lack of supervision. When the learners come from school they just go and play and forget about schoolwork. They return home late from playing in the streets. They do not complete their homework and fall far behind in their schoolwork. In addition to this they have poor study methods, improper allocation of time for certain subjects, lack of memory techniques and exam writing skills. This escalates poor academic performance as pre knowledge always forms the background or basis on which new knowledge is built.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the study**

The first limitation lies in the research design in terms of the sampling technique used. It is believed that purposive sampling has some disadvantages in that it relies heavily on subjective consideration of the researcher rather than scientific characteristics when selecting the sample (Bless & Smith, 1995:77). Even though the researcher and participants had related to each other with ease, in some instances, the learners may not have been totally honest about their circumstances. They might have felt embarrassed, obligated, or protective towards their parents, and may not have revealed the truth. As the sample was small the findings of the study cannot be generalized. Another limitation of this study was that it was a case study and therefore conducted in one school. Also, the study was not an experimental study to investigate the extent of the impact of psychosocial deprivation on scholastic performance.

#### **5.5 Recommendation for future studies**

This study could serve as a basis for further research on the following:

- A quantitative study of the relationship or correlation between psychosocial deprivation (poverty) and academic performance,
- A similar study on a larger scale involving many learners,
- An investigation of the effects of poverty on learners well-being, and

- The role schools can play to mitigate the effects of poverty on learners' wellbeing and scholastic performance.

## 5.6 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to come to a better understanding of the relationship between psychosocial deprivation and academic performance. It is the combination of economic, social, and emotional deprivation which heightens the vulnerability of poor learners and families. Poverty is often accompanied by additional social problems such as family disintegration, adults and children in trouble with the law, and substance abuse. The data collected provided answers to the research questions. Indeed, there is a relationship between psychosocial deprivation and academic performance.

According to the findings, the learners were affected by the factors such as unemployment, single parents, general poverty, substance abuse, lack of parental involvement etc. Some learners were affected by more than one factor. This shows that psychosocial deprivation has a negative effect on learners' scholastic performance. Many learners from poor families often go to school on an empty stomach and consequently find it difficult to pay attention in class. If the school does not take into consideration the environmental contexts of learners or their economic backgrounds, then both learners and educators are likely to have negative experiences at their school (Donald et al, 2002). Chinkanda (1987) points out that the school and families should complement each other in teaching children. There should be no contradiction between these two institutions of learning. School should serve as an extension of the family. School can also act as an agent of change.

Being able to identify and understand children who are at-risk is critical if we are to support their growth and development. In order to do this, warm and caring relationships need to be developed between teachers and children. This will enable teachers to detect any warning signs that may place children at-risk for failure, interfering with their chances for success in school and life. Academic and behavioral problems can be indicators of impending failure. Among such behaviors are: delay in language development, delay in reading development, aggression, violence, social withdrawal, substance abuse, irregular attendance, and depression (Leroy & Symes, 2001). It is trusted that this study will be of value to all stakeholders in education.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Agulnik, P.& Hills, J. (2002). *Understanding Social Exclusion*. England. Oxford University Press.

Althouse, R. (1981). *The young child – learning with understanding*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Anderson, G. (1998). *Fundamentals of Educational Research*. London: The Falmer Press.

Andrews, T. (2009). *Reasons why Students Academic Performance may be Impacted*. Retrieved on 12/10/2010 from ([www.articlesnatch.com](http://www.articlesnatch.com))

Asiimwe, J.B.(2007). *The Effects of HIV/AIDS on Children’s Schooling in Uganda*.Kampala: Makerere University.

Attree, P. (2006). *The Social Costs of Child Poverty. A systematic review of the qualitative evidence, Children and Society* 20 (1) 54-56.

Bacalso, L. (2009). *Parental Drug Abuse Effects on Children*. Retrieved on November 11, 2010 from [www.eHow.com](http://www.eHow.com).

