

**“DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN”: A CASE STUDY OF THE VULNERABLE
STATE OF CHILDREN AND HOW IT AFFECTS SCHOOLING IN SOUTH
AFRICA**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Thamsanqa Norman Mvuna, the undersigned, hereby declare that the contents of this dissertation constitute my own original work, which has not previously been presented to another institution, either in part or as a whole, for the purposes of obtaining a degree. Where use has been made of the work of others, this has duly been acknowledged and referenced.

.....

Signature

.....

Date

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WRITING CONVENTIONS

The author wishes to orientate the reader to the writing conventions that have been adopted in this thesis. It uses the Short Harvard Style for referencing, an internationally recognised system. For example:

Author(s), year, page/pages from which citations has been taken (where it is necessary)

(Brown, 2006)

(Brown, 2006: 69)

(Brown, 2006: 69-72)

Brown (2006) maintains that

Brown and Mouton (2005) point out that...

Brown and Jones (1990) hold the view that...

Brown, Jones, Goldberger and Skinner (2006: 40) contend that...

Brown (1999), Jones (2005), Skinner (2006) maintain that ...

Brown et al (2006) discussed ...

In the list of references:

Books and Encyclopedias:

Author(s). (Year). Title. Date of publication. Town/City: Publishers.

Henning, E. (2005) *Finding your way in Academic Writing*. (2nd ed.)

Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Journal Articles

Author(s), date, title of article, title of journal, volume of journal, edition number, and the relevant page numbers of the article.

Moletsane, R.(2003). Another lost generation? The impact of HIV/AIDS on Schooling in South Africa. *Journal of school Disaffection*. 1(2). 7-14

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENT	PAGE
DECLARATION	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	III
WRITING CONVENTIONS	IV
TABLE OF CONTENT	V
ACRONYMS	VIII
ABSTRACT	IX
CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE THESIS	
1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. HIV/AIDS the pandemic disease.....	4
1.3. Single parents	5
1.4. Overcrowded families and housing problems.....	5
1.5. Child labour and house chores.....	7
1.6. Alcoholic parents/care givers	8
1.7. Urbanisation	8
1.8. Community contexts in which children live.....	10
1.9. The purpose of study.....	11
1.10 Objectives of the study.....	12
1.11. Key research questions	12
1.12 Arrangement of chapters.....	12
1.13. Summary	13
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LETERATURE RELATING TO THE STATE OF CHILDREN LIVING IN ADVERSE CONDITIONS	
2.1. Preview.....	14
2.2. Poverty	14
2.3 Unemployment	15
2.4 Children’s Bill of Rights and Responsibilities	16
2.5 Child abuse	17
<i>2.5.1 Neglect and emotional abuse</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>2.5.2 Physical abuse and corporal punishment in schools</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>2.5.3. Verbal abuse and humiliation</i>	<i>19</i>

2.5.4 House chores.....	19
2.5.5 Sexual abuse.....	20
2.5.6 Substance abuse	21
2.5.7. Abuse of grants.....	22
2.6. Violence	22
2.7 Family size and structure/ overcrowded families	23
2.8 Single parenthood	24
2.9. Abandoned children.....	24
2.10 HIV/AIDS pandemic.....	24
2.11 Grandparents as caregivers	25
2.12 Urbanisation	26
2.13 Neighbourhood settings	26
2.13 Summary.....	27
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	
3.1 Preview.....	28
SECTION A	
3.2. Key concepts.....	28
3.2.1. <i>Child / learner</i>	28
3.2.2 <i>Disadvantaged children</i>	28
3.2.3 <i>Vulnerability</i>	29
3.2.4 <i>Schooling</i>	29
SECTION B	
3.3. Theoretical framework	30
SECTION C	
3.4. Research strategy	35
3.4.1 <i>Research design</i>	36
3.4.2. <i>Research methodology</i>	36
3.4.3. <i>The research field</i>	36
3.4.4. <i>Participants</i>	37
3.4.5 <i>Data collection methods</i>	38
3.4.5.1 <i>Triangulation</i>	38
3.4.5.2 <i>Arts based and participatory methodologies</i>	38
3.4.5.3 <i>Interviews</i>	40
3.4.6 <i>Challenges during fieldwork</i>	41
3.4.7 <i>Ethical considerations</i>	41
3.4.8 <i>Data analysis</i>	42
3.4.9 <i>Summary</i>	42

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Preview	43
4.2 Absent parents	43
4.3. Violence	49
4.4 Child safety child sexual abuse	55
4.4.1. <i>Verbal abuse and humiliation</i>	56
4.4.2. <i>House chores imposed on children</i>	58
4.4.3. <i>Child safety and sexual abuse</i>	62
4.4.4. <i>Abuse of child support grant</i>	65
4.5 Poverty	66
4.6 Summary	68

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Preview	70
5.2 Key research questions	70
5.2.1 What is the nature and extent of children’s vulnerability in South Africa?.....	70
5.2.2 How does the vulnerable state of children affect their schooling (in South Africa)? ...	73
5.3. Recommendations	78
5.4 Limitations of study	80
5.5 Conclusion	80
References	81
Appendices	86

ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
CGE	Commission on Gender Equality
CSG	Child Support Grant
DOE	Department of Education
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
MIET	Media in Education Trust
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NOAH	Nurturing orphans of Aids for Humanity
P.G.S.E.S	Psychological Guidance Specialist in Education Services
SASA	South African School's Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SIDH	Society for Integrated Development of Himalayas
SSMP	School Sports Mass Participation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VC	Vulnerable Child(ren)

ABSTRACT

Education is one of the fundamental rights of children. Parents have the perennial responsibility to see to it that education, as a basic right for children, is met. However, experience and studies show that most children's schooling is under threat. Various factors such as family background, the dangerous neighbourhood and communities from which learners come are central in the disturbance of children's schooling. These contextual factors correlate with one another and sometimes result in children forfeiting schooling opportunities.

Bronfenbrenner's (1989) ecosystem theory, among other perspectives, facilitates our understanding of the fact that a learner does not exist in isolation, but in interdependence with a number of other systems in their environment. This is because the functioning of any learner is dependent on the interaction between the various systems within the contexts they find themselves. If the child's immediate environmental system, the family, for instance, is faced with hardships, the child's development is most likely to be hampered. Young's (1990) theory of oppression maintains that the children's immediate environmental systems are said to be oppressed by the situations that are beyond their control.

This study examines the vulnerable state of children and explores ways in which these vulnerabilities affect their schooling. The strategies employed to gather data involve the adoption of the research methods that are arts-based and are combined with different types of interviewing techniques.

Research findings reveal that most children live alone because parents work far away from their families. As a result, children are exposed to drugs and many more potentially hazardous eventualities. Other children who are orphans live with caregivers or guardians. The perceived biological gap

between such children and caregivers, often result to physical abuse. This, among other things, makes children find it difficult to concentrate fully on their studies. Other children walk long distances to and from school and they become tired and exposed to abuse. It is no wonder that when these learners reach their homes they do not do their schoolwork.

The study concludes that poverty is the main cause of all the hardships that act as obstacles in children's schooling. Hence, social workers have the challenge to monitor the use of child support grants so that there would be no abuse of these social services by caregivers. In addition, some of the parents are dying because of AIDS, and this further necessitates proper counselling of children who have lost their parents.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE THESIS

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The eighteen years I have spent as an educator have enabled me to identify various factors as having direct impact on educational achievement of children. These include learners' social contexts such as the family background, neighbourhood, and the larger community settings where children find themselves in. These factors affect learner's schooling, and their general development directly and indirectly (Pettigrew & Akhurst, 1999: 217). Parents/ caregivers are faced with various social challenges. These challenges are poverty perpetuated by unemployment, diseases related to HIV/AIDS and natural catastrophies (such as floods, droughts and so on). Although crippled by poverty and devastated by many curable and incurable diseases, parents/caregivers still send their children to school. This is because they regard education as the only gift they have for their children in the face of other adverse social issues.

Indeed, education is important for it is a means of upward mobility and better-educated individuals have more access to resources than uneducated people (Barbarin & Richter, 2001: 57). The South African government, for example, recognises the centrality of education to the lives of the people in the 21st century. This is shown in the country's decision to incorporate the right to basic education in its Constitution RSA (1996) under the Bill of Rights. As part of the strategies to promote this right, the South African government embarked on various programmes that attempt to ensure that children are educated. This is in line with section 34(i) of the South African Schools Act (SASA) that states that the government must fund public schools on an equitable basis in order to promote the right of learners to education and redress the past inequalities in education (Final School's Allocations 2008/9 Circular No. 41). As one of such public schools, my school benefits from this programme. For instance,

all our learners are supplied with free educational materials such as texts books and stationery (which includes exercise books, pens and other learning material) on a yearly basis.

Furthermore, the government has recently declared some of the schools in rural areas where parents/ caregivers are struggling to pay school fees as “no fee-paying schools”. According to the School’s Allocation Budget, Circular No. 41 (2008/09) of the South African Department of Education, such schools have been “classified according to the level of poverty prevalent in the communities where the schools are located. This circular further states that Statistics South Africa’s (Stats SA) census data has been used to determine the poverty scores of these schools. In Stats SA each school is linked to a specific geographical area or name of the place closest to the school (School’s Allocation Budget No. 41, 2009/9). According to this circular, my school and other neighbouring schools have been declared as “no fee payment schools”. In such schools, no learner pays school fees as the government gives 95% subsidy to the school for each child.

Alongside this school fees exemption for learners who come from poor families, the Department of Education is also determined to fight hunger in schools. The government has introduced feeding-schemes in primary schools. School feeding schemes are interventions aimed at reducing short-term hunger and alleviating the effects of malnutrition on the development of school going age children (KZN DoE & Culture, 2004 Operational Guidelines for Primary School Nutrition Programme). In addition, the government provides unemployed parents/ caregivers with monthly child support grants (CSG). The Child Support Grant is meant to address the financial burden felt mostly by unemployed women who still have a duty of raising children (Bundlender, 2000).

To develop learner’s enthusiasm and love for schooling, the government has initiated the School Sports Mass Participation (S.S.M.P.) programme. This programme

facilitates participation in Sports and Recreation activities within disadvantaged schools, particularly schools that are situated in high crime areas, farm and rural areas and the government's priority nodes (Department of Sports and Recreation & Department of Education, 2007: 22). This programme purports to develop a sense of sportsmanship among children and to make schools places of fun and happiness for children.

Furthermore, the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal has designed an intervention that is aimed to provide quality care and support for the increasing number of orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) in schools (KZN DoE, 2008/9). The programme for this intervention, as outlined in the National Strategic Plan (NSP, 2007-2011), includes the implementation of mechanisms for identifying, tracking and linking orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) as well as child-headed households to grants benefits and social services at local level. In this programme each school receives about R12 000-00 to increase the quality of care and support for orphaned and vulnerable children enrolled in the school.

However, despite these progressive intervention programmes that are designed to make children enjoy schooling in South Africa, there are still observable factors that affect schooling. This is because the factors that render children vulnerable are multifaceted. Skinner, Tsheko, Munyati, Segwebe, Chibatamato, Chandiwana, Nkomo, Tlou & Chitiyo (2004: 13) point out that the degrees of vulnerability depend on the situation of each child and that each of these factors could add to the cumulative load that the child carries. In the following sub-sections I identify and discuss the nature of some of the factors that create the vulnerable state of children and how this affects schooling.

1.2. HIV/AIDS, THE PANDEMIC DISEASE

South Africa remains one of the countries in Southern Africa that has an increasing number of orphans as a consequence of high AIDS prevalence. The United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) (as cited by Skinner & Davids, 2006: 1) estimates that about 11 million children under the age of 15 years in Southern Africa have lost one or both parents. Skinner and Davids (2006: 1) further point out that HIV/AIDS has social and economic serious implications in some instances as many children are left with no one to look after them, and in some instances family or society members stigmatise them. The pandemic has also given rise to poverty due to the death of parents. When the parents die, children may be forced to leave school to care for young siblings (Skinner & Davids, 2006: 1). If these orphaned children are lucky to be adopted by care-givers, problems arise when it comes to official documents for registration to get grants. Sometimes both the care-giver and the orphaned children lack these documents.

Skinner et al (2004: 14) also confirm that lack of parental and child registration documents often inhibits access to financial assistance from the government. Other challenges facing parents or caregivers regarding difficulties in gaining access to child support grants (CSG) include the long distances they have to travel to the government offices and often they do not have transport costs (Skinner et al, 2004: 14). According to Skinner et al (2004, 16), children's problems revolve around three key areas: material, emotional and social problems. A child who lacks access to financial resources, basic needs, shoulder to cry on and support becomes vulnerable due to material and emotional problems or deprivation. Pandemic HIV/AIDS's situation becomes worse when orphaned children where under the care of a single parent. This means the next of kin (if grandparents are still alive) have to take over as care-givers.

1.3. SINGLE PARENTS

According to Skinner et al (2004: 11), one of the factors, which contribute to the vulnerability of children is the increasing number of divorced or widowed parents who do not have necessary resources to support their children. For some single parents, particularly in rural areas, it is difficult to raise their children due to financial problems since some of them are unemployed. They find it difficult to provide their children with school needs, such as school fees and uniforms and children end up depending on their grandparents' grant (Barbarin & Richter, 2001: 144).

For instance, the majority of children enrolled in our schools are living with their grandparents, who support them. Further problems arise when grandparents die. Children become a responsibility of their relatives or caregivers and these relatives or caregivers find difficulties in maintaining these children due to many problems. They find it sometimes difficult even to access the child support grant. This happens when they do not have the necessary documents such as birth certificates for the child or identity documents for themselves. Another challenge facing relatives and caregivers is an enrolment of abandoned and orphaned children at school, which is caused by the lack of the required identification documents (Machel, 2001: 96). Machel (2001: 97) further claims that in 1997 the Sri Lankan Ministry of Education allowed children without birth certificates to attend school, but refused them to sit for an examination and even to participate in many school activities such as sports and so on.

As a result of HIV/AIDS that has unending dying of young parents (single parents), grandparents or relatives find themselves living in overcrowded houses. This is due to a load of orphaned children left on their disposal by young unmarried parents.

1.4. OVERCROWDED FAMILIES AND HOUSING PROBLEMS

According to Kelsall and Kelsall (1971), overcrowding and extended families, unemployment and poverty are some of other factors, which contribute to an increasing number of vulnerable children in our society. Children can become

burdensome to their unemployed parents as the parents are unable to provide them with necessary resources, such as basic needs and education and thus children become vulnerable (Skinner et al, 2004: 3). Another factor to overcrowding could be high influx of people from rural to urban areas.

The movement of families to towns and cities for job opportunities gave rise to the establishment of townships, which failed to accommodate the big numbers of people who moved to urban areas (Kuzwayo, 2004: 105). Lack of accommodation in cities and towns saw the mushrooming of informal settlements (Kuzwayo, 2004: 106). Densely populated areas near the places of employment created community context where many children become vulnerable. Informal housing poses a danger to children who might be infected by many diseases such as HIV, small pox, tuberculosis and so on because of overcrowded space (Skinner & Davids, 2006: 3). Apart from diseases that are spread through overcrowding, it also contributes to the lack of space for school children to have enough space to do their schoolwork. In his study, Pillay (2004: 8) confirms that overcrowded family spaces make it impossible for children to study, because in these circumstances, many people live together, for example, in one room. In such situations, the high levels of noise by other family members disturb children who are studying and they end up performing poorly in their school subjects.

In addition, child sexual abuses happen due to lack of privacy or overcrowding (Steyn, Van Wyk & Le Roux, 1990: 303). The findings in the study conducted by Ratele, Skinner & Nkomo, (2006) show that there are many such cases where children are sexually abused. Material poverty among some large families further leads to a point where parents are forced to offer their children to cheap labour syndicates (Pretorius, 1998: 362) in order to have income.

1.5. CHILD LABOUR AND HOUSE CHORES

Pretorius (1998) draws a distinction between child labour and normal, educative house chores for children. Child labour could be described as an employment of children from the age of four up to fifteen years. Normal, educative house chores involve housework and duties that are done by children in their homes. However, the house chores can be far more extensive than the duties that could be done by children such as washing utensils, scrubbing floors, washing clothes and cooking (if possible). According to Pretorius (1998), other acts could be classified as child abuse, which often result from industrialisation, urbanisation and technological development. Children have to be involved in economic activities in order to supplement their family income. Findings from Pretorius' study (1998) show that orphans are the most victims of child labour. For example, some orphans of about twelve years of age are sold as slaves or sex workers for the exchange of money or goods. This is mostly done by caregivers who might lack financial resources in raising these children (Mfecane, Skinner & Davids, 2006: 69).

Bower (2003) states that the poor child in South Africa is often denied access to services such as education, health and other material needs. He or she is also subjected to child labour such as cattle herding and house work depending on the gender of the child. Skinner et al (2004: 12) point out that although parents may show love, care and provide well for a child, there could be obstacles to children's normal life, which includes schooling, playing and doing other activities that are proper to the child's normal life. According to Skinner et al (2004), parents tend to focus more on trying to prepare the child for adulthood, than focusing on the actual needs of a child at his/her stage. This parents' ideology is characterised by an excessive house chores and duties that are imposed on children in the name of preparing the child for adulthood. This might affect the child's schooling. In his study, Pillay (2004: 8) reveals that learners living in informal settlements were involved in various house chores, such as selling of liquor at home for survival and this left learners with little time to do their school work. In many instances they would come late to school and

this affected their academic performance in school. This business of selling liquor by children as house-chores does not end in house-chores imposed by parents. Some of the parents who abuse liquor, sometimes impose unreasonable house-chores to their children.

