

5 EMPIRICAL STUDY : REPORT ON INTERVIEWS REGARDING THE EFFECT OF LABOUR ON EDUCATION FOR BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA IN THE PERIOD 1948-1986

5.1 Introduction

It was deemed fit to include an empirical study in this research in order to verify and confirm the theoretical study conducted through literature research. Cohen (1980:13) defines an empirical study as a study dealing with that which is verifiable by observation and evidence. This chapter reports on the data collection by means of an interview schedule and on the findings of the study.

5.2 Aims of this empirical research

- (a) To determine the effect of labour on education for Blacks in South Africa between 1948-1986 according to a number of interviewees,
- (b) in order to find support for the theoretical study in the previous chapters, if available, or to refute the findings in previous chapters.

5.3 Data-gathering

5.3.1 Method

Cohen and Manion (1980:42) define method as the range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction. Interviews were conducted in a specific geographical region of South Africa known as the "Gauteng Province". Interviews seemed to be the most appropriate method to employ at the time when this study was conducted because they were based on a schedule or supervised questionnaire and not a mailed questionnaire. According to Good (1941:378) an interview is referred to by authors as an "oral questionnaire". A mailed questionnaire could have been used but because of the problems attached thereto, this method was not considered. The disadvantages of using a mailed questionnaire emanate from the fact that respondents may simply ignore the questionnaire through lack of interest. Respondents can also give distorted information by involving people who have not been selected for sampling.

Other reasons why interviews were chosen for this study is because the interviewer or researcher gets the chance to interact and to probe further on the basis of some of the questions. Good ideas are freely exchanged and the respondent does his/her best to prove the value of his/her opinion. According to Good (1941:378), with an interview it

is possible to secure a great deal of data that cannot be obtained through the less personal procedure of distributing a reply blank. In support of what Good said Lovell and Lawson (1970:32) say that it has been found that many persons are more willing to communicate orally than in writing and will therefore provide data more readily and fully in an interview than by completing a questionnaire.

5.3.2 The questionnaire

A total of twelve open-ended questions were designed with cross-references to the theoretical research. Questions were discussed with the supervisor of this study. Although ambiguity of questions and relevancy were checked, a pilot study was still necessary to eliminate problems with regard to conceptualisation.

5.3.3 The pilot study

The questionnaire was tested by consulting knowledgeable people in the field of educational and other research methods. Participants in this study included Dr. Adele Gordon, former HSRC researcher, presently at the Wits Centre for Continuing Education, and Mr. W Ralefeta, former Chamber of Mines researcher, and now a project manager of USAID - SA Human Rights Division. Some questions, such as 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6, were found to be vague and ununderstandable and were therefore rephrased. The questionnaire was then administered to Isaac Hamese, a local resident in Diepkloof who was a high school student in 1976. Isaac Hamese's responses were included in the final report on the interview because of his knowledge in civic affairs. According to Hamese the questionnaire was clearly worded and understandable, and he responded to it with great ease. Mr. W P van der Merwe - DET's Labour Relations Head in Pretoria - also assisted in the pilot study and helped remove ambiguity in the questions.

5.3.4 List of twelve questions

SCHEDULE

THE EFFECT OF LABOUR IN THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION FOR BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA (1948-1986)

SCHEDULE FOR INTERVIEW WITH PERSONS WITH HISTORICAL WEIGHT

Name of respondent: _____

Age: _____

Qualifications: Professional: =

Academic: =

Present employer/organisation: =

Previous employer/organisation: =

Experience in work done: =

- 1 What are your views regarding the factors which influenced the relationship between education and labour for Blacks in the RSA?
- 2 Why, in your view, did the colonial government at the Cape and in other provinces introduce a separate education for Blacks?
- 3 How did education in South Africa affect the provision of manpower for South Africa's economic system?
- 4 What is your assessment of the Bantu Education curriculum from 1954-1986?
- 5 What were the causes of unrest in Black schools in the period 1954-1986?
- 6 How did these school boycotts/this unrest affect the provision of manpower and views on labour?
- 7 What is, in your opinion, the Biblical notion of the relationship between education and labour?
- 8 In what way did the Commissions of inquiry into education and labour legislation affect the policies of the National Party?
- 9 What are, in your view, the contributions of international pressure, freedom movements and trade unionism to the labour relations in the RSA in the period 1948-1986?
- 10 What do you perceive as the most negative and unacceptable aspect of the provision of education for Blacks in South Africa between 1948-1986?
- 11 What would you recommend as (a) mechanism(s) to redress the imbalances in the education and labour spheres in the RSA?
- 12 Briefly give your assessment of and general comments on this schedule and interview: its structure, its value, its shortcomings, etc.