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self- Efficacy: The exercise of Control*. Freeman. New York.

Bandura.A. (1989). *Social Cognitive Theory*.USA. JAI Press.

Barbarin, O. & Richter, L. (2001). *Mandela’s Children*. New York: Routledge Publishers

Barbour, A. (1996). *Supporting Families: Children are the Winners*. Retrieved on August 27,2011 from [www.earlychildhoodnews.com/media.aspx](http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/media.aspx).

Baumrind, D. (1971). *Current Patterns of Parental Authority*. 4 (1). *Developmental Psychology Monograph*.

Berliner, David & Gage, N.L. (1988). *Educational Psychology*. USA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Best, A. & Khan, C. (1986). *Child Development*. Homewood Illinois: Irwin.

Biehler, R.F., & Snowman, J. (1993). *Psychology Applied To Teaching*. London: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Bless, C. & Smith, H.C. (1995). *Fundamentals of Social Research Methods: An African Perspective*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Cape Town: Juta.

Borg, W. & Gall, D. (1989). *Educational Research: An Introduction*. New York: Longman.

Borich, G.D. & Tombar, M.L. (1997). *Educational Psychology A Contemporary Approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc.

Boyle, M.H. & Lipman, E.L. (2002). *Socioeconomic Disadvantage and Behavioural Problems of Children*, 70(2) 378-89.

Bramley, G. & Karley, N.K. (2007). Homeownership, Poverty and Educational Achievement. *Journal of Housing Studies*, 22 (5) 693-721.

Breakwell, G.M., Hammond, S. and Fife-Schaw, C. (1995) *Research Methods in Psychology*. London: Sage Publications..

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1989). Ecological Systems Theories: *Annals of Child Development*, 6, 187 – 197.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bukatko, D. & Daehler, M.W. (1995). *Child Development – A Thematic Approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). USA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Campbell, G. (1991). *Education and the child*. Durban: Butterworths.

Cemca (2008). Purposive Sampling. Retrieved on April 12, 2008 from [www.cemca.org/books/chap13.htm](http://www.cemca.org/books/chap13.htm)

Cherian, V.I. (1994). Relationship between parental aspiration and academic achievement of Xhosa children from broken and intact families. *Psychological Reports* 74: 835-840.

Chiland, C. & Young, J.G. (1990). *Why Children Reject School*. London: Yale University Press.

Chinkanda, N.E. (1987). Community care of mentally retarded children: an exploratory study of support systems. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Pietersburg: University of the North.

Clark, R. (1983). *Family Life and School Achievement: Why Poor Black Children Succeed and Fail?* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education* (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). London: Routledge Falmer.

Coombe, C. (2000). Managing the impact of HIV/AIDS on education in South Africa, *Journal of comparative studies*, 3 (1).

Dane, F.C. (1990). *Research Methods: Determinants of Education Outcomes*. New York: Appleton Crafts.

Darling, N. (1993). *Parenting Style and it's Correlates*. USA. University of Illinois.

Davies, L. (1987). *Educating Harmless Children*. [www.kellybear.com](http://www.kellybear.com)

Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (2000). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication.

- Dills, A. K. (2006). Trends in the Relationship between Socio-economic Status and Academic Achievement. Stetson Mecer University.
- Donald, D., Lazarus, S. & Lolwana, P. (2002). Educational Psychology In A Social Context. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Duminy, J.L. & Steyn, P. (1982). Education in Sociopedagogics, Pretoria: van Schaik.
- Du Toit, L.(1994). Orthopedagogics. Only Study Guide for ORP431-V. Pretoria: Unisa.
- Elsinga, M. (2005). Home Ownership. Netherlands. Delft University Press.
- Evans, G.W.( 2004). The environment of Childhood Poverty. New York: Cornell University.
- Fife-Schaw, C.R. (1995). Research Methods in Psychology. London: Sage Publications.
- Flick, U., Von Kardorff, E. & Steinke, I. (2004). A Companion to Qualitative Research. London: Sage Publications.
- Fogel, A. & Melson, G.F. (1988). Child Development – Individual, Family and Society. USA: West Publishing Company.
- Fraser, G. (1997). Uprooting Poverty. Washington: Island Press.
- Garbarino, J. (1992). The Meaning of Poverty in the World of Children: *American Behavioral Scientist*. 35 (3).
- Google Answers. Retrieved on September 9, 2010 from [http://www business dictionary.com](http://www.businessdictionary.com)
- Google Answers, Single Parenting and Children's Academic Achievement. Retrieved on January 12, 2010 from <http://library.adoption.com/articles/single-parenting-and-childrens-academic-achievement.html>.