1.6. ALCOHOLIC PARENTS/CARE GIVERS

According to Mfecane et al (2004), the availability of alcohol in poor social contexts is increased due to alcohol being sold at lower prices with the aim of accommodating the majority of unemployed people living there. The sale of alcohol also becomes the only source of income for many poor families. However, Skinner et al (2004: 11) state that the abuse of alcohol has an impact on children. They do not get proper care from their alcoholic parents and this results in children's future being compromised. The consumption of alcohol by parents/caregivers and the money spent on alcohol, which is supposed to be used for the caring of children is wasted (Skinner & Davids, 2006: 4). Veldsman and Buthelezi (2001: 132) confirm that many children of alcoholic parents or caregivers are vulnerable to emotional abuse and neglect, such as abandonment, isolation and rejection. Children living under these conditions often suffer academically as they manifest schooling problems like playing truancy, having aggressive behaviour and juvenile delinquency (Finkelhor & Browne, 1986).

The widespread abuse of alcohol came as a result of industrial revolution and urbanisation when people moved to towns and cities for job opportunities (Pretorius, 1998: 57). With their husbands already in the cities, some women moved to cities in search for domestic work, and when they did not find work, they started beer brewing and selling illicit alcohol (Kuzwayo, 2004: 16).

1.7. URBANISATION

Writing on urbanisation, Barbarin and Richter (2001: 19) point out that urban migration brought significant changes to the formation, composition and process of family life. The time parents moved to towns in search for job opportunities, family

situations like the bond family members used to have, changed. These significant changes were brought by industrial labour and urbanisation and they resulted in families, being dismantled. Nuclear families moved away from the main families. This resulted in husbands, wives and children staying away from their extended families. The movement of people closer to industries and urban areas for labour renders the present-day family to be economically, emotionally as well as in respect of role differentiation, vulnerable (Pretorius, 1998: 57).

While unemployment remains the major problem, in some families, the economic demands force both parents to leave home to work far away from home. In such circumstances, children are left to their own. When parents travel long distances to and from their work places, they have to leave their homes very early in the morning and come back very late in the evening (Chinkanda, 1987: 180). In such situations, parents hardly spend time with their children and as a result many children in these families are emotionally vulnerable, for they lack parental love, guidance and direction because most of the time are left to their self-care (Skinner et al, 2004: 19). The degraded economic situation that had forced parents to be absent from their families resulted in some of the children experiencing forms of self-inflicted abuse such as drugs and substance abuse (Ratele et al, 2006: 69).

In his study, Swart-Kruger (1992-1993) reveals that children in self-care experienced bad feelings such as boredom and loneliness due to continued isolation and lack of interpersonal contact. Findings of Swart-Kruger's (1992-1993) study indicate that there are sometimes no good or peaceful relationships among the siblings themselves in the absence of their parents and this is regarded as an unpleasant situation by the children in self-care. Some children, especially older siblings, become bossy, fighting with each other and telling lies in the return of their parents. There is also no one to help with schoolwork. However, most children do enjoy being alone at home as they can do what they like at any time, for example, visiting friends and having dates without their parents knowing it.

Many families are vulnerable in respect of role differentiations. For example, the absence of the father may hamper the son's socialisation with the people of the same sex because he lacks a male figure in his development and finds it difficult to relate with people of the same sex (Pretorius, 1998: 57). Moreover, a boy child is denied the male guidance support. This is also viewed as a spawning ground for academic, behavioural and emotional maladjustment of children (Barbarin & Richter, 2001).

1.8. COMMUNITY CONTEXTS IN WHICH CHILDREN LIVE

In both urban and rural communities, many children are experiencing some difficulties in learning. According to Kelsall and Kelsall (1971: 54), community situations in which the child lives could affect the child's ability to benefit from what the school offers. For example, lack of job opportunities experienced by youth and young adults results to many youths and young adults engaging in crime and drug abuse (Barbarin & Richter, 2001: 87). The assessment given by a number of staff from the Department of Social Development (DSD) is that unemployment leads to an increase in substance abuse (Mfecane et al, 2006: 15). The abundance of shebeens in many communities, for example, has affected the schooling of some of the children due to drugs and alcohol abuse. Lack of recreational facilities and non involvement in recreational activities further contribute to youth problems of drug abuse and involvement in crime. Mfecane et al (2006: 15) confirms that the daily consumption of alcohol by youth is predominant in many parts of South Africa because of the high rate of unemployment.

The study by Mfecane et al (2006: 25) also highlights the fact that informal settlements constitute a particular risk for many children. This is because the majority of people living in the informal settlements are unemployed and lack access to basic necessities such as clean water, proper shelter, sanitation and electricity. In his study, Pillay (2004: 8) collaborates these findings. He reveals that the lack of water and electricity at informal settlements makes life difficult, as learners feel embarrassed

when they have to wear dirty clothes at school and sometimes they have a bad odour because they do not wash their bodies because of the shortage of water. They also find it difficult to do their homework since at times there are no candles at home to provide light for studying (Pillay, 2004: 7). Most learners are also unhappy with the houses they live in and the toilets they have. Sometimes the long distances children have to walk to and from school also affect their performance at school.

According to Siluma (2004:1), difficulties experienced by learners in underdeveloped urban areas, like informal settlements are also experienced by learners in rural communities and some of these difficulties are not widely recognised since they are more traditional and social in nature. There are certain traditional and social practices that consume a lot of instructional time and are therefore not particularly supportive of children's schooling (Siluma, 2004). For example, initiation practices, which require candidates between 15 and 21 to be kept away from home and the community for two to three months. During this period, it means that learners will be away from school for such long periods. As a result, many schools are forced to start either later than usual or to cope with scores of learners coming to school late (Siluma 2004: 1). Some of these learners who go away for initiation struggle to catch up with the work that they have missed and this results in poor performance and learners are thus advised not to continue with school (Siluma; 2004: 1).

1.9. THE PURPOSE OF STUDY

The main aim of this study is to investigate the nature of the vulnerability of children and how it affects their schooling. The findings of this study will inform the interventions by the Department of Social Development (DSD), Non Governmental Organisations (NGO), such as Media in Educational Trust (MIET), and the community-care giver's committees such as committees for Nurturing Orphans of AIDS (Noah). These mentioned bodies may assist vulnerable children better.

1.10 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the research objectives:

- To investigate the nature and extent of children's vulnerability in South Africa.
- To determine how the vulnerable state of children affects their schooling.

1.11. KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Basing the research on core objectives of the study, the following questions will be answered by the findings:

- What is the nature and extent of children's vulnerability in South Africa?
- How does the vulnerable state of children affect their schooling?

1.12 ARRANGEMENT OF CHAPTERS

Chapter One offers the necessary contextual parameters of the study, and introduces the thesis.

Chapter Two presents a review of literature. The discussion of literature offers different explanations about the subject of my study that both local and international researchers have put forward various forms of vulnerability of disadvantaged children. It explores how these vulnerability affect the children's schooling.

Chapter Three discusses the key concepts, theoretical framework and the research strategy. It also provides an account of how the study was designed and conducted. Research methodology, sampling method, instruments, research field and problems encountered are also described.

Chapter Four presents research findings from the responses of learners, teachers and parents/caregivers and chapter Five provides analysis, recommendations, limitations and conclusion.

1.13. SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have discussed the background of the study, which has dealt with some of the conditions that make many children vulnerable. It has also discussed the purpose and the objectives of study. Key research questions have been included to direct the researcher to the finding of the study. The arrangement of chapters has also been discussed.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE RELATING TO THE STATE OF CHILDREN LIVING IN ADVERSE CONDITIONS

2.1. PREVIEW

Current research reveals that many children worldwide suffer horrendous setbacks, which hinder their schooling process (Moletsane 2002). These setbacks stem from different environments in which each child is involved. In their study, Kelsall and Kelsall (1971), state that factors arising from interaction with the environment often hinder children. So, this chapter reviews local and international literature by scholars offering an explanation about possible obstacles, which affect success in education.

The main focus of discussion will be on the factors and ways in which they hold learners back from actualising their full scholastic potential. This will be done by basing the discussion on the following themes: poverty, unemployment, Children's Bill of Rights and Responsibility, child abuse, violence, family size and structure/overcrowded families, pandemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS, neighbouring settings and urbanisation. The manner in which these themes affect schooling of children will also be treated.

2.2. POVERTY

There are many perceptions of poverty. The general perception is a personal failure on the part of the one experiencing poverty (Barbarin & Richter, 2001). People who experience poverty suffer from unemployment, which result to the lack of income, low standard of education, lack of material consumption such as food and so on. However, some of the people, like Penn, view poverty in terms of material possessions (Penn, 2005: 19). In most cases, poverty impacts on children who are deprived of clothes, adequate nutrition, and access to services such as health and education services (Skinner & Davids, 2006: 3). Poverty and inadequate standard of living have devastating effects on the development of children, since these children

affected by poverty lack many resources for development, such as money for school, balanced diet and so on. Pollitt & Gorman, (1994) points out that a growing body which experiences economic deprivation and its sequelae, malnutrition and hunger, suffers from an enduring detrimental effects on physical and cognitive development. The low standard of living and economic hardships are linked to adverse outcomes such as high rate of behavioural problems, low education achievement and a host of social ills. Poverty is exacerbated by the high rate of unemployment, which further contributes to the vulnerability among community members (Skinner, Davids, Nkomo, Mfecane & Ratele, (2006).

2.3 UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment is one of the major problems in most African countries, including South Africa. The high rate of unemployment of many parents in the society has a negative effect on children, our nation of tomorrow. It contributes a lot to children's vulnerable state as many children are from poverty-stricken families. There are many different opinions concerning the high rate of unemployment, particularly, South Africa. Some other authors like Mfecane et al (2006: 14), are of the opinion that the problem of unemployment results from the lack of skills required for work because of the lower level of education by many people. Others, like political leaders would like to think that it is because of apartheid. They think that economic policies of apartheid which constrained employment opportunities for many people had left many black people unemployed, and unemployable.

In most cases, as a result of unemployment some children depend on their grandparents' monthly government grant (Barbarin & Richter, 2001). Some of these children depend on their grandparents' pension fund because of HIV/AIDS status of their parents who could not work anymore. The high rate of unemployment has unacceptable outcomes in the society. For an example, inactivity contribute to subsequent involvement in destructive lifestyle such as crime, substance abuse, family violence and so on (Skinner & Davids, (2006). If children are not abused physically or emotionally, they experience deprivation in terms of material

possessions, education and limited access to supportive services. Such experiences become obstacles to children's academic progress and even to emotional development. Although children live with their parents/care-givers, if they [parents] are unemployed children suffer in terms of material possessions such as clothes, decent shelter and so on (Pillay; 2004).

In his study, Pillay's (2004) reveals that many learners indicated that unemployment and poverty contributed to their negative experiences in the informal settlements. According to Swanepoel (1992: 138–139), parents who are unemployed become aggressive and thus behave strangely because of their state of life Swanepoel (1992: 140) goes on pointing out that they [parents/caregivers] end up releasing all the tensions and frustrations on their children by abusing them.. In this way children's rights are being violated (South African Children's Charter 1992). Of course, some parents might not even be aware that they are abusing their children.

2.4 CHILDREN'S BILL OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In nowadays, children have rights, but these rights come with responsibilities and obligations (Department of Health,1999: 2). The Children's Charter of South Africa (1992), states that children have the right to good education and they therefore have the responsibility to study and respect their teachers. Since they have the right to freedom from corporal punishment at school. Children have the responsibility of being obedient and to be disciplined. The Children's Charter (1992) further states that all children have the right to expression, meaning to express their own opinions and the right to be heard in all matters which affect their lives, but they have the responsibility of listening to others as well. They also have the right to good medical care, a safe and comfortable home, as well as the right to be well fed. However, children have the responsibility to keep their home clean and should not vandalise it. They also have the responsibility not to waste food as they have the right to be well fed.

All children have the right to be loved by their parents and the rest of the family members, and they thus have the responsibility to love and care for other people as well. All children have the right to be protected from all types of violence and abuse, which include alcohol abuse by parents, family members and others, and right to be educated about these forms of violence, the danger of drugs and alcohol abuse as well as not to be sent to places where alcohol is sold and consumed. The government has the responsibility to impose laws to shebeen owners that restrict the ages of people to whom they sell their stuff (Department of Health, 1992: 3).

All children, especially in rural areas, should be protected from any kind of hard labour. It is the responsibility of parents to teach their children to participate in daily house chores. Parents should make sure that the house chores done by children are at the level of their development, and that these home duties are executed with parental love and passion, otherwise it is child abuse (Department of Health, 1999: 2).

2.5 CHILD ABUSE

According to the South African Concise Oxford Dictionary (2005), the word ‘abuse’ means to use something or somebody in a wrong, harmful way and for a bad purpose. Pretorius (1998: 366) explains child abuse as a behaviour where a parent acts or fails to act towards the child in such a way that a child is deprived of his rights and freedom and his/ her optimal self-actualization is thereby impeded. Mfecane et al (2006: 27) explain that child abuse can either be physical or emotional. Physical abuse involves forcing children to work excessive house chores at home for the exchange of food, or an outside job to generate income. Mfecane et al (2006: 27) further explain that child abuse can also be the denial of certain rights entitled to children. Abuse of grants means the misuse of money by people who claim to be relatives of stranded children. They use it for their personal needs. Most children are victims of such abuse. Various forms of abuse are discussed in the next subsections.

2.5.1 Neglect and emotional abuse

Kaplan and Sadock (1999) state that abuse includes intentional verbal or behavioural acts that result in adverse emotional consequences. They say that emotional neglect occurs when a caretaker or parent intentionally does not provide nurturing verbal and behavioural action needed for healthy development. The emotionally abused and neglected children show behavioural features such as low self-esteem, poor relationships with their peers and school-learning problems. Sometimes verbal and emotional abuse go hand in hand with physical abuse or corporal punishment.

2.5.2 Physical Abuse and Corporal Punishment in Schools

According to Pretorius' (2007: 366), physical abuse includes physical assault of children, which might be hitting, beatings, smacking, shoving and so on. Findings from Pretorius's (1998) study show that physical abused children have a multitude of psychiatric disturbances, such as anxiety, aggressive behaviour and poor self esteem. For example some of the children become bullies. Some of the teachers in many schools are the perpetrators of physical abuse. They [teachers] still rely on corporal punishment as a tool of positive reinforcement. Corporal punishment in schools has been abolished, but many teachers still use it to address unwanted behaviours, because they think that if children are not punished, they misbehave. This has no effective result in moulding character of children, instead it creates enmity between the teacher and a learner. As a result of corporal punishment undesired behaviours affecting schooling are created. Wheldall and Glynn (1989) further point out that these behaviours include avoiding and escaping behaviors such as avoiding the teacher's area of control whenever possible. Such behaviours include lying, hiding, truancy, and cheating in exams, to name a few. Wheldall and Gynn (1989) are of the opinion that truancy, school phobia or school refusal may often be simply the product of a school environment, which the child finds aversive or lacking in positive interactions compared with what is available outside the school environment. Ratele, Skinner and Nkomo (2006: 69) state that vulnerable children are exposed to great risk, as they are vulnerable to verbal abuse.

2.5.3. Verbal Abuse and Humiliation

Another form of abuse, apart from corporal punishment, is verbal abuse. This form of abuse includes the use of abusive words that are full of sarcasms and criticisms. Abusive words are pejorative remarks that make the victim feel unworthy or feel useless and unwanted. In classroom situations verbal abuse may affect the learning process. In his study, Joseph (2003) reveals that name-calling is more devastating for children's self-confidence than physical bullying. Verbal taunts typically lead to low self-worth, and thus victims feel helpless and lacking control over their own feelings and actions. Name-calling and usage of unacceptable nicknames towards others are prevalent and hurtful features, especially to children at school. They threaten the learner's identity. The same goes with labeling learners according to their performance in class, using words like smart learner or dumb learner (Crozier & Dimmock 1999). This habit is unfair, not only to the child, but to ones classmates as well. Labeling learners creates a bias and prejudice that spread to other children and teachers. It also degrades a child. Verbal abuse of learners in schools could therefore provoke emotional discord, leading to frustration and strained relationships between a teacher and a child (Patridge, 2006).

Emotional difficulties may have further detrimental effects as they might cause behavioural forms of 'school refusal' and refusal to speak in certain contexts in the classroom (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2000: 294). Physical and verbal abuse are often some of the tools used by abusive parents/caregivers (Mfecane et al, 2006: 19) when imposing unreasonable house duties on children.

2.5.4 House Chores

Pretorius (1998: 362) point out that abuse, exploitation and deliberate mutilation of children are not new phenomena. These were used during the Industrial Revolution if children were refusing to work and complaining about work conditions. They were beaten and starved to death. This went on until the period of urbanisation, industrialization and technological advancement when it was declared as abuse of

children within the family situations (Pretorius 2007: 363). House chores within family situations, contribute to children's vulnerability since they [house chores] tend to be imposed on children. House chores include laborious home duties such as doing hard manual labour like ploughing the fields, helping in building constructions and other kinds of duties far above the level of the child. Although it is perceived as an abuse to an outsider, Chinkanda (1987: 182) views the practice as an approach of teaching children the hard facts of survival from an early age. The study by Gupta (2005) reveals that a high number of children leaving school were all from nuclear families. In his study, Gupta (2005) points out that these children are forced by their parents to do hard manual labour. If they do not want to work, they do not get food and are beaten up.

Human Rights Watch (2004) report, reveals that some of women in Kenya even force their girl children to go to the streets (for prostitution) so that their families could survive. This is viewed (by the researcher) as one of the house duties imposed on children. Sexual abuse is discussed in the next subsection.