5.3.5 Procedure in conducting the schedule interviews

Conducting the schedule interviews was in practice very problematic and at times discouraging because respondents were not easily accessible. Appointments were made telephonically. With some respondents an appointment was honoured only after more than ten telephone calls. Prof. Nic Wiehahn was one of the respondents who was very difficult to contact even telephonically as he was out of the country conducting fact-finding missions for the Government of National Unity in South Africa. Interviews took place in Pretoria, Midrand, Johannesburg and Soweto at all times of the day.

A schedule interview was conducted on a one-to-one basis. A group interview was discarded as it would intimidate other respondents psychologically and the researcher was not going to get the best responses from them. The researcher introduced himself to the respondent and explained the purpose of the interview as well as the name of the university where the research was registered. The respondent was also asked for his/her consent that the tape-recorder be used to record the responses. Not all the respondents agreed to the use of a tape-recorder during and after the interview. Notes were in any case taken as they responded. There was no restriction on time for the respondents. The interviewee or respondent was also made to feel comfortable by firstly asking him/her nonsensitive questions with regard to work and personal details like names and place of employment. Occasional guiding questions without irritating the respondent were used and leads were picked up. Interviews mostly ended before the respondents showed signs of weariness. Useful and accurate data was obtained during these schedule interviews. The reason for the accurate data was that the researcher collected data directly from the respondents using a tape-recorder and note-taking.

5.3.6 Criteria for selection of interviewees

- * The 16 interviewees or respondents were selected with the following criteria in mind:
 - they had to be knowledgeable in the field of both education and labour;
 - they had to have "historical weight", i.e. be acknowledged experts in their respective fields;
 - they had to reflect the population in terms of race, age, class, and gender;
 - their field of knowledge, as a group, had to cover the whole field explored in this research project;

- they had to be able to understand and speak English;
- they had to be readily available for an extended interview, and
- they had to be readily accessible to the researcher in respect of distance to travel by car and in terms of funds available to him.

The fact that these specific criteria were applied makes it impossible to generalise the findings emanating from this empirical survey to the whole population of Gauteng and to other experts in this field of research. The selection of this group of interviewees was instrumental in reaching the aims of the empirical research, viz. finding in-depth corroboration of the findings of the literature study by listening to what acknowledged experts in the field had to say (see 5.2 above).

5.3.7 Sample size

A total of 16 respondents were selected from a research population of academics and representatives from various education, church, trade union, student organisations and institutions such as consultancy companies and SABC/TV. A sample size of 16 participants was deemed appropriate because it consisted of men and women who were knowledgeable in the education and labour spheres. This sample was proportionally spread to include the relevant and interested parties in education and labour in the Gauteng Province (cf. Table 5.3.8).

5.3.8 Respondents' personal details in alphabetical order

Name	Age-group	Highest qualifications	Employer/Organization
1 Gordon A (Dr)	45-55	Ph.D	Wits Community Project
2 Hamese I	25-35	Matric (student in 1976)	Community volunteer
3 Junod V	60 -	B.A.	Volunteer (Witkoppen Diepsloot Education Trust)
4 Kekana M	20-25	Matric	President of COSAS, Gauteng Province
5 Kgoroadira O	40-50	M.A.	School Principal, DET - Soweto
6 Masia P	40-50	Junior Certificate	REF, Johannesburg
7 Mataboge T.J.M.	55-65	M.Ed.	DET, PTA (N. Tvl. Region)
8 Matakanye M	45-55	HPTC	Soweto Teacher, Assistant General Secretary SADTU, Gauteng Province
9 Mathies Ger	60 -	Matric/Holland	Pastor/Johannesburg North
10 Mdluli J	60 -	Matric	Businessman - Soweto
11 Motloi S	60	Matric, B.A.	Farmer - Johannesburg North
12 Modise T	25-35	Matric/Management Diploma	School Inspector N.Tvl Region
13 Nwaila C	40-50	M.A.	SABC/TV, Johannesburg
14 Omar R	30-40	B.A.	Principal DET/REF
15 Tenza E	60 -	B.A. Hons	COSATU (Head of Human Resources)
16 Wiehahn N. Prof.	60	LLD	Retired Principal, DET serving in READ/TUATA
			Chairman of Wiehahn Commission 1979

5.3.9 Analysis of data from respondents

The responses to each question were qualitatively analysed. Responses were then compared and similarities and differences were traced.