GoogleAnswers, PsychologicalWellbeing. Retrieved on October 3, 2009 from <http://answers.Google.com/answers/threadview/id/32811.html>

Greenbaum, T.L. (1998). *The Handbook for Focus Group Research*. California, London, New Delhi: Sage Publication.

Gregson, S. (2005) *Aids Care*, 17 (7) 785-794.

Guest, E. (2001). *Children of Aids. Africa's orphan crisis*. (1st ed). University of Natal Press

Gunn, J.B. & Duncan, G.J. (1997) *Children and Poverty*, 7 (2) 55-71.

Haralambos, M. & Holborn, M. (2000). *Sociology. Themes and Perspectives*. (4th ed.). London: Collins. Publishers.

Harkness, J. & Newman, S.J. (2003). Effects of Homeownership on Children: The Role of Neighborhood Characteristics and Family Income. *Economic Policy Review*, 9 (2)

Human Resource News (2010). Unemployment Affects More Families With Children. Retrieved on November 7, 2010 from [learnmoreabouthr.blr.com/.../Unemployment-Affects-More-Families-with-Children/](http://learnmoreabouthr.blr.com/.../Unemployment-Affects-More-Families-with-Children/)

Huston, A.C. (1991). *Children in Poverty: Child Development and Public Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Huston, A.C., McLoyd, V.C., & Coll, C.G. (1994). Children and Poverty: Issues in Contemporary Research. *Child Development*, 65, 275 – 282.

Jeynes, W.H. (2005). *Consider Parent Involvement and Academic Achievement*. California. Harvard Family Research Project.

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (2006). *Report on the global AIDS Epidemic*. Geneva.

- Kapp, J.A. (ed.). (1991). *Children with Problems – An Orthopedagogical Perspective*. Pretoria: J.C. Van Schaik Publishers.
- Kaiser, A. & Delaney, E. (1996). The effects of poverty on parenting young children. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 71, 4, 66-85.
- Kelsall, R.K. & Kelsall, H.M. (1971). *Social Disadvantage and Education Opportunity*. (1st ed.) London: Garden City Press (Ltd).
- Kingdon, G. & Knight, J. (2004). *Unemployment in South Africa 1995-2003: Causes, Problems and Policies*. Department of Economics, University of Oxford.
- Krefting, L. (1991). The Assessment of Trustworthiness. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 45 (3) 214-222.
- Krishna-Kumar, T., Gore, A. & Sitaramam, V. (1996). Conceptual and Statistical Issues on measurement of Poverty. *Journal of Statistical Planning and Inference*, 49 (1) 53 – 71.
- Kuzwayo, E. (2004). *Call me Woman*. (1st ed.) Johannesburg: Macmillan.
- Landsberg, E. (2005). *Addressing Barriers to Learning*. (1st ed.) Pretoria —Van Schalk Publishers
- Landman, W.A., Van Der Merwe, I.J.M., Pitout, D.N., Smith, A.G. & Windell, J.H.J. (1990). *Teachers Handbook for Education*. Pretoria: Academia.
- Leroy, C. & Symes, B. (2001). Teachers' perspectives on the family backgrounds of children at risk. *McGill Journal of Education*, 36( 1) 45-60. WilsonWeb. Retrieved on December 10, 2010.
- Lewis, M. (1995). Focus group interviews. Retrieved on November 15, 2010 from <http://www2.fhs.usyd.edu.au/arow/reader/rlewis.htm>
- Lupton,R. (2003). *Neighbourhood Effects. Can we measure them and does it matter?* London. Case paper 73. Centre for analysis of social exclusion.