2.5.5 Sexual Abuse

Landsberg (2005) points out that moral and sexual licentiousness has reached extreme limits as children of two years and babies of few months old are being raped. Myths regarding sexual—abuse are perpetuated by beliefs that sexual abuse is not harmful if the child enjoys it (Landsberg, 2005: 40). In addition to the myths of sexual abuse, Machel (2001: 55) states that perpetrators believe that young girls are less likely to be carriers of sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS. This statement supports the myth that HIV/AIDS is cured by having sexual intercourse with a virgin (Mamphela Ramphela, 2008), this idea gives rise to high rate of young girls being raped by old men and even their fathers. As a result, young girls become more vulnerable to venereal diseases and teenage pregnancies (Landsberg 2005: 30). Unemployment of the youths contributes to sexual abuse, as many girls are hooked to the boys so as to get money.

High rate of unemployment amongst the youths have forced many teenage girls to opt for prostitution as a survival strategy (Skinner & Davids, 2006: 4). On the other hand, as a result of unemployment male youths become involved in crime and rape (Skinner & Davids, 2006). As rape of many women is escalating to high levels, Machel (2001: 55) 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 behavioral 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. Landsberg (2005) further suggests that teachers should have full knowledge of each child's family background, as one of the participants from the research study by Mfecane, Skinner and Davids (2006: 28) observed that parents tend to leave their children unattended while they are socializing in local shebeens where alcohol is sold, and this poses danger to children such as rape and hunger.

2.5.6 Substance Abuse

Substance abuse has been a consistent problem across South Africa and the problem of excessive alcohol consumption is well established. Findings from the study of Skinner & 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 points out that the abuse of alcohol by parents/ caregivers heightens the problems for children. They are left on their own with no one to take care of them, since parents/caregivers are always out enjoying themselves. Supporting this statement, Kuzwayo (2005: 49) maintains that liquor rob families, particularly mothers and children, of the father's wages and that excessive drinking contributes greatly to the breakdown of family life. In their study, Mfecane et al (2006: 18) reveal that alcohol abuse is rife as both parents and children abuse it to unacceptable levels and this is caused by the lower prices charged for alcohol. Some sheebens do not observe the age restriction in selling alcohol.

As a result of high levels of alcohol usage by both adults and youths, lack of money to have access to food and liquor due to unemployment forces some of the parents/ caregivers to be attempted to abuse children's grants.

2.5.7. Abuse of Grants

Abuse of grants in most cases, involves caregivers or extended family members who foster children after their parents have died. According to Skinner et al (2004) some of the extended family members contribute a lot to the vulnerable state of children, by taking children's inheritance and misusing their social support grants. Findings from the study of Skinner & Davids (2006) show that there are people who foster children for the purpose of generating income and to inherit all the properties left by children's parents. These people are not interested in the children whom that they are fostering and they thus misuse children's social support grant and property (Ratele et al 2006: 69). At the end of the day, the abused children become helpless, without proper education and coping skills. Such situations disturb children's physical and psychological development, which result in poor performance at school and possible dropping out. They [children] even find it difficult to develop other personal skills. Pretorius (1998) states that some of these abusive caregivers or relatives are not good at financial management. They misuse money, which leads to stress and they fail to manage and resolve stress without resorting to violence and humiliation of children. The next subsection discusses violence, directed to children.

2.6. VIOLENCE

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary (1995), violence means behaviour, which hurts another person. So there are many forms of violence. It could either be physical or emotional. These forms include beating, rape, sexual harassment and so on. In their study, Barbarin and Richter (2001: 204) state that most children encounter violence in the family and neighbourhood settings. Human Rights Watch (2004) reported that for many children, violence is part of their lives at school and at home, especially within the overcrowded families. Continuing Gender Based

Violence (GBV) in communities and schools, interact to hamper efforts aimed at addressing inequality in education and discrimination against girl children in society (Moletsane, 2003).

Gender based violence working hand in hand with gender inequality constitute women's oppression and discrimination. Human Rights Watch (2004) reported that girls in many countries are deprived of education because their education is not valued. It was also the case in some places in South Africa but that mentality has changed. Gender based violence is commonly experienced by families dominated by high-level of alcohol usage. It is however noted that many children from overcrowded families witness violence between parent/ caregivers as they [parents/ caregivers] lack privacy (Steyn, Van Wyk & Le Roux, 1990: 303), due to overcrowding.

2.7 FAMILY SIZE AND STRUCTURE/ OVERCROWDED FAMILIES

The main aim here is to show how the size of the family could affect children. Kelsall and Kelsall (1971: 50) state that it is difficult to look after a big family with an insufficient income. Such 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 behavior 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.

2.8 SINGLE PARENTHOOD

There are many causes for single parenthood. It could be divorce of married couple, separation and death of a spouse (Haralambos & Holborn (2000). 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 single parents find it difficult to cope without their partners. Some of the single parents become delinquents. They become involved in drug abuse, which affect the schooling of their children as they have no one to look after.

In their study, Mfecane, Skinner & Davids (2006: 16) reveal that single parenthood today is exacerbated by young people who engage in sexual intercourse outside marriage, which results in the high rate of the unplanned babies being born. Faced with challenges of raising children, some abandon them.

2.9. ABANDONED CHILDREN

Deprived by poverty, the life style of the greatest percentage of poor families in South Africa shows visible signs of the demoralizing influences, as both adults and young people fail to maintain reasonable standards of self respect, home management and sexual morality (Landsbergs, 2005: 28). The sexual immorality among youth is so high, so the rate of unplanned pregnancies soars to high levels (Mfecane et al, 2006: 16). In most cases, abandonment of children is caused by the high rate of unplanned children whose parents are unemployed. Poverty could also be a contributing factor. Lately, people abandon their children who are HIV positive.

As a result of abandonment, such 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).

2. 10 HIV/AIDS PANDEMIC

UNICEF (2005) reports that HIV/AIDS continues to strain communities in Southern Africa by killing some of the most productive members of society, including civil

servants, teachers, farmers and parents, which result in many families being headed by women, children or very old people. 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. If our leaders do not take the epidemic of HIV/AIDS seriously, many children will leave school to care for their dying parents and job-hunting for survival (Guest, 2001). Some children are forced to leave school for job-hunting after the death of their parents because of their relatives or caregivers who deprive them of the inheritance left by their parents. Some of the children are lucky enough to have their grandparents as caregivers.

2.11 GRANDPARENTS AS CAREGIVERS

Most of orphans caused by AIDS are being left to the responsibility of their grandparents who support them with 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 is concern. They firstly care for their dying children and then look after their grandchildren.

As the rate of teenage pregnancy while at school is very high nowadays, grandparents, especially grandmothers also play a major role by allowing their granddaughters to continue with school while they take care of their grandchildren. Grandmothers are the ones who step in when their daughters are not able to care for their children because of serious illness, abuse of substances, or even plain irresponsibility (Barbarin & Richter, 2001: 144). 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.

As grandparents play the role of being the buffers for children against hunger and other basic necessities, the overriding fear among grandparents is that they will also die and leave their grandchildren stranded (Barbarin & Richter, 2001: 144- 146).

These statements are supported by this response from the old woman with newspaper journalist: *“All that I want is to see my grandchildren doing something for themselves in future and not ending up like me and their mother. I want them to be nurses, teachers, or journalists. I often worry about what will happen if I die”*. (Sunday Times, October 10: 2003). Grandchildren’s education is limited as grandparents due to old age ailments may be called to rest (die) (Sunday Times, 2003). However, despite HIV/AIDS, depriving children the right of living with their parents, children are left to the care of their grandparents because of urbanisation which had moved people to cities for job hunting.

2.12 URBANISATION

Lack of job opportunities drives people to the cities. As a result, unplanned informal settlements are rapidly spreading all over near the cities (Landsberg, 2005: 22). The demands that urbanization and modernization make on the family, called for radical changes in family situation (Chinkanda, 1987: 180). These radical changes come as a result of the fact that most of the goods needed have to be paid for in high prices (Chinkanda, 1987: 178). Urbanization and modernization have prompted shifts in gender roles as mothers of young children are increasingly drawn into labour markets and are engaged in work outside their homes (Barbarin & Richter, 2001: 20). These family—structural changes have contributed to the increasing number of children who are left alone at home because their parents are out, job hunting (Le Roux, 1994: 202). Children thus lack parental supervision and care. Urbanisation, with unemployment as a challenge, has created a social climate in neighborhood settings in which violence and crime are rampant and anti-social norms become a standard (Barbarin & Richter, 2001: 197).

2.13 NEIGHBOURHOOD SETTINGS

According to Chinkanda (1987: 180) children who are raised in areas where there is a high rate of crime, alcoholism, malnutrition and high mortality are bound to grow up with negative character traits. Children living in poor communities surrounded by

substandard housing, attending under resourced chaotic schools where crime, violence and problems of physical safety are everywhere, are vulnerable to negative experiences in their life development (Barbarin & Richter, 2001: 198). Supporting this statement, the Human Rights Watch (2006) reported that the lack of easy access to schools forces many children to walk long distances on foot to and from school. This poses many dangers to children such as sexual abuse, road accidents and so on.

Human Rights Watch (2004) also reported that children in poor rural areas are often faced with economic barriers to education that may seem insurmountable. Children in many communities do not lack school fees only, but even school material such as stationery and uniforms. Kelsall and Kelsall (1971: 55) state that children from slum environments may sometimes happen not to have much interest in education because it [education] is likely lacking from some of their parents who should inspire them.

2.14 SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have reviewed literature, which is related to the subject of this study. 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.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 PREVIEW

This chapter discusses the key concepts, theoretical framework and the research strategy adopted in this study. Key concepts are defined and explained in relation to the study. The section on theoretical framework focuses on theories that are used in the study. The research strategy section discusses the research design, data collection methods, data analysis method, ethical considerations and challenges during fieldwork.

SECTION A

3.2. KEY CONCEPTS.

3.2.1. Child / Learner

There seems to be a common understanding of the word “child”. The South African Concise Dictionary (2005) defines “child” as a young human being below the age of full physical development. The term ‘learner’, on the other hand, is commonly used in South Africa to refer to any child who is receiving education or obliged to receive education (Government Gazette, 1996, no 4). During this development stage, children as young human beings have no power to fend for themselves and are thus vulnerable to various forms of social predicaments. In this thesis, the words child and learner are used interchangeably since the children who participated in the study are schooling and are of school going ages.

3.2.2 Disadvantaged Children

According to the South African Concise Oxford Dictionary (2005), ‘disadvantaged’ children are children who are in socially and economically deprived circumstances.

As a result, they find themselves failing to reach their educational goals for which they are capable of achieving. In agreement with Kelsall and Kelsall (1971), Garbers (1980: 6-22) describes disadvantaged children as a group of children whose education and development are hindered by their environmental backgrounds. In this thesis, the concept is used in line with this definition.

3.2.3 Vulnerability

Vulnerability means to be exposed, to being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally (South African Concise Dictionary, 2005). Pretorius (1998: 57) views “vulnerability” as a state of being defenseless. For the purpose of this study, I am using the same understanding with these two referenced sources since the study concerns children that are struggling under severe social life circumstances due to poverty, unemployment of parents, pandemic diseases such as AIDS and other social problems against which they have no power. These problems have negative effects in children’s lives as sometimes children are forced by circumstances to drop out of school.

3.2.4 Schooling

Schooling is a term used to refer to education that is received at school. Pretorius (1998: 75) describes the school as a social institution which has been established as an “instrument” with the task of methodically providing the maturing generations with skills, knowledge and insight, which they will eventually need as adults in society.

Schooling means attending classes for learning by children so that they are equipped with knowledge and skills. In other words, for formal education to happen in a formal environment, schooling has to take place. In order for learners to be successful with their schooling, basic necessities such as school fees, uniform, stationery, food to sustain body and mind need to be met by their families. In addition, a stable family environment that is full of love and warmth enhances academic progression at school.

However, in poverty-stricken environments and where people die of diseases such as AIDS, love, support and warmth, which many children usually receive from families, may be replaced by neglect, rejection, abandonment and abuse of children.

SECTION B

3.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Bronfenbrenner's (1989: 187-249) ecosystemic theory postulates that existing environmental influences directly and indirectly affect child development. Bronfenbrenner's (1989) children's ecosystemic theory is based on the interdependence and relationships between different organisms and their physical environments. Explaining interdependence, Bronfenbrenner (1989, 188) states that it refers to a relationship that exists when two or more entities need each other or one another for their physical survival or social functioning. According to this theory the "environment" of a developing child is arranged into 'systems' where the functioning of the whole is dependent on the interaction of all parts. The 'systems' are the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, up to the macrosystem. The arrangement of systems also begins with the child's immediate settings such as family, the school, and neighbourhood up to more remote contexts such as the broader culture. According to Bronfenbrenner's (1989: 199-200) ecosystemic theory, "each of these systems interacts with the others and with the individual, and whatever happens in one part of the system will impact on all other parts."

According to Bronfenbrenner (1989), the microsystem predominantly consists of the child's immediate family. The child's immediate family includes parents, grandparents and siblings of the developing child. At the school, neighbourhood, and church level, the child's immediate environment comprises of peers, teachers, the priest and so on. These form the subsystems within the microsystem (Donald et al, 2002: 51). At this microsystem level, the developing child is closely involved in continuous face-to-face interactions with familiar people (Donald et al, 2002: 21). Bronfenbrenner (1989) points out that not only do the people or subsystems present in

the microsystem influence children, but children themselves also influence those people as well. For example, poverty perpetuated by unemployment of parents in families negatively influences the child's academic development because the child may not be able to attend school due to financial constraints (Pretorius, 1998: 306). In turn, the child might negatively influence the school since the child's poor attendance at school and unpaid school fees will affect the functioning of the school or teaching and learning.

Pettigrew and Akhurst (1999: 216) maintain that whether parent-child relationships support or undermine the child's development depends on the environmental systems that surround and influence these relationships. Due to high prevalence of diseases related to HIV/AIDS, parent-child relationships are undermining the child's development. The illness of parents reduces their capacity to provide care to the developing children. In addition, children are psychologically affected when they have to watch their sick and dying parents (Skinner & Davids, 2006: 2). The breaking down of family structures caused by death of one or both parents (Siluma, 2004: 1) also have negative impact on children's development. As discussed in chapter two, many orphaned children, especially girls, sometimes drop out of school in order to take over adult roles at home (Guest, 2001: 7).

The mesosystem consists of those sub-systems that are close to the child, such as the school, the neighbourhood, day care-centre, the church and other systems (Pettigrew & Akhurst, 1999: 216). Unlike in the microsystem where the child interacts directly with each of the subsystems (family, church, school and so on), in the meso-system, these subsystems interact with each other and with the family of the developing child. Pettigrew and Akhurst (1999: 216) point out that the connections between these subsystems (i.e. the school, neighbourhood, day care centre, the church, and so on) and the family of a developing child are particularly important to a school-going learner. This is because the child's academic progress at school is promoted by his or her parental involvement in his/her school life as well as the extent to which academic

learning is valued and encouraged at home. The services rendered by subsystems or institutions in the mesosystem enhance the development of the child. Beckmann (1989: 236) maintains that the lack of services from these institutions would negatively influence the child's development.

Bronfenbrenner's (1989) view that there should be a strong supportive link between the school and the family is challenged in situations where children grow up under adverse conditions. Many orphaned and abandoned learners are raised by their grandparents who might be very old, and thus not have the required energy to effectively support the academic development of their grandchildren. Some learners live with caregivers who might lack interest to support the academic development of children. This happens when caregivers believe that schoolwork should only be done at school and home time is for doing house chores. In these circumstances, the child's academic learning is neglected and thus not valued (Pretorius, 1998: 310).

Some of the children are raised by single parents who are often engrossed with challenges from work and are more focussed on generating income for their families. Such parents might have inadequate time dedicated to their children's academic work. In adverse conditions, and when there is a lack of connection between the school and the family of the developing child, the school might lack understanding of what affects the learning of a child. For example, as mentioned in chapter one, Pillay (2004: 8) conducted a study in Lenasia Secondary School where he investigated the "experiences of learners from informal settlements". In this study, Pillay (2004) reports that learners from informal settlements experienced hardships when studying at home because of overcrowding. The houses in informal settlements are close to each other and most people survive by drinking alcohol and thus make a lot of noise. The study by Pillay (2004) further reveals that the lack of water and electricity in informal settlements makes life difficult, as learners have to study using candlelight. Families do not have enough money to buy candles needed for studying. Engulfed by these difficulties, learners from informal settlements negatively experienced the

school as they felt that teachers and other learners thought that they themselves (that is, learners from informal settlement) did not want to learn (Pillay, 2004: 6). This also shows that if schools do not take cognisance of the environmental contexts of learners or their cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, both learners and teachers are likely to have negative experiences at their schools (Donald et al, 2002).

Bronfenbrenner's (1989) third environmental layer, which is the exosystem, consists of settings that the child never experiences directly but, which may still affect his/her development (Pettigrew & Akhurst, 1999: 216). These would include parent's place of work, siblings peer group, local education and, government bodies and community organisations (Pettigrew & Akhurst, 1999: 217). Pettigrew and Akhurst (1999: 217) also claim that the exosystem support can also be informal. For example parent's social networks like friends and extended family members may provide advice and even financial assistance.

The exosystem supports can also be formal when government bodies such as the Department of Health and Welfare intervene in the development of a child who is orphaned. For example, intervention by the Department of Education to alleviate poverty in primary schools by providing schools with feeding-scheme programmes is also one of the exosystem supports.