5.4 Results of the schedule interviews

5.4.1 Introduction

The effect of labour in the history of education for Blacks in South Africa between 1948-1986 was discussed in the preceding chapters on the basis of a literature review. A number of key issues were tackled. These included the relationship between education and labour (cf. 2.1). The results of the schedule interviews seem to validate the data collected from the various sources in the literature study. Similarities and differences between the interviewees' opinions are pointed out in the following analysis, thus demonstrating and verifying the validity of the literature study in the previous chapters. The analysis which follows is in accordance with the sequence of questions in the questionnaire.

5.4.2 Analysis of responses

- 1 Responses to question (1) about views regarding the factors which influenced the relationship between education and labour centred around apartheid policies before 1948, and after 1948 until 1986, when the National Party Government relaxed some of its policies such as the Influx Control Measures (cf. 4.3.3.). Apartheid policies were, according to the responses, the main factors which disrupted the relationship between education and labour. According to Wiehahn (1995) apartheid brought about segregation and subordinate roles played by Blacks in order to serve the white community as manual labourers and to protect the poor white community (cf. 4.2.5.). There was general consensus among the respondents that the creation of a class society, the stigma of supremacy, fear of competition in the job situation as well as control of production by white South Africans helped to enhance master and servant relationships, instead of enhancing the relationship between education and labour for the improvement of the South African socio-economic system (cf. 4.2.4.). According to Gordon (1994) children in farm schools were not to be given too much education which would make them to leave the farm. This response suggests that the farm communities were virtually bound or kept hostage on white owned farms by means of education.
- 2 According to Nwaila (1994) colonial governments in the RSA introduced separate education systems of education to produce cheap black labour in order to avoid sharing resources. The theoretical study (cf. 4.3) already indicated the motive for the segregated education system as subordination to white domination. The domination of Whites was echoed in responses by

interviewees such as that Blacks would be regarded as inferior. Modise (1994) summarized the segregation in the schooling system as follows: "The same education system for Blacks and Whites in South Africa would empower Blacks". Throughout the history of education in South Africa Whites have never regarded Blacks as their equals. To them segregated education was the solution to maintaining South Africa as a heterogeneous country (cf. 1.1).

- 3 The effect of an unequal education system in South Africa can be seen in the declining economy of the country over the years as Blacks entered the world of work unprepared for it and with little or none of the skills which were needed for coping with the environment. There were similarities in the responses regarding Blacks having lacked the skills for jobs in the labour market. Wiehahn (1995) described the effect of unequal education on the manpower needs of the RSA as an "economic backlog" whereas Hamese (1994) indicated that unequal education resulted in Whites occupying managerial positions while production suffered through delayed schedules as a result of poor skills from Blacks.
- 4 Responses with regard to Bantu Education and its curriculum were negative. The Eiselen Commission was seen as having contributed to the inferior position of Blacks in the socio-economic and political spheres of South Africa (cf. 4.5). According to Mataboge (1994), Bantu Education produced "garden boys", and was irrelevant. Masia (1995) commented that the Bantu education curriculum was meant to perpetuate darkness. Mathies (1994) mentioned that Bantu education was a convenience for Whites, especially in farm schools. Hamese (1994) labelled Bantu Education as a big crèche to delay people until they were of labour age because it offered skimpy knowledge through rote learning. Hamese might have referred to the literature review (cf. 2.6.3) which discussed indoctrination. Bantu Education did reveal qualities of indoctrination because very little education took place in Bantu schools. This can be seen from products of the schools following the Bantu Education curriculum. Blacks who could not comprehend nor conceptualise the instructions from a "master" were referred to as "houtkops", meaning that this poor Black was "stupid". How could Blacks not become a "houtkop" when the Bantu Education system was designed to produce "houtkops"?, Hamese asked.
- 5 Data from the respondents on questions 5 and 6 about the causes of unrest in Black schools and how the unrest affected manpower and views on labour respectively could not be divorced from each other as they were similar and

related. Education was white-dictated and poorly resourced. There was consensus among respondents about the causes of unrest in black schools. An inferior type of education was the cause, although the enforcement of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction was used to lodge the protest that led to school boycotts in the RSA in 1954, 1976 and in the 1980s. Unrest nearly brought learning to a complete standstill, and production suffered as a result of parents failing to report at their workplaces. Omar (1995) has indicated that labour and education were closely related and both were disrupted. The culture of learning disappeared. Mahlomola (1995) summarises the effects of school boycotts on education and labour as follows: "There was no public transport and parents lost their jobs and children". Children, he said, disappeared and parents left their jobs to look for them. According to Kgoroadira (1994) the boycotts affected education because the drop-out rate increased as children skipped the country to join liberation forces such as the ANC and PAC.