- Machel, G. (2001). *The impact of War on Children*. London: C Hurst & Co (Publishers) Ltd
- Madela, N.B. (2002). *The Lived Experience of Black Parents who have Children in former Model C Schools*. Umlazi: University of Zululand. (D Ed dissertation)
- Madzamba, H.K. (1999). *Culture of Poverty & School Underachievement*. *Educator's Voice*, June/July 1999. Pietersburg.
- May, J. (Ed.). (1998). *Poverty and Inequality in South Africa*. Report prepared for the Office of the Executive Deputy President and the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Poverty and Inequality – Summary Report.
- McMillan, J.H. (2000). *Educational Research: Fundamentals for the Consumer* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed). New York: Addison Wesley Longman.
- McNeill, P. (1992). *Research Methods*. London: Tavisback Publications Ltd.
- Meyer, W.F., Moore, C. & Viljoen, H.G. (1989). *Personality Theories from Freud to Frankl*. Johannesburg: Lexicon Publishers.
- Mfecane, S., Skinner, D. & Davids, A. (2006). *Qualitative Report of OVC Living Conditions and Services in the Koanong Municipality, Free State Province*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Monyela, E.D. (1999). *Home Factors Related To Poor Academic Performance In North West Primary Schools*. University Of South Africa. Unpublished M Ed Thesis.
- Morrison, G.L. & Vonnice, M. (2000) *Parents' Management of Their Children's Education Within the Home, at School, and in the Community: An Examination of African-American Families Living in Poverty*, *Journal of Urban Review*, 32 ( 1)1.
- Myers, D. G. (2004) *Happiness*. Excerpted from *Psychology*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition. New York, Worth Publishers.

Ngwane, L., Yadavalli, P. & Steffens, G. (2001). *Basic Concepts in Education*. Pretoria: De Jager-Haum.

O'Brien, R. (1998). *An Overview of the Methodological Approach of Action Research*. Faculty of Information Studies. University of Toronto.

Ogunbanjo, P.E. (2007). *Factors Influencing the Academic Performance of Underachieving Learners in Secondary Schools with an Inhibitive Learning Climate*. M.Ed Dissertation. Unisa.

Ong, L.C., Chandran, V., Lim, Y.Y., Chen, A.H. & Poh, B.K. (2010). Factors associated with poor academic achievement among urban primary school children in Malaysia. *Singapore Medical Journal*, 51(3) 247.

Online Medical Dictionary (2007). *Psychosocial Deprivation*. University of Newcastle upon Tyne: The Centre for Cancer Education. Retrieved on October 30, 2010 from [www.cancerweb.ncl.ac.uk/cgi-bin/omd?psychosocial+deprivation](http://www.cancerweb.ncl.ac.uk/cgi-bin/omd?psychosocial+deprivation)

Online Resources for Parent/Family Involvement. Retrieved on December 8, 2010 from [http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC\\_Digests/ed432775.html](http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed432775.html)

Oxaal, Z. (1997). *Education & Poverty*. University of Sussex. United Kingdom.

Pellino, K.M. (2007). *Effects of Poverty on Teaching and Learning*. Retrieved on August 15, 2010 from <http://www.teach-nology.com/tutorials/teaching/poverty/print.htm>

Pettigrew, E.J. (2009). *A study of the impact of socioeconomic status on student achievement in a rural east Tennessee school system*. United States: East Tennessee State University.