The fourth layer of the environmental systems that I discuss is the chronosystem, which is about societal influence and change (Chinkanda, 1987: 247). According to Bronfenbrenner (1989-1993), the environment is not a static force that affects children's development in the same way across decades or centuries, but instead it is ever changing. Pretorius (1998: 252) claims that the educational communication is often influenced by the fact that the time and social circumstances under which a learner develops differ radically from the situations that prevailed when the child's parents grew. Previously, in many societies orphaned children were hardly identified since the children who lost their parents were catered for within the confines of

extended families, crime was minimal, pandemic diseases like AIDS were unheard of, and ways of living were strictly channeled by norms and values dominating societies. In addition, the solidarity of the people in communities where people shared natural resources among themselves also meant that very few, if any; families were living in dire poverty.

The widespread of modern styles of living and advancements that have been brought by technology are the radical changes that have never prevailed during the parent's childhoods. In modern societies, children are disadvantaged and vulnerable because of various social ills prevailing in the environment most of which result from various set backs in their environmental settings. The social ills prevailing in the environment make the environment to be oppressive to the developing child. Describing the theory of oppression, Young (1990) regards oppression as restricting as it denotes structural and material constraints that significantly shape a person's life chances. Young (1990) further points out that oppression restricts both self-development and self-determination. According to Young's (1990) theory of oppression, all oppressed people suffer some restrictions or inhibitions of their abilities to develop and exercise their capabilities as well as express their needs, thoughts and feelings. A child's environmental systems are oppressive when they do not favour the child's development. Therefore, children whose environmental settings restrict their capabilities to develop and make them suffer from perpetual restrictions in terms of basic life necessities, such children are said to be living under the oppressive environmental settings. In other words such children are oppressed by the environment.

SECTION C

3.4 THE RESEARCH STRATEGY

3.4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

For the data collecting phase I spent seven weeks in the research field, which was thirty-five days of data collection. In the first two weeks, I worked with learners. One week was allocated for fabric painting. Art materials such as fabric paint, paint brushes, newspapers to cover working surfaces, and old yoghurt containers to use for mixing fabric paint were supplied to children. During this week, learners worked on the artwork projects that were assigned to them. Learners used the supplied materials to make their drawings. The artwork project took a week, as each learner was given enough time to work in his /her own pace. The second week was used for textual responses from learners. During this week, learners wrote down their responses in their diaries. The researcher had supplied each learner with a diary.

Preliminary analysis of data from learners happened during the third week. This informed the nature of questions that were asked to parents/caregivers and teachers during the following weeks. During this week, I also arranged time schedules for interviews with the teachers. The fourth week was spent on collection of data from educators through interviews. The fifth week was spent arranging time schedules with parents/caregivers. Here, I visited the parents/caregivers in their homes. Preliminary analysis of data from learners and teachers continued. The sixth and seventh weeks were spent collecting data from parents/caregivers.

3.4.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, qualitative design is used in order to explore the nature and extent of vulnerable state of disadvantaged children and the effect it has on schooling. Several studies (Eisner, 1991; Hull, 1997; Lee, Mitchell & Sablynski, Merrian, 2006; Nasser, 2001) describe qualitative research as a study that occurs in natural settings of social actors. The qualitative study examines a small number of settings of people over extended period of time. Creswell (1998) defines qualitative research as “an inquiry

process of understanding based on distinct methodical traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem.” Babbie and Mouton (2005: 270) also describe qualitative approach as an approach which allows qualitative researchers to study human actions from the perspective of social actors themselves, which are research participants. In other words, the researchers deliberately attempt to put themselves in the shoes of the people they are observing and studying.

Qualitative research uses methods such as interviews, observations and diaries to collect data. The qualitative method is relevant in this study since I am studying learners in one school to gain an in depth understanding of their circumstances and how these affect schooling. In the study, the learners’ own explanation of their situation through drawings and responses in diaries were analysed. In addition, the teachers and parents/caregivers responses during interviews were obtained and analysed.

3.4.3. THE RESEARCH FIELD

The research was conducted in a primary school. The school is situated in a densely populated area along the south coast of KwaZulu-Natal. The area in which the school is located was never involved in political violence that affected the province during the 1980’s. As a result, the place became a place of safety for refugees from neighbouring areas that were torn apart by violence. Apart from violence, which was a push factor, attracting people into this area, the area is located between Durban and other towns such as Umzinto, Scottburg as well as Port Shepstone. Being located near the busy N2 freeway, which connects the small towns with the city of Durban, the area is much exposed to the trafficking of drugs and other dangerous commodities. The area is also having flourishing businesses of liquor as some of community members make ends meet by selling liquor. For instance, there are six taverns in the community surrounding the school.

The community in which the school is situated is comprised of people from different social classes. The group, which forms the majority of the people in the community, are mainly the working class and lower classes who are struggling to make ends meet. Children who go to the school, which is the research site, come from these classes of the society. The minority in the community form the middle and the upper classes. These are the affluent community members who are mostly civil servants, professional people, and some hold high positions in industries. Children from these families attend urban schools known as ex-model C schools¹ in town.

The school has an enrolment of one thousand, one hundred and sixty learners. There are thirty-nine teachers, teaching in this school. The school is located next to the main road and this poses fatal road accidents to learners. Since the school is serving the poverty stricken community, the Government feeding scheme for learners thus assists it. The school has recently been classified as non-fee paying school, which is also one of Government's attempts to reduce the burden of paying school fees from shoulders of parents/caregivers.

3.4.4. PARTICIPANTS

From four sections/classrooms for grade seven, learners were randomly selected according to their age from twelve up to eighteen years, and the researcher ensured gender balances among participants. A group of learners from grade seven was selected on the basis that they belong to the grade I teach. To select learners from other grades was going to be problematic as it was going to be time consuming to bring them together on time, since the school is a big institution. Learner's age groups and gender are distributed in the table below:

¹ Ex-model C schools were schools that were reserved for Whites during the apartheid regime. These schools were funded by the Government and they have all facilities including resources for teaching and learning. African parents who can afford, now send their children to such schools.

Table 1: Age groups and gender of learners from grade seven

AGE GROUPS	GENDER	
	BOYS	GIRLS
12 YEARS	2	1
13 YEARS	2	4
14 YEARS	2	4
15 YEARS	2	1
16 YEARS	1	-
17 YEARS	-	-
18 YEARS	1	-
TOTALS	10	10

Five teachers and five parents/caregivers were selected to participate in the study. Among the teachers, three female and two male teachers were selected from different grades. Parents/caregivers comprised of two females and three males. Gender balance was ensured in the selection of both teachers and parents/caregivers. Teachers and parents/caregivers were selected, because they are the ones who live with children most of the time. Teachers stay with learners during teaching and learning hours and parents/caregivers live with them at home.

3.4.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

3.4.5.1 TRIANGULATION

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) point out that triangulation, which is the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspects of human behavior, is the most powerful way of demonstrating validity. To demonstrate validity, I saw it important to employ three methods, which are interviews; diaries and arts based participatory methodologies. Three groups of research participants were also selected, which were the learners, teachers and parents/ caregivers

3.4.5.2 ARTS BASED AND PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGIES

Since the study concerned children who are disadvantaged and vulnerable to social ills, arts-based and participatory method was found to be a suitable tool for collecting data from children, since drawings to people whose negative emotions might be evoked, are less confrontational than interviews (Reley, 2003). Adding on arts as a

vital tool for collecting data, Silver (2005: 11), says arts involves symbolic representations, conscious and unconscious thought, and feelings. It was therefore necessary to employ arts based method for the children so that they would express freely their thoughts and feelings through arts in a relaxed environment. In the study, fabric paintings were thus used. Art-drawings are also recommended as a healing method for depressed children as art making can relieve painful deprecation (Reley, 2003: 4).

Compiled booklets called “Diaries” titled “the story about my life” were distributed among learners who were participating in the research programme. Describing a diary, Allport (1965) describes it as spontaneous, intimate personal documents in which the author sets down only such events, thought and feeling as they have importance to him. Babbie & Mouton (2005: 301) regard the diary as a resource in which the author may express feelings which otherwise would never be made public in its ideal form. Therefore, children as authors were allowed an opportunity to write events, thoughts and express their personal feelings in their diaries.

Painting materials were supplied to learners who were selected group of learners. Learners were instructed to draw artistic figures in fabric materials, which they were supplied with. Learners were told to make a drawing that would best depict their lives. The figure that had been drawn was to be followed by a description of what it is depicting. Since the main aim was to collect data from learners in a relaxed environment, a friendly atmosphere was created. Right-handed learners were instructed to draw using their left hands and the left-handed learners used their right hands. This made learners who are not good at drawing not to feel bad about themselves because even learners who are good at art were not using hands they would normally use. This also made the art session fun. Kaplan (2000) points out that art can stimulate pleasure and self-esteem and provide opportunities for successful functioning in children with cognitive impairment. This point by Kaplan (2000) became a reality when during the sessions I noted some of the learners in jovial

moods, humming their ditties while they were fully engaged with their art works. There were also self-praises accompanied by boasting among boys, showing each other their drawn art works, created by the hand they do not use.

Completed art works were photographed and photos were pasted in spaces reserved for art work photos in the learners' dairies. Pieces of fabrics that were used for drawing were thus sewn together to form beautiful banner. Learners' diaries had two sections, which were section A and B. Section A of their diaries were reserved with spaces for photos of their art works. Learners were requested to paste their art-works photos in spaces that were provided for artwork photos in section A. Just below the artwork photos, a space was provided on which learners had to describe all what their artwork photos depict. Section B of the diaries had questions and learner wrote their responses to questions in spaces that were provided in their diaries.

3.4.5.3 INTERVIEWS

In the study, I used interviews to collect data from teachers and parents/caregivers. The rationale for using interviews as one of the instruments for data collection stemmed from the point made by Akroyd and Hughes (1992: 102) that an interview allows individuals to report on what they feel, tell others about their lives, disclose what they hope and fear, offer their opinions and state what they believe in. Bearing the above mentioned points in mind, and keeping with the central concern of the study, which will focus on the participant's views, I realised that an interview is a suitable research tool. The advantage of an interview technique is its scope for hatching issues and leading people into deep discussions about matters pertaining to their lives.

Teachers and parents/care-givers were invited for interviews. Teachers were selected on the basis of being class teachers with knowledge about learners family backgrounds. Parents were selected on the basis that they live with children at home. As mentioned earlier, five teachers and five parents/caregivers were invited to participate in the interviewing programme. Teachers and parents/caregivers were

interviewed at different times. Group interviews were conducted. The rationale for choosing this method is that it saves time and it shapes and reshapes opinion (Babbie & Mouton, 2005: 292). This became true when parents/caregivers were debating about issues concerning problems that are caused by children. Interviews were conducted after school hours in one of the classrooms that were prepared for interviewing sessions. The interviewees were comfortable and relaxed during interviews. A tape recorder was used to capture data as it was going to be impossible to remember or to capture in notes all the complex ideas explored during the interviews. As will be explained later, all ethical considerations were taken care of regarding the research including recording of sessions.

3.4.6 CHALLENGES DURING FIELD WORK

Civil Servants' strike had a major set back for this study, as all the public institutions were forced to shut down. The school where the research study was to be conducted had to be closed for a month. Everything concerning this study had to stop. However, after the strike, the research programme continued, but there were challenges when it came to its participants. The responses from parents were poor as they were committed with their daily work schedules. Parents happened not to avail themselves for their booked days. Teachers had to be involved with their children for extra-curricular activities in the afternoons to make up for the lost time during the strike. Since participation was on voluntary basis, it was easy for teachers to tell me that they were not prepared to take part in the interviews. I had to re-schedule all dates. However, I was able to collect all data during the newly arranged dates.

3.4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Prior to the research, permission was firstly sought from the provincial Department of Education. The Department of Education issued a letter permitting me to conduct a research at the school. A copy of the letter from the Department of Education was also forwarded to the Ward Manager for notification and approval. Other copies of

letters from the Departments 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 (SGB)(See Appendix 1 – 6). The principal and School Governing Body's Chairperson gave me the permission to conduct research at school.

Participants were informed that a tape recording machine would be used to collect data during the interviews (Appendix 7 – 9). Therefore, their consent with regard to a tape recorder being used was sought. To ensure the participants' freedom of expression during interview sessions, they were informed that they have the right not to be recorded should they wish not to. Data and my report writing were stored in a safe filling cabinet where, I as a researcher was the only person who had an access to. All data collected for this study, will be burnt after 3 years of completing the degree. Prior to research study being conducted, ethical clearance application together with research proposal were submitted to the University's ethics committee and the ethical clearance certificate was obtained.

3.4.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Data sources were transcripts from interviews with teachers and parents/caregivers (Appendix 7 – 9). Written responses of learners that were based on diaries and their art works were analysed. The data was coded and recorded and categories were formed. Themes thus emerged and these are discussed in the next chapter.

3.4.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter I have discussed the key concepts and the theoretical framework where I discussed theories relevant to the study. I have also discussed the research strategy, which included the research design, research methodology, data collection methods, ethical considerations and data analysis. The next chapter will present the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 PREVIEW

This chapter presents the research findings. Data sources that were analysed are: transcripts from interviews with teachers and parents/care-givers, learner's drawings, their written texts and the researcher's field notes. Four themes that emerged from the analysis, which are discussed below are:

- absent parents
- violence
- child safety and child sexual abuse
- as well as poverty.

4.2 ABSENT PARENTS

According to Bronfenbrenner (1989: 189), 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: 7). In this study, the findings reveal that fifty-percent (50%) of learners have absent parents. Of this group, twenty percent (20%) has absent parents in their lives, because their parents have died. The theme of death that was depicted through tombs and funerals in the learner's drawings forms a thread running through.

Figure 1. Tombs of family members



This drawing in figure 1 shows the learner with her sister, as they were living together after all adults had died. The very same sister, with whom the learner was living, fell pregnant and she also died when she was giving birth to the child. The number of tombs in the yard explains the full fate of the learner. In her written text, she explained that the tombs belong to her parents, brothers and her grandparent (Diary no.6: 7).

Figure 2. The learner with her full responsibility at her home



The drawing in figure 2 shows the learner who drew this drawing holding her three-year-old sister. The toddler is now the responsibility of the learner, as parents died in a car accident. Again, in this drawing the learner shows tombs of the parents that have died. The third tomb is for the learner's brother who was sick and died immediately after having been discharged from hospital (Diary no.16: 7). Responsibilities together

with sad death memories were also depicted in the learners' drawings, as most learners drew themselves crying.

Figure 3. The learner in her family funeral



The above drawing shows the picture of the funeral. This learner's drawing in B depicts her with tears, showing that she is crying. Next to her are two people carrying a corpse. According to the learner's explanations, the body that is being carried away to the grave is that of her mother (Diary no 7: 7).

Figure 4. Family funeral again (HIV/AIDS victim)



Not all learners who have lost their parents knew about what killed their parents, though this learner was suspecting that AIDS was the main cause of her mother's

death. This drawing in figure 4 above also shows a funeral. The drawing shows the dead body being carried away to the graveyard. There are two children that are crying. The learner who drew this said that the other child next to her is her younger sister. She said that the drawing is about her mother's funeral whom she suspects was killed by AIDS (Diary no.12: 7).

When parents die, children are emotionally affected, as they expressed themselves about failing to concentrate fully during teaching and learning sessions as they think about their dead parents. Learners' written life stories based on their drawings show evidence that either or both parents have died. The sick and dead parents affect attendance or schooling because learners have to take responsibility for their young siblings, as the following participants indicated:

Bengihlala nodadewethu ekhaya. Abazali bethu bashona, ngasala naye wabe eseyakhulelwa. Wathi uyabeletha washona. Ingane eseyibelethile yabe isisala nami. Uma ngiza esikoleni ngiyishiya nomakhelwane. Nabo omakhelwane sebeqala ukuba nenkinga nami. Sengiyaqala ukuphazamiseka ezifundweni. Uma ngivuka ngicabanga ngale ngane ukuthi ngizoyenza njani.

I was living with my sister at home. Our parents died and I was together with my sister. She fell pregnant. During delivery, she died and left a newborn baby behind. This baby is my responsibility. When I go to school, I leave her with my neighbour. Now, my neighbour is showing signs of having problems with the baby and me. I am being disturbed in my studies, as I am worried thinking what to do with the baby (Diary no.6: 7).

Kumndeni wakithi ngihlala nabazali bami nomfowethu nodadewethu. Kwase kuvela inkinga yengozi yemoto kubazali bami base bayashona. Umfowethu wagula kakhulu, wathathwa wahanjiswa esibhedlela. Ngasala nodadewethu omncane. Wabuya umfowethu esibhedlela. Kwasa ngakusasa eseshonile. Mina ngase ngisala nodadewethu omncane. Sihlala sobabili ekhaya ngoba izihlobo azifuni ukusithatha. Ngingase ngingasakwazi ukuqhubeka esikoleni ngoba akafundi udadewethu omncane oneminyaka emithathu.

In my family I used to live with my parents, my brother and my sister. My parents were involved in a car accident and they died. My little sister and I were thus left alone with my brother. My brother took seriously ill and he was rushed to the hospital. My brother was

discharged from the hospital, but the following day, he died. I am now living with my sister, because our relatives do not want to take us. There is that possibility of not continuing with schooling as I have to look after my baby sister who is not schooling because she is still young, she is only three years old (Diary no.16: 7).

Lack of counseling for children who had lived with terminally ill parents or who had their parents dying, leave children being psychologically and emotionally affected. Affected children struggle to concentrate at school as they keep on thinking about their parents as some learners expressed:

Mina ekhaya ngihlala nomama. Ubaba washona nabafowethu bonke bashona. Umama uyagula. Mina sengiphazamisekile emqondweni wami ngoba ngihlala ngicabanga ngomama. Kwathi ngisesikoleni ngafonelwa udokotela bengitshela ukuthi umama ushonile.