- 6 The Biblical view about education and labour seems to have been accepted and shared by the Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Communist respondents. All the respondents indicated that the Bible does not support discrimination and unfair labour treatment as well as inequality in education. Pastor Mathies (1994) has pointed out that "we are all made in God's image and nobody - nobody can say you are less than I am, we are all special in God's eyes" (cf. 2.2.2). Wiehahn (1995) indicated that "if a system denies you the right to be developed, trained and educated, that system is immoral according to Christian ethics".
- 7 Respondents in general felt that the intention of the Government to establish commissions of inquiries into education and labour were appropriate but expressed a great disappointment when the recommendations of the De Lange Commission (1980-1) in particular were not accepted (cf. 4.8.5). Gordon (1994) opines that the "Eiselen Commission was in line with the politics of the time. De Lange/Wiehahn/Riekert opened up changes but the conservative element was too powerful and hampered change". Wiehahn (1995) was positive about the Commission he chaired (cf. 4.7); this is what he had to say about his Commission: "My Commission was successful in 1979". He explained the success of his Commission through the parable of Samson who pulled down the walls on the Philistines and the result of his Commission was that "the whole temple of evil in labour crumbled". Tenza (1995) mentioned in support of the Wiehahn Commission's findings that "Wiehahn transformed labour and had a great influence on National Party policies". He also mentioned that De Lange was useful but that his recommendations were not all considered.

- 8 External and internal pressures changed education and labour policies in the RSA positively (cf. 4.9.3). South Africa, being a polecat among Nations then, had no option but to change its policies which dehumanised Blacks in the RSA. The respondents indicated that isolation, rejection, sanctions, the trade and arms embargo by the international community through the world body (the United Nations) helped to pressurise South Africa to make meaningful changes and to move towards democracy. Omar (1995) listed sanctions-isolation-armed struggle together with what she called the four pillars of the struggle, the internal, namely: mass movement, the international pillar, the underground pillar and the propaganda pillar as the general and powerful weapons used to bring about change in South Africa. Motloi (1994) quoted the then Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg, Bishop Desmond Tutu, who preached to the international community the concept of "disinvestment" in South Africa in the 1980s.
- 9 Inferior education in the history of Blacks in South Africa was detrimental and destroyed Blacks by showing them the "road to nowhere" (cf. 4.5.3). Matakanye (1995) mentioned that there was a "lost generation, people were destroyed educationally, there was a backlog in housing, and education destroyed talents. He also indicated that Whites were destroyed as well as they were only taught how to oppress. On the other hand Kekana (1995) pointed out the following as having been detrimental to Blacks: violence (Black on Black violence), drug abuse, the division of Blacks, a high dropout rate, subordination to white supremacy and early teenage pregnancies. Poor qualifications of teachers were also detrimental to education and labour (Tenza, 1994).
- 10 Questions about recommendations and comments concluded the schedule interviews and respondents pointed out various methods which can be used to redress the imbalances of the past education system and labour policies. This included the retraining of teachers, improvement of facilities, free and compulsory education and support of Adult Basic Education (ABE). Omar (1995) recommended the following: greater accessibility of schools, quality education, proper governance of schools and consultation as well as integration of schools in the RSA. Wiehahn (1995) recommended teacher education, crash programmes, good salaries for teachers, close co-operation between teachers, parents and students, shortening of school holidays, technology oriented education to be introduced in all schools as there were many persons with BA degrees without jobs. Gordon (1994) recommended that farmers should not control schools. This recommendation by Dr. Gordon, who has conducted an

extensive research into farm school education, might refer to the transfer of farm schools to the state because of the controversial governance of this schools. Early Childhood Development and ESS were recommended by Masia (1995). The government should introduce these programmes. According to Kekana (1995), Non-Government Organisations could help to support self-help projects and parents could be encouraged to volunteer in undertaking minor works in their schools as this is the fundamental and the essence of the Reconstruction and Development Programme introduced by the Government in 1994.

Respondents concurred that there was a relationship between education and labour. Mdluli (1994) summarised this interview in the following words: "Ideas from this paper will help to understand the past education system in South Africa, and if you do not ask you will never know - if you do not do research you will never discover".

5.4.3 Conclusion

The results of the schedule interview concurred with the literature review in the preceding chapters. The effect of education in the history of education for Blacks in the RSA from 1948 to 1986 has been demystified by the respondents, in the process revealing that indeed education for Blacks in the RSA has had an effect on the lives of Blacks which culminated in lack of relevant skills for specific jobs, and in subservience. The empirical survey has also shown that where there is a will, there is a way: the imbalances in the education and labour spheres which affected Blacks can be redressed now and in the future.