Pettigrew, L., Akhurst, J. (1999). *Learning and Teaching in Psychological Perspectives*. (1st ed). Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.

Pinkster, F.M. (2009). Watch Out For The Neighborhood Trap. *Journal of Children's Geographies*, 7(3) 323-337.

- Reber, A.S. (1995). *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology*. England: Clays Limited.
- Redding, S. (1993). *Parents and Learning*. Temple University. Philadelphia.
- Richter, L. (2004). *The Impact of AIDS on the Development of Children*. Cape Town. HSRC Publishers.
- Roberts, A.R. (1974). *Childhood Deprivation*. USA: Thomas Books.
- Sadock, B.I., & Sadock, V.A. (2000). *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry* (7<sup>th</sup> Edition). Volume 2. USA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Sameroff, A.J. (1987). *The Social Context of Development*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Scherer, M. (2006). The Silent Strugglers. *Journal of Educational Leadership*, 63 (5) 7.
- Schuftan, C. (1975). *Archivos Latinoamericanos de Nutricion*. Retrieved on October 1, 2008 from <http://humaninfo.org/aviva/ch14.htm>
- Seifert, K.L. & Hoffnung, R.J. (1994). *Child and Adolescent Development*. USA: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Seminar on Human Rights. (2001). *Draft United Nations Guiding Principles on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty*. Retrieved on May 22, 2010 from [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Draft\\_United\\_Nations\\_Guiding\\_principles\\_on\\_Human\\_Rights\\_and\\_Extreme\\_Poverty](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Draft_United_Nations_Guiding_principles_on_Human_Rights_and_Extreme_Poverty)
- Silverman, D. (2002). *Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Simkins, C. (2002). *Poverty Report: Measuring Poverty in South Africa*. Durban: Praxis Publishing.
- Skinner, D. & Davids, A. (2006). *Multiple Vulnerabilities*. (1st ed). Cape Town: HSR press

Smith, H. (1995). *Unhappy Children: Reasons and Remedies*. London: Free Association Books Ltd.

Solidarity Helping Hand. (2007). Retrieved on August 18, 2011 from  
<http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Child-raped-every-3-min-report-20090603>

South Africa – Family life in Black Communities. Retrieved on November 11, 2010 from  
<http://family.jrank.org/pages/1613/South-Africa-Family-Life-in-Black-Communities.html>

Swanson, D.M. (1998). *Bridging the Boundaries? A Study of Mainstream Mathematics, Academic Support and “Disadvantaged Learners” in an Independent, Secondary School in the Western Cape, (South Africa)*. Unpublished Master’s dissertation, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Terre Blanche, M. & Durrheim, K. (2006). *Research in Practice*. Cape Town. UCT Press.

The Free Dictionary. Well-being. (2009) Retrieved on October 03, 2010 from  
[www.thefreedictionary.com/wellbeing](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/wellbeing)

Tlale, C.D.M. (1991). The Causes of Scholastic Underachievement. *Educamus*, 37(1) 16-18.

Trickett, E.J. (2004). *American Psychological Association*. 59 (3) 77-92.

UNAIDS (2006). *Global Report*. Retrieved on (29/11/2010) from  
[http://data.unaids.org/pub/GlobalReport/2006\\_gr\\_cho2\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/GlobalReport/2006_gr_cho2_en.pdf)

UNICEF, Southern Africa Countries in crisis-(2005). Retrieved on December 3, 2009 from  
[http://www.unicef.org/emerg/southern\\_africa/index-hiv-aids-htm/](http://www.unicef.org/emerg/southern_africa/index-hiv-aids-htm/)

Van Manen, M. (1994). *Researching Lived Experience*. Canada: The Athlone Press.

Van Rensburg, C.J.J., Landman, W.A. & Bodenstein, H.C.A. (1994). *Basic Concepts in Education*. Halfway House: Orion.

Varma, V. (1993). *Coping with Unhappy Children*. Great Britain: Redwood Books.