At home I was living with my mother. My father had died. My brothers had also died. My mother got sick. I was disturbed in my mind by my mother's illness. One day when I was at school, I received a call from my mother's doctor, informing me that my mother had passed away (Diary no. 7: 7).

Bengihlala nomama ekhaya. Umama wagula washona. Sasala sobabili sinodadewethu. Ngiyasola ukuthi wayeguliswa izifo eziphathelene nesifo se HIV/AIDS, ngoba wayesezacile kakhulu. Thina siyafunda. Uma sifunda siyaphazamiseka esikoleni ngoba sisuke sicabanga ngomzali wethu, kodwa sisaqhubeka nokufunda.

I was living with my mother at home. My mother became sick and she died. We are thus left with my younger sister. I'm suspecting that my mother died of HIV/AIDS, as she was very thin. During teaching and learning at school, we are disturbed as we find ourselves thinking about our mother, but we are still schooling (Diary no. 12: 7).

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. Evidence from data shows that fifteen percent (15%) of children whose parents are still alive, are not living with their children because of various reasons. Some parents are working far away from home and some parents have just abandoned their children. In situations where parents are not living at home, children are thus exposed to gender related harassments, addiction to drugs and violence, as one of the learners responded:

Mina ngihlala nomalume ekhaya. Mina ngiyafunda. Sihlala nabanye abafowethu abathathu nabo bayafunda. Uma nginikwa umsebenzi wasekhaya (homework) esikoleni, uma ngibuza ngawo umsebenzi wasesikoleni bavele bathi abanandaba. Ngingawubhali ngisebenze ngigeze izitsha ngiyohlakula ensimini. Abazali bethu basebenza kude nasekhaya bahlala eThekwini. Abafowethu laba abadala baye bathi angipheke ngoba yimina intombazane. Abafowethu bayabhema ugwayi nensangu. Babuye abafowethu bangayi esikoleni badle ukudla bakuqede mina ngigcine ngingadlanga. Babuye abafowethu bangishaye kwesinye isikhathi ngize ngilanyulelwe ngumalume.

I live with my uncle at home. I am a scholar. My three brothers live with us. If I have been given homework, wanting my brothers to help me as they are doing higher grades than me, they simple tell me that I should leave behind homework and do the house chores. They instruct me to go to mielie-fields to weed and after that they instruct me to wash the dishes. Our parents are working far away from home. They live in Durban. My brothers use to instruct me to cook food, because I'm the girl. My brothers drink liquor and smoke dagga and tobacco. My brothers use to stay away from school, absenting themselves for no reasons. They do not go to school and at home they eat food leaving me with nothing to eat. My brothers beat me to such an extent that my uncle is forced to intervene (Diary no.13: 7).

Some parents, who cannot face the challenges of bringing their children up, abandon them. Angry with their parents for leaving them stranded, abandoned children feel unloved (Guest 2001: 60) and they become short tempered and depressed. For example, one child was raised by the grandmother as he was abandoned by his mother. His grandmother died leaving him alone. His relatives thus adopted the child. Guest (2001: 95) points out that such children are behind in their development. Similarly, the boy who was abandoned by his mother is behind with his studies. At the age of 18 years he is repeating grade seven. In his written text, he expressed his depression:

Ngicabanga ngize ngikhale. Ngize ngizibuze ukuthi ngazalelwani. Umama wami uyaphila udlala izinto zomhlala. Kumanje angimanzi ukuthi ukuphi nomhlaba.

I used to think to such an extent that I cry, asking myself why did I come to the earth? My mother is alive but she abandoned me as she was taken from me by the glitters of the world. Even now, I don't know where she is (Diary no.18: 7).

Responses from teachers do confirm that absent parents in the lives of children do affect children's schooling. For example, one of the teachers said:

There is a lack of parental involvement in learner's school work. I assume learners are not getting proper parenting development. There are cases where parents are lost, may be parents are divorced. Socially, children are not getting proper attention at home (Vis. Male teacher).

As Pettigrew and Akhurst (1999: 36) state that the behaviour can be observed and learned, parents/caregivers' views regarding abandonment of children were that abandoned children may copy and practise the behaviour of their parents when they grow up. This is the response from one of the parents/caregivers:

Uma umzali ehamba eshiya umntwana, umntwana asale abe ngundingasithebeni angenabo abazali, njengoba umzali waduka nezwe eyohlala namanye amadoda noma abafazi. Umntwana uzokubuka lokho bese naye eyakwenza, njengoba kwenza wena mzali. Umzali akabheke umntwana wakhe amkhulise ngokuyikho. Uma umzali elahla ingane yakhe ayishiye, nomntwana uzosala naye azibonele afune umuntu abazohlala naye.

When the parent abandons his/her child and goes far away and cohabits, the child will copy what is done to him/her and eventually the child would do exactly as the mother or father. The parent must take care of the child, because if the parent abandon or neglect the child, the child will think that the mother or father has abandoned him/her, thus she/he will go out to look for people with whom she/he will have love relationships just like you (female parent)

4.3. VIOLENCE

As it was discussed in chapter two, most children experience violence in family and neighbourhood settings (Boney-McCoy & Finkelhor, 1996: 2000). The findings in the study reveal that children experience violence in family settings. Both female and male parents/caregivers beat their children, particularly when they are under the influence of alcohol. Thirty-five percent (35%) of children who participated in the study indicated that they encounter violence in the form of beatings from their drunk parents/caregivers. Children who are exposed to violence find it difficult to

concentrate in classes during teaching and learning sessions as some learners expressed:

Mina nodadewethu ubaba uhlala esishaya uma ephuzile. Uma eke wahamba nathi sahamba saya esikoleni uyasishaya ntambama uma ebuya kophuza asithuke. Athi uma sike sasho uzosishaya asibulale. Manje izifundo azingeni emqondweni. Asisakwazi nokukwenza umsebenzi wethu wesikole ekhaya ngoba sishaywa ngubaba. Manje sibuye singayi esikoleni.

Our father always beats my sister and me when he is drunk. Once he went to the bar and we are gone for school, he beat us when comes back from the bar. He insults us. He used to tell us that should we tell our mother that he had beaten us, he will beat us till we die. Now we are failing to concentrate to our studies. We are failing to do our homework and assignments, because father beats us. We are now finding ourselves being absent from school (Diary no. 15: 7).

Mina ngenenkinga ekhaya. Umama wami uma ephuzile uyathetha athuke inhlamba ashaye. Phela uyaphuza uyabhema. Mina uma ngiphuma esikoleni umama wami ngimfica ephuzile ukudla engakuphekanga. Uyangisebenzisa ngokwenza imisebenzi yasendlini. Angigadise ingane yakhe yena ehambile eye e-Bar. Ukugada ingane kungenza ngingakwazi ukwenza umsebenzi wesikole. Lokhu kungenza ngingazinikeli ngokugwele ezifundweni zami ngicabanga ngenhlalo yasekhaya. Futhi mina ngenenkinga yokuguliswa yizinyawo uma kubanda kakhulu noma kushisa kakhulu.

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, I used to find her drunk. She never cooks food. She instructs me to do the house chores 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 studies as I think about my home situation. I have a problem of painful feet when it is very cold or when it is very hot (Diary no.9: 7).

However, some parents/caregivers who do not drink alcohol are still violent towards their children. Skinner and Davids (2006: 2) maintain that sometimes caregivers or guardians do not have children parenting skills. Relatives or neighbours are more likely to foster the children if the state helps with the grocery bills and school fees (Guest, 2001: 96) but if they are struggling on their own they feel the burden of fostering children and they thus become cruel towards the children. The findings reveal that learners whose parents/ caregivers do not drink alcohol also experience

violence in their families. About thirty five percent (35%) of learners of non-drinking parents/caregivers experience violence in the form of beating.

Uma sibuya esikoleni mina nomfowethu sihlala nogogo, ngoba umama nobaba basuke besemsebenzini. Baze babuye ntambama. Imina engiyingane endala ekhaya. Ngithe ngibuya esikoleni nomfowethu, safika ugoto ehleli phansi kwesihlahla ethamele umthunzi. Ngakhumula izingubo ngaqeda. Wathi ugoto angiwashé izitsha. Ngazithatha izitsha ngazibeka emnyango phezulu kwetafula. Ngaziwasha izitsha, wabona ukuthi angikaziqedi izitsha. Wasukuma phansi wangena endlini. Wabuya nebhakede lokukha amanzi wathi angihambe ngiye emfuleni. Mina ngaqhubeka ngawasha izitsha ngoba ngasengizoziqeda ukuziwasha. Wazitshela ugoto ukuthi angifuni ukuya emfuleni, wathatha induku eduzane nesihlahla wangishaya.

At home my brother and I live with my grandmother. In the afternoons, we usually spend time together with our grandmother, as our parents used to be at work and come back be in the evenings. I am the elder child at home. One day coming from school with my brother, we found our grandmother sitting outside the house. I went inside to take out my school clothes, so that I could wear the clothes I usually wear around home. My grandmother instructed me to wash the dishes. I took dishes and I placed them on the table outside the house. While I was busy with utensils to wash; she went inside the house and came back with a bucket. My grandmother told me to go and fetch water. I never said a word to her. I continued to wash the dishes quickly so that I will go and fetch water. The old lady seeing me not responding, judged me wrongly, thinking that I was refusing to fetch water. She took the stick and beat me up (Diary no.14: 7).

Mina nomfowethu sihlala kwa-anti ngoba asinabo abazali sebazishonela. U-anti njalo uhlala esishaya abuye athi thina sizohamba. U-anti usishaya noma kwenzeke into encane. Ubuye aphinde athi sizohamba siyohlala ehlathini. U-anti usishaya noma kuwe ingane yakhe noma isitsha.

My brother and I live with our aunt since our parents have died. Our aunt is beating us. She beats us even when we have done a minor mistake. She used to tell us that she will chase us out of her house. Sometimes she tells us that we shall go and live in the forests. My aunt beats us if her baby happened to fall down or if the utensils have dropped down (Diary no. 20: 7).

This theme of violent parents/ caregivers also came out from learners' drawings as well.

Figure 5. The boy is beaten by his father, as the boy was under the influence of alcohol



This photo shows the learner who drew it. He is being beaten by his father, because his father discovered that the boy was under the influence of alcohol (Diary no1: 5).

Figure 6. Children being beaten by the caregiver



This picture in figure 6 shows the ordeal of children in their aunt's house. The boy and his brother are being beaten by their aunt (Diary no. 20: 5).

Figure 7. The caregiver who is the grandmother of the learner bit the girl with a stick



This photo in figure 7 shows the girl busy washing the house utensils under the tree and the grandmother bits the girl with a stick (Diary no.14: 5).

The findings in the study also reveal that children experience violence from their siblings. Such violence stems from drug abuse by children.

Figure 8. The boy is smoking dagga and he chases his brother holding a knife to stab him.



This photo in figure 8 shows the drawing of the boy. In drawing A, the boy is alone busy smoking dagga. In drawing B, the boy is under the influence of dagga and is chasing his brother holding up the knife (Diary no.11: 5). The boy's written text reveals this:

Ngangibuya njalo esikoleni ngibheme insangu. Kwathi ngelinye ilanga ngabonwa umfowethu ngibhema. Wangikhuza, kanti vele ngidakiwe ngasuka ngadonsa umbese wami ngamgwaza.

I used to come back from school and smoke dagga. One day my brother saw me smoking dagga. He reprimanded me. As I was under the influence of dagga, I drew the knife out from my pocket and stabbed him (Diary no.11: 17).

Figure 9. The girl is harrassed and beaten by her brothers



This photo in figure 9 shows four children of the same family who are living alone. There are three boys and one girl. Two boys are shown with cigarettes in their mouths. The other boy is shown with a knob-kerry and he is angry. The learner in the middle is in a pink skirt with tears running down from her eyes. She is being beaten by her angry brother (Diary no.13: 5).

As discussed in the literature review chapter 2 that some teachers still exercise corporal punishment. Wheldall and Glynn (1989) point out that school phobia, school refusal may be the product of a school environment, which the child finds aversive, or lacking in positive interactions compared with what is available outside. In a school where corporal punishment is administered, the environment becomes unfriendly and hostile to children. All the children who participated in the study confirmed that they do not like the school where teachers beat them:

Into engingayithandi ngesikole sami ilokhu: siyashaywa ngothisha.

What I don't like in my school is this: teachers beat us (Diary no. 14: 21).

Contrary to children's views and much against the Abolition of Corporal Punishment Act No.33 of 1997, which prohibits the use of corporal punishment in South African schools, some teachers believe that corporal punishment helps in character formation and moulding of children, as the following response from a teacher indicates:

Corporal punishment is administered based on what the child has done. Remember, it is said 'spare the rod and spoil the child' (Vis, Male teacher).

4.4 CHILD SAFETY CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

As discussed in chapter two, child abuse takes many forms including sexual, physical or emotional abuses plus the abuse of grants and use of children for labour (Skinner & Davids 2006: 4). The findings in the study reveal that the teachers in the school impose dangerous and unhealthy duties to learners. The school has a nutrition programme where food is cooked at school so that learners are served a meal during school hours. Since this is a poor school, it has no stoves for cooking, instead it relies on fire wood. All children in the school have to bring firewood for cooking twice a week. This poses a danger to the children, as they have to go to the forests to fetch firewood.

The school has recently been given the General Assistant employed by the Department of Education. This person is responsible for cleaning offices and helps in daily maintenance of the school. The cleaning of the toilets is still the responsibility of children. Children clean the toilets under the supervision of teachers and the general assistant. This poses a health hazard, as the children are too young to know how to take precautions so that they do not contract diseases from contaminated filth of toilets. All children's responses expressed hatred and abomination towards these duties:

Izinto engingazithandi esikoleni ukuwasha amathoyilethi nokuphatha izinkuni.

What I do not like at school is to bring firewood to school for cooking, and washing the toilets (Diary no. 9: 2).

However, there was no evidence that teachers have an insight into the possible health hazards posed by involving learners in these duties. Instead, teachers claimed that learners should clean up the toilets because they are the ones who use them, as expressed by the following respondents:

Learners are the ones who messes the toilets, therefore there is nothing wrong for us as teachers to supervise them to clean their mess (Nomasonto, female teacher).

I do not see anything wrong, when teaching our learners to be responsible. I am seconding the first respondent; our school is now having water taps. There is nothing that is difficult since they are using horse pipes to wash the floors while others scrub the mess using hard brooms. When they are doing this job they are strictly under the supervision of teachers (Zithulele, male teacher).

4.4.1. VERBAL ABUSE AND HUMILIATION

As discussed in chapter two, verbal abuse includes the use of abusive words that are full of sarcasm and criticisms. Abusive words are pejorative remarks that make the victim feel unworthy or feel as somebody who is useless (Joseph, 2003). In addition to other forms of abuse, Mfecane et al (2006: 68) point out that verbal abuse includes talking to the children using abusive language and calling him/ her by abusive names. The findings in the study reveal that some of the learners are experiencing negative remarks and name-calling by some of the teachers. This makes children shy and afraid to participate during learning processes. Children expressed their concerns that they experience criticism and pejorative remarks followed by name-calling and labeling by some of the teachers. Two of the learners who participated in the study responded as follows:

Into engingayithandi esikoleni ukuthi kuthiwe siyizidomu.

What I don't like in my school is to be addressed by the word 'dom' meaning that I am stupid in the classroom (Diary no.7: 21).

Engingakuthandi esikoleni ukuthi bathi othisha ngimdala. Uma umfundi ehlulwa into njengokufunda othisha babe sebekhuluma ukuthanda kwabo.

What I don't like in my school is this: teachers say that I am old. When a learner is struggling or battles with schoolwork, teachers talk whatever they like to the learners (Diary no. 18: 21).

The findings also reveal that teachers inhumanely treat children. Children as human beings with dignity and rights are never considered as such by some of the teachers. All children's responses revealed their dissatisfaction about 'ukushemulwa'(see the explanation below). This practice is done with a purpose of humiliating the child so that he or she will be forced to cut his/her hair short.

Ukushemula

Ukushemula means to cut the hair haphazardly short so that the learner would appear ugly. When that has been done you are expected to be in the classroom for the whole day with other learners. After school the learner goes home in that condition, so that the first thing to be done at home is to cut the hair properly. The purpose of this is to humiliate the learner so that she/he is forced to cut his/her hair short.

All children expressed their dissatisfaction about ukushemula, as one of the children's written text reads:

Into engingayithandi esikoleni ukuthi siyashemulwa noma siyashenyulwa.

What I don't like at school is this thing of ukushenyulwa (Diary no.1: 21)

Requiring learners to keep their hair short is part of the school's efforts to enforce hair hygiene. According to teachers, it is the responsibility of the learner to see to it that his/her hair is cut short. If learners fail to cut their hair short, teachers will intervene by ukushemula, thus forcing the learner to cut his/her hair short. Teachers' responses on the issue of ukushemula justified the practice as follows:

Rights go hand in hand with responsibilities. Learners are told to cut their hair but they do not do that. They are leaving the teachers with no choice but to have their hair cut short (Sonto, female teacher).

Cutting their hair short is the right strategy. (Maguga, female teacher).

I think applying ukushemula practice to children is good, because we are trying to bring up these people in a right way. When it comes to human rights, we have to enforce our ways. If you can stick in these government laws, you may end up failing to manage accordingly (Z'thulele, male teacher).

However, parents/caregivers had their own concerns about ukushemula. They said that the school does not tell them when the child needs to cut his/her hair short. As parents/caregivers, they were not clear about the accepted length of hair at school, as one of the participants expressed:

Lendaba yokugundwa kwabantwana isafuna ukulungiswa. Othisha abasitshele ukuthi umntwana kufanele agunde, ungaboni nje ngengane isishenyuliwe, ufika ntambama uphuma emsebenzini. Ungumzali ubuye ube nokudideka ngoba izinwele zomntwana zisuke zisemfishane. Uma ubuza enganeni, ikutshela ukuthi ishemulwe ngoba ingakamanga izinwele. Othisha abasicabangele ngoba kugundwa ngemali.

This matter of cutting the hair by teachers needs to be addressed. Teachers must tell us before they take actions when a child needs to have his/her hair cut short, not just to see the child with haphazardly cut hair; when coming from work in the evening. As a parent you happen to be confused when seeing a child having short hair only to find that her/his hair is haphazardly cut short (ukushemulwa). When enquiring from the child, the child tells you his or her hair were cut because she /he forgot to comb the hair. Teachers need to think for us because cutting hair involves money (female parent).

From this participant's viewpoint, teachers do not only do ukushemula to children with long hair, but also to children with short hair if the child has forgot to comb his/her hair. Although parents support the school policy that requires all learners to keep their hair short, parents do not like this practice of ukushemula. Cutting of hair is free if it is done by a pair of scissors at home by a child's older sibling or the parent/caregiver themselves. Since parents are working and most of the time children prefer hair-cutters, which are not dangerous as pair of scissors, parents are forced to take their children to barber shops for hair cuts since hair cut is professionally done in barber shops. When a parent has more than one child to do haircut, he/she will pay more.

4.4.2. HOUSE CHORES IMPOSED ON CHILDREN

As discussed in chapter two, Skinner and Davids (2006: 4) point out that the family does remain the most likely site of abuse. Gupta's study (2005) reveals that children are involved in hard manual labour when their parents have no other persons to assist

them. The responses from Gupta's children participants reveal that if they do not work, their parents/caregivers do not give them food and others are beaten by parents. Gupta's study (2005) concluded that children from nuclear families are overworked and they get no time to study. In line with the report from Gupta's study, the findings of the study reveal that most parents/caregivers force their children to do house chores and hard manual labour when they arrive home after school. Often, parents/caregivers also beat up children when doing manual labour assigned to them.

Figure 10. The learner in hard manual labour cultivating the soil at home.



This photo in figure 10 shows the drawing depicting the child busy in the fields cultivating the soil. Her mother is standing near the learner who is working. The child drew her mother with hands akimbo (hands on the hips and elbows turned outwards) meaning that the mother was supervising her (Diary no.17: 5). In this photo the learner clearly shows that she is forced to work as her mother is seen instructing her. The learner has drawn herself with tears flowing down her face, indicating that she is crying.

Figure 11. The learner is forced by his father to work



This photo in figure 11 shows the drawing depicting the learner hoeing in the orchard. The father of the child is standing at a little distance away from the child. The father with a knob-kerrie in his left hand, has his right hand akimbo. This indicates supervision, which is accompanied by beatings. The mother of the child is seen being helpless, as she cannot intervene, she is also afraid of her husband (Diary no.10: 5).

Figure 12. The learner is working in the banana fields after school



The photo in figure 12 shows the child working in the banana field. The child together with his brother is cultivating and eradicating harvested banana trees. Both

parents are there in the field to supervise children. The father is seen with both hands akimbo (Diary no.19: 5). One of the child participants's written text reveals this:

Mina ngiphuma esikoleni kuthiwe angiye kolima. Njalo uma ngivela esikoleni nginikezwe i-homework, angisitholi isikhathi sokufunda nokwenza umsebenzi obhalwayo wesikole. Esikoleni ngifike ngijeziswe ngoba ngingayibhalanga i-homework. Ngiyahlukumezeka emqondweni. Lokhu kuzongenza ngingasithandi isikole.

When I come from school, at home they instruct me to go to cultivate the banana fields. When banana bunches has been cut, I am instructed to clean the field by eradicating the trees without banana bunches. I do not have time to do my homework. At school teachers punish me for not having done my schoolwork at home. This makes my mind confused. This will make me hate schooling (Diary no.19: 7).

Responses from interviews with teachers indicated that teachers are aware that some children do too much work at home after school as one respondent expressed:

A child whose home is used by parents as a shebeen, that child has a lot of work. Time for school work is not available. The child will have to wash dishes, collect bottles and sell to the patrons. That child cannot concentrate at school, because she/he slept late (Sonto, female teacher).

However, parents/caregivers thought that house chores are a way of teaching children to be independent and helpful. According to parents/caregivers, children have to learn this so that they are able to take care of themselves when parents/caregivers die, but parents/caregivers also acknowledge that there should be a limit to the amount of work given to children at home so that children also get time to do school work. One of the parents responded in this way:

Ngesikhathi ingane ungayisebenzisi, leyo ngane uyayilahla. Uma ingane ungayisebenzisi ekhaya uyayibulala, futhi usethubeni lokulahlekelwa yiyo lengane, ngoba njengomzali uzofa. Uma usufile ingane izosala nenkinga yokuthi ayazi lutho. Amukho umuntu ozoyithatha ayigcine, ngoba ayazi lutho ngomsebenzi wasekhaya. Ingane engeke ikwazi nokuwasha, ngisho ukuwasha izitsha lezi. Leyo ngane uyayibulala. Ingane ayisebenze ekhaya, kodwa yenze umsebenzi olinganiselwe yona.

Children need to do house chores, because if you do not teach the child to do house chores, you are killing the child or you are running the risk of losing that child. When you die, the child will have a problem of not knowing anything. Nobody will take that child to his/her care, because the child knows nothing about house chores. The child who cannot do the washing, even

washing dishes is a problem. Children need to be taught to do house chores, but to a limit. They should be given time to do their homework (female parents).

4.4.3. CHILD SAFETY AND SEXUAL ABUSE

As discussed in chapter two that the Human Rights Watch (2006) found that the lack of easy access to schools, forces many children to travel long distances on foot to and from school. This poses a danger to children as people on their way to or from school could abuse them. Homes where some of the children live can also be breeding places for them [children] to be sexually abused. Skinner and Davids (2004: 11) also state that family situations that make the child vulnerable are those situations where the child is living with sexually maladjusted parent/caregiver. In such situations, the child's safety is compromised.

As discussed in Chapter two, under the South African Children Charter, children have the right to be protected from all types of violence including the emotional and other forms of violence (South African Children's Charter, 1992). However, the findings in the study reveal that many children are not safe either at school, outside school or at home. The community members in collaboration with educational authorities never considered the children's right to safety when approving the lay out of the school-buildings near the main road where the fence is the only boundary between the school premises and the main busy road. This has a major impact on children's lives as many of them die in road accidents. Children expressed their concern about the school's closeness to the main road.

Mina engingakuthandi esikoleni ukuthi isikole sakhiwe eduze komgwaqo uma siphuma esikoleni kwenzeka izingozi.

The school is built next to the road. When we go out from school to our homes, we get involved in road accidents (Diary no.5: 21).

Into engingayithandi ngesikole sami ukuthi isikole sethu sakhiwe eduze nomgwaqo. Izingozi uma siphuma esikoleni ziningi.

What I don't like with my school is this: it is built next to the road Road accidents are common, when we are coming from school (Diary 16: 21).

As I mentioned earlier on, that the school depends on firewoods for cooking the food for its feeding scheme, children are required to collect firewood and bring them to school. This collection of firewood exposes children to dangerous situations. Other children are poked by the bottles in the veld, others fall from trees trying to break wood from branches of trees and others are bitten by snakes. South African Children's Charter (1992: 5) points out that all teachers should treat children with patience, respect and dignity. Some teachers seem not be aware of this obligation as they force learners to provide the school with firewoods. Learners who come to school without the required firewoods are not allowed to enter the school premises unless they bring the firewoods. This means before entering the school's main gate learners have to wonder in the nearby bushes in search for firewoods. However, some teachers are aware of the dangers to which children are exposed to when collecting firewood from the bushes.

This firewood collecting business has dangers. A child may fall down from the tree when he/she is looking for the firewoods. Snakes will bite children. The school must buy stoves for cooking (Maguga, female teacher).

All learners stated in their written texts that they do not like fetching firewood from the bushes and bring them to school.

Into engingayithandi ngesikole sami ukuphathiswa izinkuni zokupheka

What I don't like in my school is to fetch firewood and bring them to school (Diary no.17: 21).

Mina izinto engingazithandi esikoleni sami enye yazo ukuphatha izinkuni zokupheka.

One of the things which I don't like in my school is the fetching of firewood for cooking (Diary no.1: 21).

The research study on hand reveals that many children's access to school is through footpaths that wind across sugar-cane fields, which is likely to increase the risks of children being assaulted and raped. Skinner et al (2004) point out that community context in which the child lives where the environment is unsafe for children influences his/ her vulnerability.

The findings of the study reveal that children are not safe on their way to and from school. Children travel long distances between school and home and they walk across sugar-cane fields. This exposes them to child sexual abuses as expressed by one participant:

Sithe siphuma esikoleni sesihambe ibanga elide nabangani bami, sabona omunye ubaba ehlezi phansi, emobeni wathi ucela ngize kuyena. Nebala ngeza kuye, bangishiya abangani bami. Lobaba walibele engidonsela phakathi emobeni. Ngathi ngizama ukukhala akukho muntu ongizwayo. Wangidlwengula. Ngakhala. Ekhaya ngihlala no mama kuphela futhi ngiyesaba ukumtshela.

Coming from school, we had gone a long distance with my friends. We saw a man, about my father's age sitting down inside the sugar cane fields. He requested me to come to him, I went to him, my friends continued to go further away from me and this strange man. This man pulled me inside the fields. I cried, but nobody heard me. He raped me. At home I am living with my mother. I never told her what happened to me as I am afraid to tell her (Diary no.3 .7).

As discussed in chapter two, that prostitution by children and survival sex constitute an additional form of abuse or area of vulnerability for children (Skinner & Davids, 2006: 4). Faced with poverty, some parents encourage and even force their daughters into prostitution for money. This practice is usually practiced in some families, where there is no one employed. Responding to prostitution being encouraged within the family circles, one of the teacher participants responded:

Sometimes in other families children are forced by their parents to go to the roads for prostitution in order to get money (NomaSonto, female teacher).

Some of the parents/caregivers abuse alcohol and that affects their children (Mfecane: 2006: 29). According to Kriegler (1992: 4) and Olievier (1989: 8), the children who grow up in families which are characterised by alcohol abuse and drug addiction are often victims of child sexual abuse. When they are drunk, some parents/caregivers sexually abuse their children. Data from teachers who participated in the research study reveals that some of the parents under the influence of liquor do abuse children sexually as one of the teacher participants expressed it:

I have a girl child who lives with her single and alcoholic mother. When the mother has sex desires, she masturbates the girl. Now the girl is not satisfied with masturbation, she wants a proper sex with a boy. The girl has left school now because she is pregnant (Bekezelo, female teacher).

Findings show that the rate of the molested girls by their step-fathers is five times high compared with that done by biological fathers (Beckmann, 1989). This clearly indicates that even biological fathers need not to be trusted in this regard. Botha (1992) warns parents who get hooked into marriage where one partner, especially a woman, has a child outside the existing marriage, because their daughters are likely to be the victims of sexual abuse. A teacher participant has responded:

In my class, I have a child living with her mother and stepfather. The stepfather sexually abused the girl for several times when her mother was out for work (Zithulele, male teacher).

Such behaviours result from poverty, which is caused by the high rate of unemployment. Apart from sexual abuse of children, unemployment perpetuates poverty and this has resulted in many forms of corruption such as grant abuse and so on.

4.4.4. ABUSE OF CHILD SUPPORT GRANT

Another form of abuse is the abuse of child support grant. Skinner et al (2004) indicate that extended families have a contribution to the vulnerability of children by taking their inheritance and abusing their social support grants. The findings of the study reveal that many guardians or caregivers make an application for child support grant from the government and use it for their personal purposes. A response from one of the teachers indicates that some of the parents and guardians do not love children, but their grants.

There is one of my neighbours who is responsible for her relative's child. The relatives had died, leaving a child under the care of my neighbour. One day, I asked my neighbour who looks after the child how much does she get from the government for looking after the child. She became angry and shouted at the child, suspecting the child for having told me her corruption. Such people do not love children, but their money. The Department of Social Welfare should do something regarding this issue (Maguga, female teacher).

Most parents have agreed that Child Support Grant abuse exists. One of the parents has suggested what the Department of Social Welfare should do.

Abasebenzi beze nhlalakahle, kufanele balandelele kulowo nalowo muntu oyisihlobo somntwana, othola isondlo sikahulumeni, ukuze babe nesiqiniseko sokuthi umntwana uyanakekelwa ngokufanele, nokuthi imali yesondlo somntwana iyahlangabezana yini nezidingo zomntwana.

Social Welfare workers should do a follow up to a person receiving child grant from the government as to safeguard the abuse of child grant and to make sure that the money is used properly to meet the needs of the child (Male parent).

4.5 POVERTY

As it was discussed in chapter two, 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. Data from learners reveals that children are living under poverty-stricken conditions, where there are no proper houses. Such a situation affects even the schooling of children. One of the learners confirmed that:

Into engiyifisayo ukuthola umsebenzi ukuze ngilungise umuzi wasekhaya.

I wish to get the job so that I can renovate my home (Diary no.19: 23).

In his study, Pillay mentions that because of poverty children become frustrated, which result to anger and short-temper. Other children feel degraded or offended and despaired if their families are poor. Some have low self-esteem, which is caused by those who tease them and gossip about their home situation. One of the learners has responded:

Into engingayithandi ngomndeni wami, ukuthi abazali bami abaphelele. Umama wami washona, kanti nobaba akasebenzi. Abangamthandi ubaba wami bayamhleka bathi uyahlupheka. Angiyithandi leyonto uma beyisho kimina, behleba ngomndeni wami.

There is something, which I do not like about my family, that I have one parent. My mother has died and I am left with my father, who is unemployed. People who do not like my father talk badly about my father. They say that he

is poor. I do not like that. I feel bad if they gossip about my family (Diary no 1: 17).

Furthermore, poverty is characterised by the lack of income, which has a negative impact on child's development and schooling. No one doubts that parents/caregivers do wish that their children continue with schooling till they reach high levels of education. But due to financial constraints their wishes completely vanish. Responding to hindrances that can hold back children from accomplishing their education, one of the parents responded:

Enye yezinkinga esibhekene nayo thina njengabazali ukuhluleka ukwelekelela abantwana bethu ukuba baqhubekele phambili nemfundo. Inkinga isemandleni uma sekuza ngasezimalini. Lokhu kuletha enkulu ingqinamba ekufundeni kwabantwana bethu.

One of the problems facing us parents is the failure to support our children in furthering with their studies. The problem is money (female parent).

Poverty also perpetuates unacceptable behaviours by some of the children. Some leave school for job hunting and those who continue with school are found with drugs, which they sell for survival. They have developed the '***I do not care***' attitude because of poverty. This attitude is prominent in behavioural patterns characterised by truancy and lack of dedication to school work. In such a situation, a learner does not care about his/her poor performance at school and some are even disobedient to their teachers and parents/caregivers.

One of the teachers has responded to the major cause of poverty in the area, which is unemployment:

There is a large scale of poverty in the area, because of the large number of people who are unemployed. This has a great impact on the schooling of children (Vis, male teacher).

Regarding the high number of learners experiencing hunger in their family circles, government has introduced the school nutrition programme, which is highly appreciated by the community and the school community. Many children come to school with empty stomachs hoping to get food from school and this also encourages

schooling to them. Parents/caregivers and children regard school not only as a place where they only obtain education, but a place where they also get support for some of their basic needs such as food. This nutrition programme plays an important role in alleviating poverty as it was expressed by one of the learners:

Engikuthandayo ngesikole sami ukuthi siphekelwa ukudla.

What I like in my school is that they cook food for us (Diary no 2: 19).

Although the school nutrition programme is enjoyed by the majority of learners, there are some of the learners who regard school nutrition programme as an embarrassment to their families. Some of these learners are of the opinion that the nutrition programme is for the poverty-stricken children. This result to many learners not eating the food supplied by the school in the food nutrition programme. A large amount of food is therefore wasted and this has raised a concern to some of the teachers as one of them expressed:

Our school is so fortunate that there is a nutrition programme. Educators have to motivate some of the children to eat food at school since it is good for growing body (Zithulele, male teacher).

In supplementing the nutrition programme that is backed by the Department of Education, the school has embarked on the project of laying out vegetable gardens. The main purpose of this project is to teach the learners to use the soil wisely. Learners are taught to be independent and the idea of ‘DO IT YOURSELF and SURVIVE’ is ever emphasised and inculcated in learner’s lives. Responding to the issue of poverty alleviation by the school, apart from the nutrition programme from the government, one of the teachers has responded:

Fighting poverty by the school, educators in our school inculcate the love of using the soil in our children by teaching them to lay school vegetable gardens. Laying vegetable garden does not end here at school but we also encourage them to lay their own vegetable gardens at homes (Sonto, female teacher).

4.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have 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, I will discuss the study analysis, recommendations and conclusion.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. PREVIEW

In this chapter I present the analysis of the findings that were discussed in chapter four. I also discuss recommendations and conclusion that are drawn from the study. In discussing the analysis of the findings, I have organised my discussion according to the following two key research questions that were presented in chapter One.

- What is the nature and extent of children's vulnerability in South Africa?
- How does the vulnerable state of children affect their schooling (in South Africa)?