Veldsman, E. & Buthelezi, T. (2001). *The management of Child Abuse*. KwaZulu Natal Department of Education and Culture (KZNDEC)

Wadkar, A.J. (1989). *Role of Home Background in Academic Achievement*. India. Ramchandra & Co.

White Paper for Social Welfare. (1997). *Legislation Pertaining to Social Welfare Services*: Department of Welfare. Pretoria. South Africa.

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Focus Group. Retrieved on July 7, 2010 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/focus> group

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Poverty. Retrieved on March 10, 2009 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/poverty>

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. What is meant by Academic Performance? Retrieved on October 3, 2009 from <http://wiki.answers.com/q/whatismeanbyacademicperformance>

Wiles, R., Heath, S., Crow, G. & Charles, V. (2005). *Informed Consent in Social Research: A Literature Review*. ESRC National Centre for Research Methods. School of Social Science. University of Southampton.

Wiles, R. & Crow, G. (2008). *Managing Anonymity and Confidentiality in Social Research*. ESRC National Centre for Social Research. Southampton (unpublished).

Winters, A. (2007). *Influential Factors of Parental Substance and Alcohol Abuse on Children's Academic Achievement* Portland State University

World Book Encyclopedia (International) Volume 15. (1992). London, Chicago: World Book, Inc.

**APPENDIX A**  
**ETHICAL CLEARANCE**

## **APPENDIX B**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GRADE 7 LEARNERS**

1. The aim of this survey directed at learners is to better understand their home backgrounds with an intention of finding out if there is a link between their home circumstances and performance at school. It also aims to assess the learners' interpretation and understanding of the impact of psychosocial deprivation and academic performance.
2. There are no right and wrong answers. All that is required of you is that you complete the questionnaire to the best of your ability.
3. You are not required to write your name as your views are confidential.

## LEARNERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Grade : \_\_\_\_\_  
Race : \_\_\_\_\_  
Gender : \_\_\_\_\_  
Age : \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Language : \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you live with both parents Yes/ No? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are they working Yes/ No? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you have a father? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you have a mother? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do your parents:

- Work away from home \_\_\_\_\_
- Come home everyday \_\_\_\_\_

6. Are your parents educated? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you have grandparents? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do they live with you? \_\_\_\_\_

9. How many people reside at your home? \_\_\_\_\_

10. What would you say are your biggest challenges? Name three:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



---

11. Do you live in a:

- Big house \_\_\_\_\_
- A shack \_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you have a television at home? \_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you have a radio at home? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Do you have story books at home? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Who helps you with your homework? \_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you use:

- Electricity \_\_\_\_\_
- Candles at home? \_\_\_\_\_

17. What are your daily chores at home? E.g. sweeping the house, washing clothes, fetching wood, etc

---

---

---

18. Do you have access to clean tap water? \_\_\_\_\_

19. What do you sleep on? \_\_\_\_\_

20. What do you eat before you come to school? \_\_\_\_\_

21. Do you ever go to bed hungry? \_\_\_\_\_

22. How often? \_\_\_\_\_

23. Do you carry lunch to school? \_\_\_\_\_

24. What subject do you like best? \_\_\_\_\_

24.1. Why do you say so? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

25. In which language would you like to write your tests? \_\_\_\_\_

26. Which sport do you like the best? \_\_\_\_\_

27. Do you play the sport at school? \_\_\_\_\_

28. Do you like school? \_\_\_\_\_

29. What would you like to become when you grow up?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

30. What is it that you really need and why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

31. What would make you the happiest child? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

32. Are your parents getting a social grant? \_\_\_\_\_

33. Name the problems that you are currently experiencing? (specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

34. Do you think your parent(s) is / are poor? \_\_\_\_\_

34.1. Why do you say so?

---

---

35. Do you have a good relationship with your parents? \_\_\_\_\_

36. Give a reason for your answer?

---

---

37. Do you partake in the school feeding scheme? \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### LEARNER AND PARENT / GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

My name is Kalamathy Naiker. I am an M Ed student at the University of Kwazulu-Natal .As part of my masters dissertation, I am conducting research on psychosocial deprivation and it's impact on academic performance. I would like to discuss with your child their experiences of schooling.

The learners will be involved in answering of questionnaires and focus group discussions. Your voluntary participation in this research will be valued. You have not been coerced to participate and are free to withdraw at any stage of the interview. If you agree to be part of the research, please have the consent form below completed by your parent/ guardian and returned.

Your decision not to participate will not result in any form of disadvantage. All information will be treated as confidential. No names will be recorded to ensure anonymity of all participants.

#### CONSENT FORM

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Full Name Printed) parent/guardian  
Of \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Child) consent to his/her  
Participation in the research project.

\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

DATE

## APPENDIX D

Mrs K. Naiker  
7 Newcentre Drive  
Castlehill  
Newlands West  
4037

The Principal & Governing Body  
Parkvale Primary School  
Briardale  
Newlands West  
4037

Dear Principal

**Re: Research on psychosocial deprivation and academic performance**

I am a teacher at Castlehill Primary School. I am completing a Masters Degree in Educational Psychology at the University of Kwazulu Natal (Edgewood Campus). In part fulfillment of my master's degree, I am conducting research on the relationship between psychosocial deprivation and scholastic performance of learners.

I hereby request permission to conduct research at your school.  
Your co-operation will ensure the success of my project.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K. Naiker.

P.S. a copy of this letter and research questionnaire has been handed to the Principal and Governing Body of the school.

## **APPENDIX E**

## BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

<b>LEARNER</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>SEX</b>	<b>GRADE</b>	<b>CHALLENGES</b>	<b>COPING STRATEGIES</b>
1	13	F	7	No lunch, no accommodation	Consult with social workers.
2	12	M	7	Living in a single parent household	Talks to mother about the fear of death
3	13	M	7	Verbal abuse, substance abuse by grandparent	Talks to social worker
4	13	F	7	Living without a mother	Finds comfort in aunt
5	12	F	7	Alcohol abuse by granny	Talk to social worker
6	13	M	7	Cannot read and write	do not know
7	12	F	7	Unemployed, sick father, very little to eat.	Try to work hard at school.
8	13	F	7	Living with aunt who is HIV positive	Trying to do the best to make her comfortable.
9	13	M	7	Not enough to eat at home, parents constantly fighting	Go to lunch club at school.

10	13	M	7	Having no mother and seldom sees his father.	Speak to social workers.
11	13	F	7	Parents constantly fighting over finances. No quiet place to study.	Speak to aunt
12	12	F	7	Living with abusive father.	Talks to mother.
13	13	F	7	Does not have good relations with friends at school	Tries hard to make friends at school.
14	13	F	7	Was sexually abused by older brothers.	My teacher called social workers
15	13	F	7	Confused about paternity.	Spoke to sister
16.	12	M	7	Go to bed hungry-daily	Joined lunch club at school
17	13	F	7	Goes to school hungry	Goes to the lunch club
18	13	F	7	Inability to read and write	Have no idea
19	12	F	7	Death of mother. Living with stepmother	consult social worker
20	12	M	7	Parents fighting daily	Talk to grandmother
21	13	M	7	Live in one room no place for homework	Sister helps because she is working



22	13	F	7	Parents can't afford to buy things I want.	Speak to parents.
23	13	M	7	Doing badly at school	Speak to my sisters
24	13	F	7	Financial difficulties at home	Talk to friends about it
25	13	F	7	Parents died living with uncle	Talks to brother
26	13	M	7	Living with stepmother	Talks to aunt
27	12	F	7	Goes to school hungry	Joins lunch club
28	13	F	7	Live in one room. No place for homework.	Sister helps because she is working.