5.2. KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

5.2.1. What is the nature and extent of children's vulnerability in South Africa?

There are multifaceted problems that lead to the vulnerable state of children in South Africa. 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. Children thus become vulnerable, especially girls as their big brothers often abuse them by forcing them to look after their home while they are out with their friends. Children also become involved in self-inflicted abuses, such as abuse of alcohol and drugs. In the absence of parents, gender-based violence and duties also become prominent

among siblings. This is when boys bully and beat their sisters. The girls also become burdened with huge amounts of house chores.

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 like HIV. People living in poor contexts, often do not have access to medication for the prevention of HIV and they cannot afford a healthy living since they do not have food. When they have contracted the virus and sick with AIDS, they often do not have access to health care, treatment and nutritious food that will help make them live longer.

When parents die, they leave their children under the care of relatives. In order to alleviate poverty, some of the remaining living parents are involved in hard manual labour, which is also done by children. In most cases, guardians do not manage to carry out their duties of being guardians perfectly. They feel much pressure and thus become harsh towards children, which results in child abuse. Orphaned children are faced with two challenges: the pain caused by the loss of their parents and the pressure of being responsible for their homes.

The lives of children from poor families who cannot afford transport to and from school are at risk in many ways. Long distances walked by learners to and from school, winding through the sugar-cane fields, put many children at high risks of being raped and assaulted.

The interventions that are meant to assist children in poor communities also render some orphaned children vulnerable. The assistance provided by welfare organizations to help orphans and vulnerable children is sometimes mismanaged by care-givers. For example they use the grant for their personal needs.

Poor condition of the school also contributes to the vulnerability of children. While the school runs the food nutrition programme, it does not have stoves to cook for

learners. As a result, children have to provide the school with firewood for cooking. This means children have to go to the forest to fetch firewood and bring to school. This poses danger to children because they can be raped, injured by bottles, beaten by snakes, and so on, while in the forests. In this way, the children's rights to safety is infringed. There has never been an intervention of any official person from the Department of the Social Welfare or the Department of Education to safe-guard the welfare of learners regarding their rights to safety and human dignity, with regard to this practice.

Lack of monitoring strategies from the government is evident in the communities, as child support grant is still abused by caregivers instead of supporting children. Monitoring is not yet done to see that the child support grant does serve its purposes. Apart from the mismanagement of support grants by care-givers, care-givers physically and verbally abuse children. Physical abuse does not end in children's families, but children are still abused physically by some of the teachers in many schools. Although corporal punishment was abolished, teachers still regard corporal punishment as a good tool to stop unwanted behaviours. Corporal punishment of children in schools is totally against the Bill of Rights. The right of children to be treated with respect and dignity is also violated by some of the teachers, as learner's hair are haphazardly cut (ukushemulwa) by some of the teachers when a learner did not comb and when the learner has long hair than the school requires.

While the school is situated in a poor context, schooling of learners seems not to be mainly affected by hunger or lack of material resources as these are provided at school. The feeding scheme, and the fact that the school is a non-fee paying institution as well as its supplies from the Department of Education in terms of stationery benefits. This plays an important role in ensuring that the disadvantaged children go to school. None of the children participants in the study mentioned that they are out of school because of hunger, lack of stationery and school fees. However, the social ills such as violence, diseases that lead to death, child abuses and the burdens that children carry do affect their schooling.

5.2.2 How does the vulnerable state of children affect their schooling (in South Africa)?

In responding to this key research question, I will refer again to Bronfenbrenner's (1989) ecosystemic theory that I used in this study, which regards the family as being in 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 vulnerable, 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. Some of these parents end up dying. This results to a child having irregular school attendance if she has to take care of the younger siblings. When the parent dies, the child as an orphan finds it hard to concentrate on studies as memories of his/her dead parent engulfs him/her. The theme of death was common in all learners' responses and drawings. This might be an indication that when learners think about their lives, they think about the burdens, which emanated because of death in the family.

In his study, Donald et al (2002: 52) stated that the mesosystem, which is the second level includes peer-group, school, church and other institutions that render services. This level is very similar to what some people call, the neighbourhood or the local community. However, there are other institutions as well, such as businesses, like shops and shebeens, which all operate as subsystems in local communities. Shebeens and spaza shops are run in 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 schoolwork in the

classroom. Children find it difficult to concentrate to their studies due to trauma and their schooling is thus being affected (Barbarin & Richter, 2001: 213).

Substance and drug abuse by both community youngsters and schooling teenagers have increased the abuse of drugs both inside and outside the school premises. Research findings of this study reveal that a grade seven teenage boy under the influence of dagga stabbed his brother. People like Donald et al, (2002: 52) maintain that home situation and what is happening within peer groups, can influence the way children respond to school. Bronfenbrenner (1989) 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 many learners who participated in the study point out that learner's parents/care-givers never gave children time to do their school work at home. Others [children], are sexually harassed by their parents/care-givers under the influence of liquor. Others, [children] are ill treated as their parents/care-givers threat to beat them for no reason when parents/care-givers are drunk. Findings of this study also reveal that some of the parents/caregivers involve their children in hard manual labour, as a result study time at home is overlooked by parents/caregivers.

The research study on hand reveals that some of the parents are not living with their children due to employment away from homes. In such situations, children are living alone with no one to supervise and assist with homeworks, 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, 1982).

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. From the research study, it is revealed that some of the teachers as subsystems are still relying on corporal punishment to enforce the school's policy on late coming, hair-cut, uniform as well as the curriculum without taking into consideration learners' family backgrounds, which are mostly affected by socio-economic problems. Parents/caregivers do not approve of the way teachers enforce the hair cut policy at school. This hampers a relationship between teachers and learners at schools. As a result, enmity between learners and teachers develops and the school attendance by some of the learners becomes irregular as they play truancy. 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).

Pettigrew and Akhurst (1999: 218) maintain that 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 although a child never directly experiences it. For example, the development of children, especially the boys was severely more affected by the discovery of mines, as it was discussed in chapter two that the absence of a father at home denies boys a role model of how a man should live in the family and in the community at large. It also denies a boy a male guidance and support (Kuzwayo; 2004: 49).

It is also revealed in this study that some of the learners abuse alcohol and drugs at high levels. The study further reveals that some of these learners become so violent towards other learners and they also challenge the authority of their teachers, which results to them being expelled from school. Such behaviour stems from antisocial peer group pressure (Sarason & Sarason, 1984: 463). Pretorius (1998) maintains that the research has shown that the scholastic achievement of children under the influence of peer-pressure is generally poor. Relating the above research findings of the study to societal influences and change (chronosystem), the abuse of alcohol and drugs by youngsters, especially girls was never dreamt of before. The widespread of

modern living styles promulgated by mass communication media had brought much harm in children's development. Pretorius (1998: 249) states that social influences that are undesirable are mainly communicated via the mass media and are conflicting with desired educational influences.

These unfavourable conditions to which many black children are subjected, are the results of apartheid system which cohorted black population to deep rural areas. Although many political changes have taken place in South Africa since 1994, the residual effects of apartheid can still be seen in the domains of access to education, employment, health and social services (Barbarin & Richter, 2001: 26).

Bronfenbrenner (1989) confirms that the environment is not a static force that affects children in the same way, but it is dynamic and ever changing. Before Industrial Revolution, the child's development was never the task of the biological parents only. When the parents died, children became the task of the extended family members and relatives, who are parents' social networks intervening as informal exosystem. Urbanisation with its modern styles of living brought about many changes in family system, which came along with poverty and HIV/AIDS. These trends have resulted in major changes that have left family and community life in South Africa reeling (Barbarin & Richter, 2001: 12). An intervention of extended family members and relatives in children's development is no longer possible, because of the economic hardships, which demand a lot of money for the provision of children.

The high prevalence of poverty, the collapse of present-day families due to HIV/AIDS and the abandonment of children by their parents have escalated and spread like veld-fires. These have triggered the intervention of government bodies such as the Department of Education, Health and Welfare as formal exosystems in the development of children. Child support grants and feeding schemes in schools are all the supports provided by the government. However, despite of these efforts, some children are still affected by poverty in their homes, which result to children leaving school for job hunting.

Bronfenbrenner (1989) emphasises that development of a child also takes place in macrosystem. Pettigrew and Akhurst (1999: 217) maintain that this level is about the cultural or socio political context in which the microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem are based. It also consists of dominant beliefs, values, customs, laws and resources of a particular culture.

What Pettigrew and Akhurst (1999) say is contradictory in some cases. For example, sexual abuse of children by some of their biological parents is the behaviour which is in contradiction with the above discussions. Adults are the ones who are responsible for inculcating societal norms and values to the young ones on their way to adulthood. Sexual abuse of children by some of the old men (like their biological parents) to be cured from HIV/AIDS, are not in line with societal values and norms. The research study on hand reveals that substance abuse by some other parents, has led to sexual abuse of children by their biological parents. In reference to these research findings, it is clearly indicated that modern man no longer knows what is right and wrong, which result to the fixed values and norms being abandoned (Pretorius, 1998). According to Botha (1992: 30-33), the academic development of the abused children is hampered as they show sudden and inexplicable deterioration of school work, unexpected failure and incidents of truancy.

Still on values and customs, many parents in our societies experience inadequate social support due to unemployment and other social misfortunes. Influenced by poverty they thus develop bad attitudes toward the society, as they feel humiliated, inadequate and inferior because of the behaviour of other people (Pretorius, 1998: 366). As a result, the abusive parents claim that the society rejects them and they are thus forced to live against the values and norms, such as denying the responsibility of raising their children. They [parents] project the rejection by the society on their children and this rejection and treatment are thus subjected to children through abandonment, neglect and rejection (Botha, 1992).

The research study on hand reveals that there are children or learners who never had parents in their lives because their parents abandoned them. Abandoned and neglected children are emotionally affected as they have no one to support them. They live with relatives/caregivers. Abandoned children tend to be bullies and aggressive towards other children, as Pretorius (1998: 368) point out that abandoned children have poor relationships with the peer group. They are not well disciplined so far as school work is concerned.

The research study on hand reveals that male dominance is the normal way of living as gender roles are institutionalised both at homes and at school. At home girls are instructed to do house duties such as fetching water from community taps, fields' cultivation, babysitting and other domestic duties. Boys are instructed to take family errands, help with cultivation of land and other outside duties, as the family must reflect societal norms and values that can equip its members for assimilation into the community at large (Chinkanda, 1987: 175). At school, girls are instructed by teachers to clean the toilets and classrooms, while boys are asked to help with the supply of buckets full of water. In the case of cleaning classrooms, boys are asked to assist in clearing the floor by moving the desks and also to clean window panes. Boys are mainly responsible for gardening duties. This is true in the sense that the macrosystem consists of laws, which outline how children should be treated and what they should be taught (Pettigrew & Akhurst, 1999: 217). Chinkanda (1987: 193) 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.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- The major problem faced by vulnerable children is the dying of their parents. There should be projects within the communities as well as at school, which will deal with counseling.

- 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. After having identified such learners, teachers should make contact with the learner's relatives or learner's extended family-members. If that is not possible, teachers should connect the learner concerned with relevant social networks such as social workers for adoption programmes. The school should invite social worker to talk to the children concerned.
- There should be educational programmes that sensitise people about gender issues in schools, particularly teachers and community members. These programmes should be conducted by the representative from Commission on Gender Equality. His/her main duty is to teach teachers and community members about the rights of children and their responsibilities as adults. In these programmes, gender equality in both adults and learners should be inculcated.
- The school should stop asking learners to fetch firewoods from the bushes; instead the school should implement modern cooking equipments such as gas stoves or electric cookers. Alternatively, parents/ caregivers should fetch firewood from the forests.
- Children's Rights programmes should be directed to teachers by representative from Human's Rights Commission so as to expose them to the rights of children and to the responsibilities of teachers on children. In these programmes treatment of learners with human dignity should be emphasized in teachers. Harmful results that comes along with corporal punishment should be emphasized.

- Corporal punishment should be stopped at school as it is illegal. The Department of Education should enforce its laws in schools regarding this.
- Bridges should be built across the freeway at several points to allow learners to cross the busy road safely.
- Community leaders should promote collaboration between the Department of Education and Transport to ensure the availability of transport to and from school for children living in poor environments.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

One of the limitations of this study is that it was conducted in one school. The other limitation is, the study did not investigate how the vulnerable state of children affect their academic performance in the classroom. It only looked at how their vulnerable state affects schooling. Further research is thus recommended to determine how the vulnerable state of children affects their academic performance.

5.5 CONCLUSION

In this study, it has emerged that poverty is the major cause of all the vulnerabilities that are faced by children. All other causes are attached to it. The researcher strongly believe that if poverty could be conquered, some of the social ills that are being winced by vulnerable children would be reduced. Our children will grow up without any hassles to adulthood. Poverty should be taken seriously as it has major effects on children's livelihoods. Further research, about how vulnerable children's academic performance inside the classrooms needs to be persued.

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APPENDIX 1

LETTER TO EDUCATORS

P.O. Box 844
Hibberdene
4220
25 May 2006

Gobhela Primary School
P.O. Box 227
Hibberdene
4220

Dear Educator

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

I am a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus in the faculty of Education. As part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education, I am required to conduct a research and to interview educators, parents/guardians and learners concerning the vulnerable state of children.

My study is titled: **“DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN” A CASE STUDY OF THE VULNERABLE STATE OF CHILDREN AND HOW IT AFFECTS SCHOOLING IN SOUTH AFRICA.**

You are kindly invited to participate in the research project that will take place at this school (Gobhela) at 13h00 after lunch. You are chosen to participate in this project, because as teachers you are the people who are most of the time working (teaching) with children. Participating in the research project is voluntary, that is, you are at liberty not to participate if you don't feel like. You are also at liberty to withdraw at any time during the project if you desire to do so. By not participating; or withdrawing yourself from the research will not disadvantage you or the school in any way.

Confidentiality will be ensured. Whatever is said as responses from research participants will be confidentially treated. Discussions will be held in one of the classrooms prepared for this occasion. Your knowledge of learners' problems and their community influences in their lives will be part of our discussions. Whilst discussing; a tape recorder will be used and there will be a scribe taking down (by writing) notes. However you are at liberty to refuse to be recorded. The research programme will start at 13h00 (immediately after lunch). The time duration for research session will be an hour (from 13h00 – 14h00). As it has been explained to you that whatever raised as issues during the discussions will remain confidential, and it will never be linked with you, your family and your relatives.

Should you wish to verify the veracity of this project, you may contact my supervisor Dr. Thabisile Buthelezi, University of KwaZulu Natal, Edgewood Campus, Private Bag X03, Ashwood, 3605, Telephone Number: (031) 260 3471, Fax Number: (031) 260 3423, Email: buthelazit10@ukzn.ac.za

Do you have any question in connection with this?

Do you agree to participate in this study? If yes, please sign the Declaration Form in the next page.

Thank you

Yours faithfully

Mr T.N. Mvuna (Student No. 200402104)

DECLARATION FORM

“DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN”

THE STUDY TO INVESTIGATE THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF VULNERABLE
STATE OF CHILDREN AND HOW IT AFFECTS SCHOOLING.

I _____ (full names of participant) hereby confirm
that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I
consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to with draw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

.....
Signature of Participant:

.....
Date:

APPENDIX 2

LETTER TO LEARNERS

P.O. Box 844

Hibberdene

4220

25 May 2006

Dear Participant (Learner)

Your teacher in Grade 7 Class school would like to invite you to take part in a project, that will take place in this school after lunch (13h00).

You have been chosen on no background that I know, except that you have been chosen by chance. When the project has been done, everything said by you will remain confidential. (i.e., nobody will know what was said, when the project was still on). What was said (by you) will never be matched (thought to be going hand in hand) with yourself; your family, your school and also your school mates. You will not be forced to answer questions that you don't want to (answer). You may end your participation at any time should you want to do so. I'll never be crossed with you should you decide not to participate.

All what you said will never be linked with you, your friends, your family and even your school. You do not have to answer questions that you do not want to answer; and you may end your participation at any time should you want to do so. That will not result in any form of disadvantage.

When the project is taking place, a Social Worker from the Department of Education (Psychological Guidance and Special Education Services – PGSES) will be asked to visit. During the time of the project, you will be given paints of different colours and brushes. A fabric cloth will also be given to you all who will be participating in the project. On these cloth – materials you will be expected to draw. If you are right handed person, you will be expected to use your left hand (when drawing) and those who the left handed following suit.

Did you know that I myself your teacher, have also a teacher who is teaching me? This project has been given to me as my class work. For you, when you want to prove me that I am telling you the truth; you are free to contact her in this address. Dr. Thab'sile Buthelezi, University of KwaZulu Natal, Edgewood Campus, Private Bag X03, Ashwood, 3605, Telephone Number: (031) 260 3471, Fax Number: (031) 260 3423, Email: buthelazit10@ukzn.ac.za

Do you have any question in connection with this?

Are you willing to participate in this project? If yes, please sign the Declaration Form in the next page.

Thank you

Yours faithfully

Mr T.N. Mvuna (Student No. 200402104)

DECLARATION FORM

“DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN”

THE STUDY TO INVESTIGATE THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF VULNERABLE
STATE OF CHILDREN AND HOW IT AFFECTS SCHOOLING.

I _____ (full names of participant) hereby confirm
that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I
consent to participating in the research project.

Do you give consent to P.G.S.E.S. being invited to be present during the research project?
..... (Fill with Yes or No).

I understand that I am at liberty to with draw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature of Participant:

Date:

.....

.....

P.O. Box 844
Hibberdene
4220
25 May 2006

Mhlanganyeli (Mfundi) Sawubona

Njengothisha wakho okufundisa ibanga lesihlanu (Grade 7), ngingajabula uma ngingaba nawe mfundi ukwenza iphrojekthi ezokwenziwa lapho kulesisikole sakho (iGobhela) ngehora lokuqala emini (13hrs00)

Ophawula ngakho, nokunikezayo njengamaphuzu oxoxa ngawo ayongcinwa eyimfihlo. Imininingwane oyinikezayo izoba yimfihlo. Imininingwane oyinikezile ngeke ihlanganiswe nawe uqobo, nomndeni wakho kanye nezihlobo zakho. Ukubamba iqhaza kungubu “volontiya” okusho ukuthi uyokwenza ngoba kusuka ngaphakathi kuwena, uthanda. Unelungelo lokuba ungalibambi iqhaza lapho kuloluhlelo uma ungazizwa unothando. Unelungelo futhi lokuthi uma ungasathandi ukade uvumile ukuthi uyeke. Lokho ngeke kukubeke esimweni esibucayi kumphathi waloluhlelo.

Uma uzolibamba iqhaza kuloleprojekthi, azonikezwa indwangu yokudweba imidwebo. Uthisha uzobe esekunikeza izinhlobo zikapende ombalabala ngokuhlukana kwayo. Ngesikhathi sokudweba abantwana abasebenzisa isandla sokudla bayocelwa ukuba badwebe besebenzisa isandla sokunxele, ngokunjalo namanxele (abantwana) ayocelwa ukuba adwebe asebenzise izandla zokudla. Lokhu siyobe sikwenzela ukuze kudaleke umoya ogcwele isasasa nenjabulo kinina enizobe nihlanganyele. Niyobe seniphendula imibuzo ngenikudwebile. Lomsebenzi oyokwenziwa uzothatha ihora elilodwa ngosuku. Izinsuku okuyosetshenzwa ngawo lomsebenzi kuzoba izinsuku eziyisihlanu; zokuza esikoleni. Siyomema owezenhlalakahle ophuma emnyangweni wezemfundo ukuba abe nathi.

Uma ufuna ukuba nesiqiniseko salomsebenzi wocwaningo ungathintana nomphakathi ongumqeqeshi nongumlolongi kathisha ezifundweni zocwaningo uDokotela Thab'sile Buthelezi, Faculty of Education, University of KwaZulu Natal, Edgewood Campus, Private Bag X03, Ashwood, 3605. Inombolo yocingo: (031) 260 3471, Ifeksi: (031) 260 3423, Email: buthlezit10@ukzn.ac.za
Unawo yini umbuzo mayelana nalomsebenzi?

Uyavuma ukubamba iqhaza? Uma uvuma ngicela ugcwalise i-fomu lokuvuma (Declaration Form).

Ozithobayo
Mr T.N. Mvuna (Student No. 200402104)

IFOMU YOKUVUMA

IZINHLOBO ZEZINGQINAMBA (EMAKHAYA NASEMPHAKATHINI) NOKWANDA
BOKUBA BUDENGWANA KUBANTWANA. KUBAKHINYABEZA [ABANTWANA]
KANJANI EKUFUNDENI ISIKOLE?

Uyavuma ukuba sikumemele oweze nhlalakahle emnyangweni wezemfundo ukuba abe khona
ngesikhathi socwaningo? (Gwalisa ngo Yebo noma Cha).

Mina _____ (amagama omhlanganyeli aphelele
nesibongo) ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi ngiyifunde ngokuqonda lencwadi nakho konke
ekuquketheyo; nohlobo locwaningo oluzokwenziwa.

Ngiyavuma ukubamba iqhaza kulolucwaningo. Ngiyazi futhi ngiyaqonda ukuthi nginelungelo
futhi ngikhululekile ukuhoxa kulo ucwaningo uma ngingasafuni noma ingasiphi isikhathi.
Inqobo nje uma ngifisa ukukwenza lokho.

I understand that I am at liberty to with draw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature of Participant:

Date:

.....

.....

APPENDIX 3
LETTER TO THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Gobhela Primary School
P.O. Box 227
Hibberdene
4220
26 May 2006

The Principal/ Deputy Principal
Gobhela Primary School
P.O. Box 227
Hibberdene
4220

Dear Sir/ Madam

APPLICATION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH PROJECT

I hereby apply for your permission to be permitted to conduct a research project in your school at 13h00; after lunch. I am one of your staff members, who is a teacher in your school having a research project titled; THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF VULNERABLE STATE OF CHILDREN AND HOW IT AFFECTS SCHOOLING. Should the S.G.B. (School Governing Body) Chairperson and the School Principal permit me to conduct the research, I would like to involve learners; teachers and parents as participants.

During the research programme, all that is raised for discussions will be treated in a confidential manner. The school Governing Body, School Management Team and the entire staff of the school will never be linked with what will be said during the research sessions. The school name will never be used instead the pseudonym name will be supplied. As a principal of the school, you are at liberty to stop the research programme at any time, should you feel that it doesn't go according to school's ethics and policies. Learners, teachers and parents are also free to withdraw themselves from participating if they desire to do so. Their withdrawal from participating will not harm their good reputation to me as the researcher.

Should you wish to get more information about this matter, you can contact my supervisor Dr. Thab'sile Buthelezi, Faculty of Education, University of KwaZulu Natal, Edgewood Campus, Private Bag X03, Ashwood, 3605. Telephone Number: (031) 260 3471, Fax Number: (031) 260 3423, Email: buthlezit10@ukzn.ac.za

Should I be permitted to conduct the research, I'll be happy should you fill in the declaration form in the next page.

Your co-operation in this matter will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Mr T.N. Mvuna (Student No. 200402104)

APPENDIX 4
LETTER TO THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

Gobhela Primary School
P.O. Box 227
Hibberdene
4220
26 May 2006

The School Governing Body (Chairperson)
Gobhela Primary School
P.O. Box 227
Hibberdene
4220

Dear Sir/ Madam

APPLICATION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH PROJECT

I hereby apply for your permission to be permitted to conduct a research project in your school at 13h00; after lunch. I am a teacher in your school having a research project titled; THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF VULNERABLE STATE OF CHILDREN AND HOW IT AFFECTS SCHOOLING. Should the S.G.B. (School Governing Body) Chairperson and the School Principal permit me to conduct the research, I would like to involve learners; teachers and parents as participants.

All what have been said during the research – programme, will remain confidential. Matters raised during the reseach sessions will not be linked with the school and its functionality. The principal and you are at liberty to stop the research programme at any time should you feel the need to do so: Learners, teachers and parents are also free to withdraw themselves from participating should they so desired. Their withdrawal from participating will not put them in bad situations (in terms of relationships between them and the researcher).

Should you wish to get more information about this matter, you can contact my supervisor Dr. Thabsile Buthelezi, Faculty of Education, University of KwaZulu Natal, Edgewood Campus, Private Bag X03, Ashwood, 3605. Telephone Number: (031) 260 3471, Fax Number: (031) 260 3423, Email: buthelazit10@ukzn.ac.za

Should I be permitted to conduct the research, I'll be happy should you fill in the declaration form in the next page.

Your co-operation in this matter will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Mr T.N. Mvuna (Student No. 200402104)

APPENDIX 5

LETTER TO THE SOCIAL WORKER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Gobhela Primary School
P.O. Box 227
Hibberdene
4220
26 May 2006

Psychological Guidance Specialist and Educational Servoces (PGSES)
Port Shepstone District (Department of Education and Culture)
P.O. Port Shestone
4240

Dear Sir/ Madam

INVITATION FOR PGSES TO BE PRESENT IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

I hereby invite you to be with me and children during the research programme that will take place in the above named school. The research study is based on THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF VULNERABLE STATE OF CHILDREN AND HOW IT AFFECTS SCHOOLING.

The research project is mainly going to deal with vulnerable children who had become vulnerable in a number of ways. As some of the issues that may be raised or asked from learners, would be touchy and evoked secondary trauma in children, your presence during the research sessions would be most welcomed; as you'll soothe them when necessary. All the necessary arrangements in connection with this matter have been arranged. Research participants will be learners (whom the study is about); teachers and parents.

The research programme for learners will be at 13h00 after lunch. The programme will start at 13h00 till 14h00. This means the research programme will take one hour and will take two days for learners. Your presence will be very much valued.

Should you wish to get more information about this matter, you can contact my supervisor Dr. Thabsile Buthelezi, Faculty of Education, University of KwaZulu Natal, Edgewood Campus, Private Bag X03, Ashwood, 3605. Telephone Number: (031) 260 3471, Fax Number: (031) 260 3423, Email: buthlezit10@ukzn.ac.za

Your co-operation in this matter will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully
Mr T.N. Mvuna (Student No. 200402104)

APPENDIX 6

PERMISSION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATALI
PROVINSIE KWAZULU-NATAL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UMNYANGO WEMFUNDO
DEPARTEMENT VAN ONDERWYS

Tel: 033 341 8610
Fax: 033 341 8612

Private Bag X9137
Pietermaritzburg
3200

228 Pietermaritz Street
Pietermaritzburg, 3201

INHLOKHOHVISI PIETERMARITZBURG HEAD OFFICE

Enquiries:
Imibuzo: Sibusiso Alwar
Navrao:

Reference:
Inkomba: 0191/06
Verwysing:

Date:
Usuku:
Datum: 11 July 2006

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to serve as a notice that TN Mvuna (200402104) has been granted permission to conduct research with the following terms and conditions:

- That as a researcher, he/she must present a copy of the written permission from the Department to the Head of the Institution concerned before any research may be undertaken at a departmental institution.
- Attached is the list of schools she/he has been granted permission to conduct research in. however, it must be noted that the schools are not obligated to participate in the research if it is not a KZNDoe project.
- TN Mvuna has been granted special permission to conduct his/her research during official contact times, as it is believed that their presence would not interrupt education programmes. Should education programmes be interrupted, he/she must, therefore, conduct his/her research during nonofficial contact times.
- No school is expected to participate in the research during the fourth school term, as this is the critical period for schools to focus on their exams.

for SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL
KwaZulu Natal Department of Education

APPENDIX 7

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. What kinds of problems, as teachers do you encounter or come across when it comes to teaching and learning in your classrooms?
2. How do such problems impact on your teaching?
3. To learners (children); how do such problems become a barrier to learning and eventually, affect their schooling?
4. Schools are the sites of violence. What kinds or forms of violence are mostly common at school? What do you think are causing learners to be violent?
5. Does the school as an educational institution, contribute towards promoting violence to learners? How does it contribute?
6. Calling children by names (called by teachers) to discipline them. Do you think that is right for learners? Why?
7. What is done by the school to alleviate poverty?
8. Children are abused in many ways by parents and community members. How do these impact on school – child's life?

APPENDIX 8

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

1. As a parent what do you regard as obstacles that may diminish your wishes of seeing your child successfully completing his/ her schooling?
2. Children living with grand parents are ones never complete their schooling journey. What are the reasons for that?
3. Children are subjected to various forms of abuses by parents. Can you name few examples of these abuses? How do parents resort to these? Why do they do this?
4. Do you think, is the community contributing to some of the behavioral problems of children? How is it contributing?
5. Other children sometimes put their families as shields or excuses that their parents never allowed them execute school work at home after schooling hours. Are those excuses by one of your children true? If it is true? Why is it done?
6. There is a high rate pregnancy among girl children still at school. This is one of the reasons for schooling being disturbed. What has gone wrong and how should this be avoided as parents.
7. As parents we are facing problem of HIV/AIDS. How would we help victims of this diseases?

IMIBUZO EHLELELWE ABAZALI/ ABAGADI BABANTWANA

1. Njengomzali/ nomgadi womntwana; yini oyibona iyingqinamba engenza amphupho onawo ngomntwana wakho noma ongaphansi kwakho ashabalale, mayelana nokumbona eqhubeka nesikole aze agogode?
2. Abantwana abavamise ukukhuliswa izaguga, bangabanye abatholakala bengasiqedi isikole. Kungabe yini izimbangela zalokho?
3. Abantwana bahlangabezana nezinhlalo nhlalo zokuhlukenyezwa okubuhlungu lokhu kuhlukenyezwa kuvela kubazali, nababheki (abantwana). Kungani abantu abangabazali bangene kulomkhuba? Kungani benze njalo? Benziswa yini?
4. Uyacabanga ukuthi umphakathi (Community) uyalibamba iqhaza ekuziphatheni okungasile kwabantwana? Umphathi ulibamba kanjani iqhaza?
5. Abanye babantwana kuyenzeka izikhathi bavike ngemindeni yasemakubo, ukuthi yibo abazali babo uqobo abangavumi ukuba benze imisebenzi yesikole emakhaya. Kungabe lokho abantwana abakushoyo ngabazali, kuliqiniso? Uma kwiliqiniso abazali/ ababheki babantwana bakwenze lani lokhu?
6. Kunokuphakama kwezinga lokukhulelwa kubantwana besikole bamantombazane. Lokhu kungokunye kwezingqinamba ezenza imfundo yabantwana ididiseke. Yini engasahambi kahle kini bazali/ babheki babantwana. Lesisimo singavinjwa kanjani?
7. Njengabazali, sibhekene nenkinga yesifo sengculaza. Thina singaba usizo kanjani kubantu asehlaselwe ilesisifo?

APPENDIX 9

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT FOR LEARNERS

A: ARTWORKS:

1. On a piece of a fabric material, kindly draw anything about your family including yourself. (Please start by using a lead pencil to draw on a fabric material; there after, you come with your paint mixed according to your colours of your choice. (Please don't forget; the left handed must use their right hands and the right handed should use their left hands. Ok?))
2. Wow! You have done a beautiful artwork. You have mixed the paints to get the colours of your choice well. Now, tell me more and be detailed about your artwork you have drawn. (Please write down in your diary, that you have been supplied with).

B: OTHER QUESTIONS:

3. Do you like yourself?
Tell me about all that is good which you like about yourself. (Please write down in your diary)
4. Tell me about all that you like about your family. Write that (all that is good) down in your diary).
5. Now write down (in your diary) all that is not good and which you don't like about family.
6. Do you like your school? What do you like about your school?
(Please write down in your diary).
7. Write down in your diary, about all the things that you wish in your life.

IMIBUZO NOMSEBENZI OHLELELWE ABANTWANA

A: IMIDWEBO:

1. Esiqeshini sendwangu osikeliwe yona, ngicela ungidwebele noma yini ekufikelayo (uma ucabanga) ngomndeni wakini, nawe futhi uzibale ngokuzifaka kulemidwebo. (Siza qala ngokusebenzisa ipeni lomsizi (lead pencil) ngokudweba ngalo endwangwini, emva kwalokho ube sewulandelisa ngopende wakho, sewuhlanganisiwe ngokuzikhethela kwakho imibala. (Ningakhohlwa njalo ukuthi amanjele azoba ngabantu abasebenzisa isandla sokudla, nalaba abasenza ngesandla sokudla bazoba nganjele namuhla-nje)
2. Woshi bo! Naze nadweba idwebo emihle. Nibe nekhono ukuqhathanisa opened ukuthola imibala eniyifunayo. Kuhle! Manje (bangani) ake uxoxe ujule ngomdwebo wakho owudwebile ungitshele ukuthi kwenzekani or noma kwenzeka ini (awungichazele.) Bhala phansi.

B: EMINYE IMIBUZO:

3. Awungixoxele ukuthi abakuncomayo bathi ungumuntu onjani? (Siza abhale phansi encwadini engikunike yona)
4. Awungixoxele konke okuthandayo ngomndeni wakini. (Ngisize ungibhalele kona phansi)
5. Manje awungixoxele ngokungibhalela phansi konke ongakuthandi ngomndeni wakini.

Uyasithanda isikole ofunda kuso (na)? Ngibhalele okuthandayo ngesikole ofunda kusona?

6. Ngibhalele ngakho konke okufisa empilweni uma sewukhulile usuqede ukufunda.

APPENDIX 10

ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

03 January 2009

Faculty Research Committee
Faculty of Education
Edgewood Campus
University of KwaZulu-Natal



Dear Dr. Buthelezi,

Consideration of Ethical Clearance for student:

Mvuna, Thamsanqa Norman - 200402104

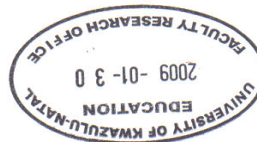
Your student's ethical clearance application has met with approval in terms of the **internal review process** of the Faculty of Education.


Approval has been obtained from the Faculty Research Committee, and the application will be forwarded for ratification (MEd) or recommended in the case of PhD and Staff applications, to the Ethics Sub-Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. All Masters applications approved by Faculty Research Committee may commence with research.

Both you and the student will be advised as to whether ethical clearance has been granted for the research thesis (PhD), once the Ethics Sub-Committee has reviewed the application. An ethical clearance certificate will be issued which you should retain with your records. The student should include the ethical clearance certificate in the final dissertation (appendixes).

Should you have any queries please contact the Faculty Research Officer on (031) 260 3524 or on the email buchler@ukzn.ac.za

Yours faithfully




Professor D. Bhana
Acting Deputy Dean Postgraduate Studies and Research

APPENDIX 11

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER



RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)
WESTVILLE CAMPUS
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 – 2603587
EMAIL : ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

05 FEBRUARY 2009

MR. TN MVUNA (200402104)
EDUCATION

Dear Mr. Mvuna

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0027/09M

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been approved for the following project:

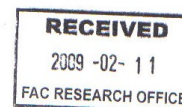
"DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN" A case study of the vulnerable state of children and how it affects schooling in South Africa"

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

Yours faithfully


.....
MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA

cc. Supervisor (Dr. T Buthezi)
cc. Mr. D Buchler



Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville