

NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY



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POVERTY AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
LEARNERS IN RURAL AREAS OF MAFIKENG:
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
MAGOGOE VILLAGE

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in Life Skills and Counselling at the North West University - Mafikeng campus, Faculty of Human and Social Sciences hereby submitted, has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university and that it is my own original work in design and execution. All material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This research report examines poverty as a socio-economic factor that may hamper the academic performance of learners in rural areas of Mafikeng (Magogoe). The research was conducted in Magogoe village of Mafikeng. The researcher is a professional Middle school educator, who in her experience as an educator realised that there are learners who do not achieve academically because of their social background.

A descriptive study was undertaken to research on poverty and academic performance of learners in rural areas of Mafikeng. Middle school learners are in a transition stage, which according to Erikson (Louw, 1991) is adolescent stage. They seek positive identity and according to Freud (Louw, 1991) they are in genital stage in which they form relationships with opposite sex persons. During this time of their lives, they need more energy that is provided by healthy nutrition, as their physical being also grows at a faster rate. Those that experience hardships are, because of poverty, greatly affected and eventually become prone to health and social pathologies.

Factors such as accommodation, income, mode of transport to school, source of energy and parental involvement in children's schoolwork were explored to verify the effects of poverty on academic performance.

The sample of the research consisted of 60 participants whom are all learners from three different middle schools in Magogoe village. Data was obtained

through questionnaires, which were self administered by the researcher to the participants. From the literature and empirical findings, it became evident that poverty does affect scholastic performance of learners.

The researcher's recommendations are that, permaculture and feeding schemes be introduced in rural schools. The Department of Transport assist learners who walk long distances to schools by providing the learners with bicycles and or school buses. Government improve infrastructures in schools and the Department of Education implement structured study periods after school where the educators can supervise the learners. Learners be provided with Life Skills education which will help them understand their situation and learn to cope in their family circumstances.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| CHAPTER 1: | PAGE |
|--|-------|
| GENERAL ORIENTATION | |
| 1.1 Introduction | 1 |
| 1.2 Problem Statement | 2 - 3 |
| 1.3 Objectives of the Study | 3 |
| 1.4 Assumptions | 3 |
| 1.5 Significance of the Study | 4 |
| 1.6 Limitations of the Study | 4 |
| 1.7 Definition of Concepts | 4 - 6 |
| 1.7.1 Socio - Economic Factors | 4 |
| 1.7.2 Poverty | 5 |
| 1.7.3 Scholastic Development | 6 |
| 1.7.4 Learners | 6 |
| 1.7.4 Rural Areas | 6 |
| 1.8 Methodology | |
| 1.8.1. Research Design | 7 |
| 1.8.2. Methods of Data Collection | |
| 1.8.2.1. Literature Review | 7 |
| 1.8.2.2. Personally Administered Questionnaire | 8 |

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| 1.8.3 Sampling | 8 - 9 |
| 1.8.4 Data Analysis | 10 |

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

| | |
|---|---------|
| 2.1 Introduction | 11 |
| 2.2 Theories of Poverty | 11 - 18 |
| 2.2.1 The individualistic theory | 12 |
| 2.2.2 Dissolve living | 13 |
| 2.2.3 Conflict theories of poverty | 14 – 16 |
| 2.2.4 The situational approach | 16 - 17 |
| 2.2.5 Structural explanation | 17 - 18 |
| 2.2.6 Capitalistic perspective | 18 |
| 2.3 Nature of Poverty in Rural Areas | 19 |
| 2.4 Factors that contribute to poor academic performance of learners in rural areas. | 20 -25 |
| 2.4.1 Unemployment and underemployment | 21 - 22 |
| 2.4.2 Migration | 22 |
| 2.4.3 Social Isolation | 22 |
| 2.4.4 Female headed families | 23 – 25 |
| 2.4.5 Lack of infrastructure | 25 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| 2.5 Types and Causes of Poverty | 25 - 27 |
| 2.6 Conclusion | 27 |

CHAPTER 3:

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| 3.1 Introduction | 28 |
| 3.2 Biographical data of respondents | 29 - 36 |
| Table 1: Gender | 29 |
| Table 2: Age | 29 |
| Table 3: School category | 29 |
| Table 4: Housing space | 30 |
| Table 5: Family composition | 31 |
| Table 6: Family monthly income | 32 |
| Table 7: Mode of transport to school | 33 |
| Table 8: Assistance with homework | 34 |
| Table 9: Source of energy | 34 |
| Table 10: Sleeping time | 35 |
| Table 11: Number of friends | 36 |
| 3.3 Conclusion | 37 |

CHAPTER 4:

MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| 4.1 Introduction | 38 |
| 4.2 Recapitulation of the objectives | 38 |
| 4.3 Main Findings | 39 - 44 |
| 4.3.1 Housing Space | 40 |
| 4.3.2 Family Composition | 41 |
| 4.3.3 Family monthly income | 41 |
| 4.3.4 Assistance with homework | 42 |
| 4.3.5 Mode of transport to school | 43 |
| 4.3.6 Source of energy | 43 |
| 4.3.7 Friends | 44 |
| 4.4 Recommendations | 45 – 46 |
| 4.6.1 Feeding Scheme | 45 |
| 4.6.2 Transport | 45 |
| 4.6.3 Homework | 46 |
| 4.6.4 School Resources | 46 |
| 4.6.5 Life Skills education | 46 |
| 4.5 Conclusion | 46 - 47 |
| 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY | 48 - 53 |
| 6. ANNEXURES | |

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

During the apartheid times in South Africa, the nation was divided into different racial groups such as whites, blacks, Indians and coloureds. Of the racial groups blacks were relegated to the lowest positions and were also highly marginalised.

The political structure of the country dictated that black people occupy areas where there were no industries, mining, agricultural opportunities or anything that would better their lives. Black people were further subdivided into different ethnic groups, an issue that was aimed at destroying the solidarity. Wherever black people were settled, the whites would come and test the land for fertility for agricultural purposes, mining or anything that suited them, and the black communities would be forcefully removed to allow the whites do what they pleased with the land. This limited the chances and opportunities for black South Africans to become self sufficient.

The blacks were not allowed by the white apartheid government to own anything or to stay in urban areas, unless they laboured for the whites in their kitchens, gardens, underground mining or doing odd jobs for them. Blacks were paid less money that could not help them improve their lives. This resulted in black people staying in remote rural areas, squatter areas and townships characterised by lack of social services.

Bantu Education System that was formulated only for blacks failed to offer proper education and perpetuated ignorance and illiteracy. This resulted in poor educational facilities in black areas, a legacy that is still with us up to date, despite all efforts of the new democratic government to turn the situation around.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT.

Poverty is largely a rural phenomenon. Of the 1 billion absolutely poor in the world, 85% still live in rural areas. In South Africa 75% of the poor live in rural areas, RDP (1995: 9). These are the people in the deprivation trap: poor, weak, isolated, powerless and vulnerable. Some manage to escape by migrating to the cities for greener pastures, leaving children unattended. Children in rural areas are deprived of basic needs such as education, health care, nutrition, proper shelter etc. Education in rural areas is highly marginalised. Schools are few and poorly equipped. In those areas where there are schools, children have to walk long distances on foot without any adult supervision. Since illiteracy is very high in rural areas, parents and or guardians are not in a position to help children with schoolwork. This, therefore, means absence of supervision and involvement of parents in school.

Because of all these adversaries children from rural areas do not perform up to standard as compared to their urban counterparts. In most villages there is still no electricity, transport is very scarce, there is poor sanitation, which is a health hazard to all the community members. Most children from rural areas come to school having not eaten a single meal because a great number of parents are

unemployed, and therefore, cannot afford the basic human needs. Families are large and consist of many children. This means that many mouths need a great deal of food and a poor family has too little income to provide for this basic need (Motingoa, 2004: 3).

Family feuds, lack of electricity, lack of privacy due to having large number of members in a family, teenage pregnancy and noise may deprive the learner to have a chance to study in the comfort of her dwelling. A great number of learners have to travel long distances to fetch wood, water and livestock, as a result, they may be too tired to concentrate on their studies.

1.3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.

The following are the objectives for the study:

- To determine the socio-economic factors which hamper the academic
 - performance of learners.
- To determine the nature, causes and extent of poverty in rural schools.
- To devise measures to improve scholastic performance of learners in rural schools.

1.4. ASSUMPTION

The assumption of the study is as follows:

- Lack of basic social services in rural areas result in poor academic performance of learners

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- This study will inform national and provincial policy makers about the plight of learners living below the poverty datum line. The study may also encourage national and provincial authorities to include feeding scheme funds in their budgets for Middle and High schools and not only Primary schools.
- The study will shed light on the impact that poverty has on learners. The study will add information to the existing theory of humanistic perspective that basic human needs have to be primarily met for a person in order to proceed to the other levels of needs and ultimately to be self-actualised.
- The study will also help school counselors to understand the implication of poverty on academic performance

1.6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The available literature does not cover the area of study, i.e. rural areas in general and specifically the area under study Mafikeng.
- The study may not be truly representative of Mafikeng rural areas, as only learners from three rural middle schools have been included to participate in the study.

1.7. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1.7.1. Socio-economic factors

- The concept socio has to do with social or society (Procter, 1978: 1062)

and economic implies to matters connected with trade, industry and wealth (Procter, 1978: 348), whereas factors imply any of the forces, conditions, influences etc, that act with others to bring about a result (Procter, 1978: 391). These forces, conditions and influences are based on the combination of social and economic considerations.

1.7.2. Poverty

Poverty means being in want of the essential elements to sustain human life and Human health. This means experiencing scarcities and deficiencies (Feuerstein, 1997: 5).

Poverty is a state of being very poor. Poor implies having very little or no money and therefore a low standard of living. It is a state of having less than is needed or expected like having the basic needs being of low quality and quantity (Procter, 1978: 844).

The World Book Encyclopedia (1989) defines poverty as the lack of enough income and resources to live adequately by community standards. These standards and definition differ according to time and place. Poverty means that some people are more disadvantaged than others are and that people do not have enough income to maintain a decent standard of living.

In this study, poverty as singled out, as a socio-economic factor will be used (the word poverty) to refer to people, that is, learners whose parents and families are jobless and have very little resources (if any) to rely on.

1.7.3. Scholastic development

- Scholastic is concerned with schools and teaching where a scholar is a person in learning.
- Development is a state of being developed; while develop implies to grow, increase, become larger or more complete. It may also refer to study or to think out fully (Procter, 1978: 300). In this study scholastic development means the ability to think out fully, to study and learn in a school setting where teaching takes place formally.

1.7.4. Learners

Learners refer to persons who are acquiring knowledge gained through reading and study (Procter, 1978: 623). To learn implies to gain knowledge of a subject or skill in (an activity) especially through experience or through being taught. Learners in this study are considered as people attending middle school with ages ranging between 13 and 18 years. They are formerly taught in the classroom by qualified educators and they partake in extramural activities. They get their progress reports twice annually, in mid year (June) and at the end of the year (December) of each year.

1.7.5. Rural areas

According to Longman Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry (1984), rural areas are associated with or are typical of the country architecture reflected in houses with low, plain walls or relating to, or constituting a tenement in land adapted and used for agricultural or pastoral purposes - opposed to urban.

1.8. METHODOLOGY

According to Mitchell (1997: 129) methodology refers to the techniques or a particular discipline used to manipulate data and acquire knowledge. McKendrick (1990: 249) further states that methodology is a formal application of systematic and logical procedures to guide an investigation.

1.8.1. Research design

Huysamen (1993) in Devos (1998: 77) defines research design as the plan or blueprint according to which data is collected to investigate the research hypotheses or questions in the most economic manner.

The research design that is used for this study is the descriptive design.

Descriptive research design includes both quantitative and qualitative description of the phenomena and investigation. Barbie (1979: 120) defines descriptive design as the precise measurement and reporting of the characteristics of some population or phenomenon under study, its purpose is to describe situations and events. For the purpose of this study, the researcher endeavors to describe the impact of poverty on the academic performance of learners in rural areas

1.8.2 Methods of data collection

1.8.2.1 Literature review

Literature review includes recent publication of newspapers, news bulletins,

recent research studies and goes back as far as it is consistent with the nature of the problem chosen to familiarise the researcher with the past studies, that are per tuned to the one being planned (Grinnel, 1998: 448). Literature review attempts to put the study within theoretical perspective.

1.8.2.2 Personally administered questionnaire

According to Brink (1996) as cited in Motingoa (2004: 12), a questionnaire refers to a self-report instrument where the respondent writes answers in response to printed questions on a printed document. A well designed questionnaire is easy for the researcher to administer and score. Yet a good questionnaire is difficult to develop. Each aspect from the items themselves to the colour of the paper used, can influence the responses of the respondents.

A questionnaire was self administered by the researcher to the respondents who are grade nine learners.

1.8.3 Sampling

According to Nachmias (2002:15), 'a sample is any subset of sampling from a population. A subset is any combination of sampling units that has been defined as a population'. Therefore, a sample has to be a reciprocal identity of the population under study. It is important for a sample to be an image of the population in order to make generalizations in the analysis phase of the study.

A sample refers to those members of a population on whom measurement of some characteristics have been made (Hardyck and Petriochich, 1975: 79, cited

by Reid, 1993: 109). The general purpose of sampling is to obtain information on a small number of individuals who can be generalised to a larger aggregate (population) from which the sample comes.

The researcher opted for probability sampling where systematic sampling was used. In probability sampling, all the elements have an equal chance of being selected. Every element is drawn from a list of the entire survey population and elements will be selected through intervals. Systematic sampling ensures greater accuracy because the sample is representative of the population.

The researcher used three middle schools in the study area. From each school the researcher opted to include only grade 9's in the sample. The grade nines write external examinations, which are standardized; therefore choosing them avoids subjectivity in the exams. To randomly select learners to be included in the sample, the researcher used the June/July schedule of results to select learners that are achieving and non-achievers. The schedule of results was used as a sample frame. From the sample frame, the researcher used systematic random sampling to select learners that were achieving and those that were not achieving as a result.

From each of the three middle schools, 20 learners were sampled. 10 learners had achieved and 10 did not achieve in their June/July 2003 exams, therefore a total number of the sample consisted of 60 learners.

To determine starting point, the numerical 1 - 9 were written on small papers, put in a container, shaken and only one chosen, then the researcher started the

counting of elements.

1.8.4. Data analysis

Data analysis is the selection of methods of organising raw data and displaying it in a fashion that will provide answers to the research questions. Data analysis thus entails categorising, ordering, manipulating and summarising the data and describing them in meaningful terms (Brink, 1996: 179 in Motingoa 2004: 14).

The researcher used descriptive statistics to analyse data because they convert and condense a collection of data into an organised, visual representation of data (a picture) in a variety of ways, so that the data have some meaning for the readers of the research report.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The relevant and recent literature was reviewed with the aim of placing the study in a theoretical perspective. This broadened the researcher's knowledge of the topic, helped her to reflect on previous research findings and to come up with findings that could either be accepted or scientifically rejected.

The reviewing of literature was also used as a method of data collection and therefore gave direction to the researcher, for instance, the literature assisted with which questions to ask in the questionnaire, the formulation of those questions and the multi-choice possibilities.

The chapter on literature review will focus on theories of poverty, nature of poverty in rural schools, causes of poverty and effects of poverty on the academic performance of learners in rural areas.

2.2 THEORIES OF POVERTY

Several theories of poverty relevant to the study are discussed hereunder. These theories give clear vision about the poverty-stricken people, the effects of poverty and the ways of dealing with their problems.

2.2.1 The individualistic theory

According to Haralambos and Holborne (1994: 192), the earliest theorists placed the blame of poverty on the poor themselves. The theory indicated that those who suffer from low income did so because they were unwilling to provide adequately for their well-being. Notwithstanding the correctness or the wrongness of the theory, the researcher would like to bring to light that because of segregation that was caused by apartheid laws, poor South Africans could not and still cannot provide for themselves. They were marginalised and thus could not get proper education and skills, which could be helping them to provide for themselves. This condition is even exacerbated in the rural areas where development and education was a non-existent commodity. In the South African case, most poor people are those who have been marginalised by the apartheid regime and were left disadvantaged, which resulted in their present poverty. This is the result of inequality, which was applied by the apartheid system because in any society where there is inequality, poverty is highly possible.

South African apartheid regime introduced Bantu Education System, which disadvantaged the parents of today's learners. Such parents are unable to render academic support to their children as they are illiterate or semi illiterate themselves and therefore do not understand how to be of help to their children. The parents occupy less paying jobs or are retrenched from work and become unemployed, as they cannot cope with the high literacy demanding jobs. They therefore are unable to provide for their own well-being and that of their families.

Learners from poor background try through the odds to be equipped with education, to be competent and become useful members of society who can adequately provide for their well-being.

Gumbi (1999: 7) views that neither society nor the social groups to which individuals belong are accountable for their poverty and society should therefore not be responsible for providing for the needs of the poor. In contrast to the above with reference to the South African case, the government and the social groups carry the burden of the poor as part of the transformation from the old to the new dispensation. This is evident through the efforts of the government in awarding social grants to the orphans, children less than 14 years and also to foster parents who raise foster children as well as other vulnerable groups such as the low-income groups and the disabled. South Africans are still undergoing a transition from the oppressive system into the democratic system, hence the concentration on poverty alleviation especially in rural areas.

2.2.2 Dissolve living

This theory is of the view that the state should interfere as little as possible in the lives of the individuals (Herbert in Haralambos et al., 1994: 205). Herbert further claims that if the poor were given absolute minimum support, laziness and moral decline would spread through the population. According to his views, the weak, the incompetent and the lazy should be condemned to a life of poverty since it

was no more than they deserve. Herbert emphasises independency over and above dependency on the government. According to him, providing too much for the people by the government encourages dependency and people become lazy to think for themselves. In the case of South Africa, apartheid took its toll in enforcing poverty especially among the blacks in rural areas. The blame is on the Bantu Education system that deprived black population of relevant skills and readiness for the commercial world. Blacks were mainly employed as cheap labourers to satisfy the needs of the white people. This left most blacks especially from rural areas unskilled and unemployed, thus perpetuating the poverty cycle.

2.2.3 Conflict theories of poverty

Sociologists working within this perspective do not blame poverty, which continues to ruin most of the people's lives; instead, they blame the society, which fails to allocate its resources fairly, thus continuing the existence of poverty.

According to sociologists, poverty is not held responsible for those who suffer from it; instead, they are seen as the victims of poverty (Haralambos et al., 1994: 213). This is true of South Africa because during the apartheid system there was unequal distribution of resources. Black South Africans were totally excluded from relevant resources, as they were not considered as citizens in their own country. This unequal distribution of resources relegated black people to abject poverty and therefore created a ground for conflict between those who have and

those who have not.

Because of race and class distinction, black rural South Africans do not have enough basic resources such as proper housing, running water, electricity and sanitation. They dwell in shelters that are not enough for their households and therefore lack of privacy. Learners in such households find it difficult to do their homework or study. The learners tend to be exposed to adults' conflicts and sexual intercourse, which then result in them adopting socially unacceptable behaviours like aggression, engaging in premarital sex and bunking school. Their concentration in the classroom or in their studies is then impaired, thus academic performance drops.

According to Pit out et al. (1990: 42) as cited in Tause (2003: 16), heredity and environment play a role in shaping a child. Growing up in a non-conducive environment for learning predisposes a child to not realising his full potential as education may render him to possible opportunities.

Children from poor backgrounds tend to experience crises in their lives, as there is no connection between home environment and school environment. Le Roux (1990: 83) as quoted by Taunyane (1999: 18) defines the child who experiences crisis as one who cannot and will not adjust to socially acceptable norms of behaviour and consequently disrupts his own academic progress, the learning efforts of his classmates and his interpersonal relationships. L Roux further says that such a child may experience difficulty in accepting himself as an individual worthy of respect; suffer from poor peer interaction and interaction with authority

figures such as educators in an acceptable manner, thus impeding their own academic success.

According to Le Roux (1990: 82) in Taunyane (1999: 18), a child who experiences developmental and learning difficulties fail to attain a satisfactory level of contextual and personal maturity. His academic performance is poor and he fails to become a person he ought to become in terms of innate potential. Le Roux further indicates that a learner may experience a psychosocial discomfort, which suggests that a learner's education and opportunities for development are offered in a way that impedes his ability to deal adequately with himself and his environment, thus exposing him further to chances of poor academic performance. When learners have to do homework in a non-conducive environment, they become unable to, because of factors like absence of privacy, noise, no parental supervision and lack of discipline.

2.2.4 The situational approach.

Kornblum (1992: 241), states that the class distinctive rates exhibited by the poor do not have cultural patterns but instead are seen more likely as externally imposed conditions. This approach interprets poverty as an adaptation of the poor to their environment, a response to problems associated with low income and the accompanying social and economic deprivation; in this regard, any fundamental human needs that are not adequately satisfied reveal human poverty.

Children exposed to human poverty are prone to neglect, ill discipline and lack of

support for educational needs. According to Wolfendale (1992: 7), there is sufficient evidence of parents to lack involvement in their children's schoolwork due to being overwhelmed by stressful life events and financial pressures. Wolfendale further says that such parents have their own experiences of schooling as not positive enough for them to overcome fears and anxieties about school and teachers. This simply implies that learners are neglected and their academic performance is negatively affected.

2.2.5 Structural explanation.

Kornblum (1992: 237), states that the structural explanation of poverty incorporates elements of both the functionalist and the conflict's perspective. They attribute poverty to the functioning of the dominant institutions of the society such as markets. Bergh (1992: 9) adds that structural perspective claims that few opportunities exist for the poor to improve themselves. Whatever opportunities exist, they are structured to advance the more privileged at the expense of the underprivileged.

This theory argues that the vast majority of the poor are in poverty because of the ways the economy and the political system of their country operate. The poor are seen as disabled because of lack of resources such as recreational facilities, inferior schools and poor housing. The elite of the rural places have migrated to cities for better employment. Their children attend schools in the urban areas where it is possible to have Learner Support Material and Educator Support

Material. Schools in rural areas are then inferior, as parents do not afford to pay the school fees. Schools in rural areas lack sponsors from rich companies as opposed to their counterparts in the cities. Basic facilities like classrooms, administration blocks and sanitation, are a luxury in rural areas, let alone libraries, laboratories and recreational facilities. Such issues negatively affect the academic performance of learners in rural schools.

2.2.6 Capitalistic perspective

According to Marxist theory, poverty exists because it serves the interest of those who own the forces of production and allow them to maintain the capitalist system and to maximize their profits (Haralambos 1991: 214). The capitalists employ the poor in cheap labour to maximise their own economy. The example of this is the white South African farmers who employ poor black families. The black labourers start to plough the white farmers' fields long before sunrise, they have a very short lunch break, and they work extremely long hours with no pay. Parents get home too tired to attend to their children, let alone to participate in their schoolwork, as they are mostly illiterate.

During reaping seasons white farmers force school children to join their parents in the fields whilst their own children continue school comfortably. This makes the children to miss school for the whole season. Those who manage to get back to school get poor results at the end of the year because of missing what has been taught.

2.3 NATURE OF POVERTY IN RURAL AREAS

According to RDP of (1994: 14) as cited in Sithole (2000: 09), poverty is a single greatest burden of South African people and it is the direct result of apartheid.

This implies that poverty as a socio economic factor is the problem which many South Africans face and its roots can be traced back, as indicated earlier, to the era of apartheid.

Apartheid regulations barred most retail and industrial development in black areas. The municipalities in black areas were deprived of the means to meet the needs of local residents such as sanitation, clean water and shelter. During this era, there was discrimination and segregation. With regard to allocation of resources, water and electricity was supplied to white residents and in rural areas these were non-existent or if available they were at enormous cost, that most black people could not afford due to poverty.

The poor were shifted to the margins of the country, focusing the problem of poverty in rural areas. The rural areas of South Africa suffer from a legacy of inappropriate production and investment decisions by government, and distribution patterns remain that were formed by apartheid; in particular, landlessness and overcrowding still persist in the former homeland areas, which are rural. People in rural areas were deprived of essential services such as health, transportation, sanitation, electricity, water and education. Education in

particular was not a priority in rural areas. This therefore created ignorance and high rate of illiteracy.

Due to high rate of illiteracy, the rural poor tend to benefit little from the recent government welfare policies. The democratic government has embarked on war against poverty. Poverty alleviation programmes have been put in place, but children in rural areas do not benefit much. These may benefit the urban poor more. A dense network of factors, which tend to perpetuate poverty, surrounds the rural poor. These include traders and moneylenders capitalising upon the economic weakness of the poor and engaging them in unequal exchanges.

Rural families who are poor still tend to want many children, largely to supply their cheap labour needs. While the rural share of the world's population is declining, the rural population is growing in absolute numbers. In the next twenty years, the world's rural population is expected to increase by 423 million people. Over the same period, the world's urban population is expected to increase by almost 1.5 billion people (Feuerstein, 1997: 30).

2.4 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS IN RURAL AREAS.

The following are the socio - economic factors that contribute to poor academic performance of learners in rural schools.

2.4.1 Unemployment and underemployment

Up to 6.8 million children have been registered for social grants in South Africa (e.T.V. News, 19H00: 13/10/2003). In his parliamentary speech, Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi reiterated that poverty is on its increase as unemployment rate is now 42% of South African Population. He called on the South African government to speed up implementation on poverty alleviation plans. (SABC 3, Parliament session; 25/05/2004).

The media reported in 1997 that some 500 million people globally are unemployed or underemployed.

In South Africa the unemployed spend less money on food and often do not have a balanced diet, which often result in health hazards. Unemployment causes stress on personal and social relationships, which can eventually undermine psychological and emotional health. There is little or no money for medical treatment. In developing countries, there have been few studies of the health effects of unemployment but evidence from industrilised countries indicates higher ill health and health damaging habits such as smoking, drug taking, consumption of alcohol and neglect of family planning (Taunyane, 1999: 58).

When parents are unemployed, it is difficult for them to meet the needs of their children. School fees are not paid; school uniform and learning aids are not available. Hunger and undernourishment affect learners' concentration negatively, which ultimately lead to poor academic performance. Because

parents are unemployed, children may have to walk long distances to school since they cannot afford public transport fares. By the time children reach school they show signs of exhaustion which tempers with their concentration and listening skills. Because of this, such children tend to display more social and emotional withdrawal, low self-esteem, less confidence and less assertiveness when given tasks. Such children are at a high risk for academic and psychological problems, which will inevitably render them unsuccessful (Walker, 1992 in Letlojane, 2001:63).

2.4.2 Migration

In South Africa today, there is a high rate of unemployment, redeployments and retrenchments. This leaves parents with no option but to go 'away' to seek for work/jobs elsewhere, even far away from home in order to make ends meet. On leaving home, parents tend to leave the children alone or with caregivers, who at times are pensioners, (Sowetan, 2003/03/09). There is, therefore, no one to guide and supervise the children's homework, no one to check their school needs, and to encourage them to attend school on a daily basis. This results in children playing truancy, getting involved in substance abuse and some times drop out of school.

2.4.3 Social isolation

Wilson, (1980: 180) a liberal sociologist, developed concepts of 'social isolation' and 'concentration effects'. This he explains by indicating that the dilemma facing

people in rural areas is the departure of stable middle class families from traditional slum areas into better residential neighbourhoods further away. The poor thus face social isolation. Not only are there fewer role models, but there are also fewer supportive institutions, including family stores, recreational facilities, churches and other voluntary associations. This deterioration brings a decline in the sense of community, neighbourhood's identification and norms against criminal behavior. Due to this deterioration, growing schoolchildren develop without positive stimulation, lack proper role models and mentors. Education to them tends to be meaningless and as such perform poorly in school.

2.4.4 Female headed families

Many women experience poverty due to widowhood, divorce or separation from breadwinner spouses. Due to the apartheid system a large number of women with school going children lack education, job experience and skills. They therefore find themselves in less paying occupations or totally unemployed. This affects the entire families including the school-attending children (Sithole, 2000: 16).

According to Bartollas (1997:84), female-headed families have a problem of increased probability of poverty, e.g. 11% of all U.S. families are under federal poverty line, whereas 46% of female-headed families with children are living in poverty. In South Africa, according to Cosatu, 42% of female headed households leave in poverty. The single parents are unable to provide basic needs for their

children. Most of the single female parents have registered their children for social grants, which are often not enough to meet the basic needs of the household as in most cases there is no other income.

The strongest emphasis is on joblessness as one of the characteristics of female-headed families. Many data demonstrate the relationship of joblessness to rural problems, for example, the scarcity of young black males with regular jobs due to regular tendency to drop out of school, substantially accounts for the growing numbers of households headed by females and the increase in out-of-wedlock births.

During the past few years, new studies, according to Bartollas (1997:92), have suggested that the female-headed families in particular subgroups are an important link in the intergenerational transmission of poverty and dependency.

Children of single mothers are less likely to complete high school and more likely to have low earnings and employment instability as adults (Krein and Beller 1986 in McLanahan et.al. 1988:131). There is growing evidence that living in a single-parent family relates to the reproduction of female-headed families through both premarital fertility and marital disruptions. Among other things, it was found that black rural populations had more percentages of single-parented families, disrupted families, premarital births, low education (spending less than twelve years of their lives studying), low salary jobs or no jobs at all as compared to white populations (McLanahan et.al. 1988:132).

The percentage of female-headed households varies from the mid teens in South and Southeast Asian countries to almost half of all households in some African and Caribbean countries (Ilo, 1995b in Feuerstein, 1997: 11). Another indicator of increasing female poverty was that between 1956 and 1988, the number of rural women living below the poverty line rose to 51% versus 41% for the men (Ifad 1994 in Feuerstein, 1997: 11).

2.4.5 Lack of infrastructure

Black rural learners lack infrastructure. Most rural schools' buildings are dilapidated; some classes are semi roofed, some have cracks on the wall and floor while some have broken windows and do not have ceiling.

The black rural schools do not have equipped libraries and laboratories thus it is impossible to do researches and experiments.

2.5 TYPES AND CAUSES POVERTY

Feuerstein (1997: 6) outlines different types and causes of poverty as a socio-economic factor:

Types

Causes

- **Inherited poverty** : Poor parents pass on their poverty to their children. It can be an unending circle. With this type of poverty, illiteracy passes on from generation to generation as education becomes insignificant.
- **Instant poverty** : Sudden hazards and circumstances like earthquakes,

droughts, floods, veldfires, wars, refugee movements and bankruptcy. This type of poverty has more impact that is psychological on school going children as it destroys their mental capacity as well as educational facilities.

- **Temporary poverty** : The causes are as in instant poverty but lasting a shorter time, e.g. Floods and veldfires.
- **New poverty** : Income/savings of workers and pensioners are eroded by high unemployment, inflation on small cash crop farmers in rural areas are ruined by high input costs and low prices of agricultural products. This type of poverty may lead to children leaving school to fend for the family.
- **Relative poverty** : Deprivation of opportunities, material assets and self-respect regarded as normal in the community to which people belong; for example: people may be adequately fed and housed through government schemes but lack material possessions and educational opportunities.
- **Absolute poverty** : Deprivation of elements that are necessary to sustain life and health such as adequate food, safe drinking water, shelter, land, employment and personal security. The absolute poor are more likely to keep returning to a state of poverty despite improvements in society, such as better market conditions. However, in most instances, such issues as better markets do not reach people in rural areas as their understanding of market conditions

are greatly limited due illiteracy.

- **Overcrowding poverty:** A large number of households occupy a non-sufficient shelter, which allows no occupant any privacy. This kind of dwelling deprives the school going children an opportunity to study and do homework thus increase the chance of poor academic performance.
- **Endemic poverty** : Caused by low productivity and poor resource base reflected by low income, poor nutrition and health, often affecting the school going children as it predisposes them to malnourishment thus they cannot cope with school work.

2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter examined the factors that affect the poor academic performance of the learners. From the literature reviewed, the major factors that play a major role in the learners' poor performance are poverty and lack of parental involvement. The literature also indicated other factors like lack of infrastructure, lack of resources, parental unemployment and underemployment as other factors that contribute to poor academic performance of learners.

CHAPTER THREE

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on presentation and analysis of data. The analysis of data is conducted through statistical inferences and use of tables. According to Anderson, Sweeney and Williams (2003: 14) a major contribution of statistics is data from a sample that can be used to make estimates and test hypothesis about characteristics of a population. The investigation of poverty as a socio-economic factor hampering the academic performance of learners in rural areas was conducted using 60 respondents from three middle schools in the Magogoe village in Mafikeng in the North West Province. The 60 respondents were divided into group A (constituting achievers) and group B (constituting underachievers), to justify how the socio – economic factors affect the underachievers. The data was collected through questionnaires that were self administered by the researcher to the participants. The questions in the questionnaire comprised of biographical data of the respondents, socio economic factors, school circumstances, parental involvement and peer pressure. The analysis of data is presented hereunder through tables and explanation.

3.2 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF RESPONDENTS

Table 1: Gender

| Gender | Total | % |
|--------|-------|-----|
| Male | 30 | 50 |
| Female | 30 | 50 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Table 2: Age

| Age | Total | % |
|---------|-------|------|
| 13 – 14 | 14 | 23.4 |
| 15 – 18 | 46 | 76.6 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Table 3: School Category

| School Category | Total | % |
|-----------------|-------|-----|
| Primary | 00 | 00 |
| Middle | 60 | 100 |
| High | 00 | 00 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

14 x 30

The participants in this research study comprised of both males and females;

50% males and 50% females; they all stay and attend school in a rural area.

They fall within the age range of 13 - 18. The age range for middle school is

normally 13 – 15 years. However, the table shows that the majority of participants

(76.6%) fall between ages 15 – 18, which are above the normal expected age

range for middle school. The reason for the delay may be due to socio economic

factors such as, among others, starting school late and lack of resources that

result in poor academic performance.

Table 4: Housing space

| Group A (Achievers) | | | Group B (Non-achievers) | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|------|-------------------------|-------------------|------|
| No of rooms | No of respondents | % | No of rooms | No of respondents | % |
| 1 - 3 | 2 | 3.3 | 1 - 3 | 15 | 25 |
| 4 - 5 | 8 | 13.3 | 4 - 5 | 10 | 16.6 |
| 6 + | 20 | 33.3 | 6 + | 5 | 8.3 |
| Total | 30 | 49.9 | Total | 30 | 49.9 |

The participants were to verify the kind of accommodation they stay in to assess if they are able to study at home in their privacy or if the space was limited and did not allow them to do their schoolwork. The majority (25%) of Group B (non-achievers) participants stay in 1 – 3 rooms as compared to 3.3% of group A (achievers) who live in 1 – 3 roomed houses. This proves that most learners who under perform are from disadvantaged families characterized by overcrowding which can contribute to lack of privacy and space for doing school work. On the other end of the continuum 33.3% of group A learners live in six or more rooms. This signifies comfortable living conditions with less or no overcrowding. Such learners tend to do better academically as proven by their academic records.

When the learners do not have enough space at their homes, they become exposed to different distracting factors such as noise, television and lack of privacy. This therefore renders them unable to learn at home. This hampers their academic development and they do not perform as expected at school, thus their academic performance becomes poor.

This is confirmed by the Conflict theory of poverty, which indicates that because of race and class distinction, black rural South Africans do not have enough basic

resources such as proper housing, running water, electricity and proper sanitation (Haralambos et al., 1994: 213). This is likely of big families as cited in Motingoa (2004: 3) that family feuds plus other factors such as lack of basic needs deprive the learners to have a chance of study in the comfort of their dwelling.

Table 5: Family composition

| Group A | | | Group B | | |
|-----------|--------------------|------|-----------|--------------------|------|
| | No. of respondents | % | | No. of respondents | % |
| Parents | 26 | 43.3 | Parents | 16 | 26.6 |
| Guardian | 3 | 5 | Guardian | 12 | 20 |
| No Adults | 1 | 1.6 | No Adults | 2 | 3.3 |
| Total | 30 | 49.9 | Total | 30 | 49.9 |

Participants were required to indicate whom they live with in their respective families.

Parents by virtue of their status as nurturers must guide their children in all aspects of their lives including supervising and directing their education or being involved in their education. Based on this, table 5 shows that learners who live with their biological parents (43.3%) from group A, do better in school as compared to those who do not live with their biological parents (23.3%) from group B. According to Sithole (2000: 09) as cited in RDP of (1994: 14), the poor in South Africa are mostly in rural areas because of the legacy of apartheid. Mostly, biological parents migrate to urban areas looking for greener pastures and they leave their children with guardians. The children, therefore, do not get any academic supervision, thus their academic performance drops. From group

A only 5% of learners live with guardians, 1.6% have no access to an adult in the home. With non-achievers on the other hand, only 26.6% live with their parents.

Table 6: Family monthly income

| Group A | | | Group B | | |
|-------------|-------------------|------|-------------|-------------------|------|
| Amount | No of respondents | % | Amount | No of respondents | % |
| 0 – 500 | 4 | 6.1 | 0 – 500 | 18 | 30 |
| 501 – 3000+ | 26 | 43.3 | 501 – 3000+ | 12 | 19.9 |
| Total | 30 | 49.9 | Total | 30 | 49.9 |

According to the table, most learners from group A live in families where the income is way above R500.00 as indicated by 43.3% of respondents. Most learners from group B are from families with income less than R500.00 as indicated by 30%.

Table 6 proves that learners from group B do not perform well as from experience they look malnourished; they lack energy to engage in their academic work, and they look shabby. This is all the result of low or no income. Due to the low income, the families are unable to afford nourishing food and reasonable comfortable housing with enough space for family members, as illustrated in table 4. This deprives the school going children the opportunity to study at home thus their academic performance is compromised. In rural schools, most learners go to school on empty stomachs, as their families do not afford to buy enough food because of low or no income. Children from low-income backgrounds tend also to experience crises in their lives, as there is no connection between school environment and home environment (Le Roux, 1990: 83 in Taunyane, 1999: 32). Le Roux further postulates that children from poor backgrounds have trouble in

accepting themselves as unique individuals worthy of respect and they do not interact freely with their peers. This fact indicates that learners from poor families find it difficult to discuss their academic problems with their peers as required by OBE curriculum. Such learners acquire low marks in their schoolwork. When parents have no income or income is extremely low, it becomes difficult for them to meet the needs of their children. School fees are not paid; school uniform and learning aids will not be available (Walker 1992 in Letlojane, 2001: 63).

Table 7: Mode of transport to school

| Group A | | | Group B | | |
|----------------|-------------------|------|----------------|-------------------|------|
| | No of respondents | % | | No of respondents | % |
| Walk | 12 | 20 | Walk | 30 | 50 |
| Bicycle | 8 | 13.3 | Bicycle | 0 | 0 |
| Bus/ Taxi/ Car | 10 | 16.6 | Bus/ Taxi/ Car | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 30 | 49.9 | Total | 30 | 49.9 |

The respondents were to clarify the mode of transport they use to go to school. All under achievers from group B walk to school as indicated by 50% whereas only 20% of achievers walk to school. It is probable that the learners arrive at school already exhausted from walking long distances, which infringes on their capability to learn. The learners' academic performance drops because of tiredness and lack of concentration (Motingoa 2004: 3). Children walk long distances to school since they cannot afford public transport fares. This correlates with information in table 6, which indicates that learners from group B who are under performing are from families with income of less than R500.00. This amount is not enough to pay for transport and other needs.

Table 8: Assistance with your homework

| Group A | | | Group B | | |
|----------|-------------------|------|----------|-------------------|------|
| | No of respondents | % | | No of respondents | % |
| Parents | 11 | 18.3 | Parents | 3 | 5 |
| Guardian | 12 | 20 | Guardian | 5 | 8.3 |
| None | 7 | 11.6 | None | 22 | 36.6 |
| Total | 30 | 49.9 | Total | 30 | 49.9 |

25% of underachievers do not get any assistance with their homework whereas only 5% of the achievers are not helped with their homework. 11.6% of the underachievers receive academic help from their siblings who may not be knowledgeable enough to offer assistance. It is clear from the above table that the group B participants do not receive parental support as only 5% report assistance from parents. When parents show little or no interest in their children's schoolwork, children perceive their schoolwork as being of no value thus their academic performance lowers. According to Wolfendale (1992: 7), there is sufficient evidence of parents to lack involvement in their children's schoolwork due to overwhelming stressful life events and financial pressures.

Table9: Source of energy

| Group A | | | Group B | | |
|-------------|-------------------|----|-------------|-------------------|------|
| | No of respondents | % | | No of respondents | % |
| Electricity | 30 | 50 | Electricity | 7 | 11.6 |
| Paraffin | 0 | 0 | Paraffin | 6 | 10 |
| Candle | 0 | 0 | Candle | 17 | 28.3 |
| Total | 30 | 50 | Total | 30 | 49.9 |

Only 11.6% of underachievers (group B) have electricity at home as compared to 50% of achievers (group A) who use electricity. Looking at it from another

perspective, it actually means that 38.3% of underachievers do not have electricity as a source of energy. These learners are deprived of the educational information from the audiovisual media, and studying may therefore not be easy and comfortable, as they use low illuminating devices for lighting.

Table 10: Sleeping time

| Group A | | | Group B | | |
|---------------|-------------------|------|---------------|-------------------|------|
| Time | No of respondents | % | | No of respondents | % |
| 18:00 – 20:00 | 7 | 11.6 | 18:00 – 20:00 | 4 | 6.6 |
| 20:00 – 22:00 | 21 | 35 | 20:00 – 22:00 | 4 | 6.6 |
| After 22:00 | 2 | 3.3 | After 22:00 | 22 | 36.6 |
| Total | 30 | 49.9 | Total | 30 | 49.9 |

36.6% of under achievers (group B) go to bed after 22H00 as compared to 46.6% of achievers (group A) who go to bed before 22H00. Table 10 correlates well with table 5 which indicates that the majority of underachievers do not live with biological parents. Lack of parental supervision contributes to lack of proper discipline. The issue of overcrowding as indicated in table 4 can also be a contributing factor. Because of overcrowding, young people may prefer to be out on the streets instead of being home with the family thus not taking any effort to do school work. This affects the learners' academic performance.

Table 11: Number of friends

| Group A | | | Group B | | |
|---------------|-------------------|------|---------------|-------------------|------|
| No of Friends | No of respondents | % | No of Friends | No of respondents | % |
| None | 0 | 0 | None | 18 | 30 |
| 1 – 3 | 10 | 16.6 | 1 – 3 | 7 | 11.6 |
| 4 + | 20 | 33.3 | 4 + | 5 | 8.3 |
| Total | 30 | 49.9 | Total | 30 | 49.9 |

30% of under achievers (group B) have no friends at all and only 8.3% have between 4 – 6 friends while group A has all its members enjoying company of friends. Children who do not have any social attachments with their peers tend to display social and emotional problems. Usually the signs are withdrawal, low self-esteem, less confidence and less assertiveness when given tasks. Such children are at high risk for academic and psychological problems, which will inevitably render them unsuccessful (Walker 1992 in Letlojane, 2001: 63).

According to Freud's psychosexual theory of development, adolescents are in genital stage, which is characterized by a well-developed ego and superego; consequently developing social relationships outside the family, through having groups of friends and interest in the opposite sex. This facilitates development of positive self-image (Baldwin, 1996 in Louw, 1999: 53). Failure to engage in broader relationships signifies low self-esteem. Children with low self-esteem do not have energy to engage in schoolwork thus affecting their academic performance.

3.3 CONCLUSION

It is evident from the data gathered from the participants that socio-economic problems hamper the academic performance of learners who come from poverty or low socio-economic background. Most of the learners from the rural communities face the challenge of learning while they get little or no support from their parents. Poverty, as characterized mainly by unemployment and underemployment, robs parents of their major role of encouraging and supporting their children. The children are not adequately fed thus lack proper nutrition that would give them energy to concentrate in their schoolwork. Overcrowding in the households is another factor that hampers the academic development of the learners because the learners do not have privacy to do their homework. Another factor that affects the academic performance of the learners is exhaustion from long distance walking. Parents do not afford the public transport fares, this exposes the learners to the harsh weather conditions, and definitely, their academic performance is affected.

CHAPTER FOUR

MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to review the findings emanating from the literature and empirical data, to discuss conclusions drawn from them and to provide recommendations.

4.2 RECAPITULATION OF THE OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of the study as indicated in the previous chapters was to describe how poverty as a socio economic factor affects the academic performance of learners in rural areas. This was achieved through literature review and questionnaire to learners from three schools in the area of study.

The following are the objectives for the study:

- 4.2.1 To determine the socio-economic factors which hamper the academic performance of learners
- 4.2.2 To determine the nature, causes and extent of poverty in rural schools.
- 4.2.3 To devise measures to improve scholastic performance of learners in rural schools.

The study was further placed on the assumption that, lack of basic social services in rural areas result in poor academic performance of learners.

All the above objectives were successfully met as the study revealed that the nature of poverty that exists in rural areas is a result of the history of South Africa

where blacks and whites did not have equal resources, equal educational opportunities and facilities due to the apartheid system. That legacy of Bantu education is still with us since it created a section of the population that is illiterate and poor. This illiteracy and poverty is passed on from generation to generation. Because of this, the following as indicated in the study prevail:

4.3. MAIN FINDINGS

The findings in this research confirmed the assumption that lack of basic social services in rural areas result in poor academic performance of learners. The high rate of poverty in South Africa affects many lives. This is more so in rural areas, which is characterised by lack of industrialisation, poor educational facilities, lack of basic services and lack of morale to aspire to higher levels of living. Children born under these conditions end up in the same position they find their parents in, hence the vicious cycle of poverty.

Parents are not keen on education, there is no innovation, no role models and more than anything is, conditions at schools are not conducive to learning.

Schools are generally characterised by lack of appropriate infrastructure such as lack of classrooms where children are packed up in few classrooms with broken windows, no furniture, where children use old dilapidated desks and learning materials that they share.

Some learners sit under trees with teaching materials non-existent, no proper sanitation and running water.

Not all these factors encourage learning instead discourage children from attending school. From all these, it is conclusive that poverty as a socio

economic factor is the main contributory factor to poor academic performance. According to Pine (1999: 7), poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon, encompassing inability to satisfy basic needs, lack of control over resources, lack of education and skills, poor nutrition, lack of shelter, poor access to water and sanitation.

Poverty breeds poor self-image and poor self-esteem. Children growing up in poverty tend to shy away from civilisation; they do not interact or mix well with their urban counterparts. Because of this in trying to exert them, they tend to do so in ways that are contrary to expected societal values. They behave in ways that 'compensate' their background yet casting them out of the societal expectations.

4.3.1. Housing space.

The researcher found out that most of underachievers lack proper accommodation. They live in over crowded homes with no privacy to encourage learning. This overcrowding does not give them enough space and privacy to do their homework and study. The housing conditions are not stimulating and not conducive to normal upbringing of children. They are confronted with overcrowding in their families and therefore unable to study in the comfort of their homes. According to Siwiza (2003: 39), the children who are not properly housed prefer to loiter in the streets until late at night and therefore they sleep late. They then wake up late, tired and arrive late at school.

4.3.2. Family composition

The high rate of unemployment forces many children to live without their biological parents because the parents have migrated to cities in search of employment. This implies that the learners do not get sufficient support, discipline and supervision thus; they waste most of their time loitering and not giving any attention to their schoolwork.

Children who stay with their biological parents get academic support and they get assistance with their schoolwork. Learners who stay with their parents get support, motivation and discipline, which help them to focus more on their studies thus improving their chances of academic achievement.

When accommodation is not enough, health can be highly compromised, as the overcrowding can be a breeding environment for bacteria and communicable diseases. When children fall ill, they absent themselves from school, therefore they fall back on their school work.

4.3.3. Family monthly income

Non-achieving learners come from families with no income or income less than R500.00 per month. When parents have no income or have less income, it is difficult for them to meet the needs of their children. This coupled with big families indicate that due to poverty, parents do not pay school fees, learners lack proper school uniform and learning aids. Schools that have registered children from poor backgrounds as learners find it difficult to cope with their poor circumstances. Proper learning aids cannot be purchased, as the schools

themselves are under resourced because of evident lack of funds. Such schools do not have appropriate furniture for the learners and the educators. Conditions such as these play a negative role in learning.

Children need sufficient nourishment enabling them to cope with the demands of formal education. Hunger affects learners' concentration negatively, which ultimately leads to poor academic performance. When parents are economically disadvantaged, they do not afford to buy enough and balanced diet for their families and this fact impacts negatively in their children's education. Adolescents need much energy that is mainly provided by food; energy boosts their concentration in what they do. A balanced diet keeps the immune system at its best thus; it can fight off the bacteria that would otherwise cause infections and sicknesses. Poor people simply do not get enough food; the food is mostly inadequate in size and irregular.

4.3.4. Assistance with homework.

The vicious cycle of poverty renders parents unable to assist their children with homework, as they are themselves illiterate. Parents/guardians of underachievers neglect their children by not attending to their academic needs through homework supervision. Disadvantaged parents seem to lack a sense of commitment to their own intimate immediate environment such as their background (family) and also to the people considered their closest friends and their neighbours. This lack of commitment encourages them to neglect their

children's academic needs.

With parents having immigrated in search for greener pastures, their children sit with no parental supervision. The parents also do not check on how their children progress academically as they are physically not there. Parental involvement in their children's learning plays a major part in their scholastic achievement. Parents' level of education and their involvement are vital for children's education. Most parents of children in the public schools are not involved in their children's scholastic well being. When parents are distant from their children's education, the children's academic performance is compromised and they do not achieve.

4.3.5. Mode of transport to school

Generally, the learners from rural areas cannot afford any means of transport to school and therefore have to walk long distances to school and spend much time in walking to school and they arrive at school already exhausted. They do not concentrate due to tiredness. This is evident in that learners who stay further away from school may be associated with late coming. This factor affects the learners negatively as they find the first period of teaching being over and thus their academic performance is affected.

4.3.6. Source of energy

As indicated earlier that rural areas are characterised by lack of social services,

the study proved that most learners came from homes without electricity. This therefore means that such learners find it difficult to study as the light is not enough. These children are not exposed to the audiovisual media that broadcast educational programmes that could benefit them academically.

4.3.7. Friends

Most underachievers have not developed social relationships outside family through having group of friends, and they have not developed interest in the members of the opposite sex.

This is an indication of a poorly developed ego and superego, which render an adolescent to have low self-esteem. From experience, learners who come from no income or low-income backgrounds tend to have low self-esteem and thus they do not participate in academic group activities as required by Outcome Based Education (OBE). Non-participation in educational activities is a definite way to ensure non-achievement.

Malnourished children may experience problems with their self-esteem because they do not acquire higher grades; they are unable to complete their school year successfully or are unable to compete with their peers. Because of low self-esteem, the under-achievers experience peer pressure, confusion and avoid making contact with peer group.

Poverty as a psychosocial problem may pressurise an adolescent to become hopeless and desperate especially due to low self-esteem. Hopelessness and

desperation are critical role players in suicidal behavior.

According to a research study carried out by Khunou (2000), psychosocial pressures such as poverty may lead adolescents to attempt or complete suicide as they deem it as a "solution" towards their frustrations and problems.

Adolescents who experience peer pressure are likely to engage in drugs, alcohol and premarital sex, which all affect their academic achievement negatively.

4.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.4.1. Feeding Scheme

The feeding scheme that operates in primary schools need to be extended to middle and high schools. Children should be provided with at least two good balanced meals per day.

4.4.2. Transport

Since parents in rural areas are mostly unemployed and cannot afford to pay for transport for their children, the Department of Education in conjunction with the Department of Transport must device means to provide transport for those learners who have to walk long distances to schools. Transport can be in the form of subsidies, school buses or bicycles.

4.4.3. Homework

Since the study found that most learners who under perform are from

overcrowded families and without electricity, it is recommended that rural schools develop a policy stipulating a need for afternoon study periods. This will allow the learners to stay after school for one or two hours to do their homework under the supervision of the educators. This will also help those learners who live in families with no person available to help them with school work. Educators must be encouraged to spend more time with learners after school to supervise homework and studies.

School community partnership must be developed to encourage rural communities to actively participate in school activities, this will help families to identify the importance of their involvement in their children's schoolwork.

4.4.4. School Resources

Since most schools in rural areas are under resourced with poor infrastructure, it is recommended that the government and the communities be sensitised to improve rural schools by providing modern buildings, providing appropriate furniture, laboratories and creating an environment that is conducive to learning.

4.4.5 Life Skills Education

Learners must be provided with Life Skills educators. This will help the learners understand their situation; encourage them to see education as a way out of the poverty, improve their self-esteem and to help improve their psychological competence.

4.5. CONCLUSION

The above findings show that learners who lack basic needs are under achievers in their general academic performance mainly because of poor nutrition, lack of parental guidance and supervision, lack of parental discipline and self-discipline as they are neglected and in turn, they neglect their schoolwork. Formation of positive identity becomes difficult for them as they have low self-esteem, thus they have less number of friends or none at all. They then compensate their low self-esteem by experimenting with substances.

Poverty leaves parents with little choice in the methods they adopt to raise children. Overcrowding and lack of resources are particularly significant in reducing the amount of affection and warmth that parents are expected to show towards their children. Parents' child-rearing methods are limited by lack of essential services

Educational success is an escape route from poverty. Yet the children of the poor do not generally do well at school and these failures are attributed solely to the lack of parental stimulation and interest in their children's schoolwork.

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ANNEXURE A

University of the North West
Private bag x2046
Mmabatho
2735

Dear participant

You are hereby requested to participate in the completion of this questionnaire. There is no right or wrong response. You are requested to respond as honest as possible.

Do not write your name or any identifying information. Your responses are mainly going to be used for the researcher's academic purposes. The researcher is a registered student of the University of the North West.

Thank you for your participation.

Mpete M.F.



ANNEXURE B

POVERTY AND ACCADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS IN RURAL AREAS.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Answer all questions honestly.

There is no right or wrong answer.

Make an x for your answer.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF RESPONDENTS

Table 1: Gender

| | |
|--------|--|
| Male | |
| Female | |

Table 2: Age

| | |
|---------|--|
| 13 – 14 | |
| 15 – 18 | |

Table 3: School Category

| | |
|---------|--|
| Primary | |
| Middle | |
| High | |

Table 4: Housing space

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| No of rooms | |
| 1 - 3 | |
| 4 - 5 | |
| 6 + | |

Table 5: Family composition

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Parents | |
| Guardian | |
| Absent Adults | |

Table 6: Family monthly income

| | |
|------------|--|
| 0 – 500 | |
| 501 – 3000 | |
| 3001 + | |

Table 7: Mode of transport to school.

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Walk | |
| Bicycle | |
| Bus/ Taxi/ Car | |

Table 8: Assistance with your homework

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Parents | |
| Guardian | |
| None | |

Table9: Source of energy

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Electricity | |
| Paraffin | |
| Candle | |

Table 10: Sleeping time

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 18:00 – 20:00 | |
| 20:00 – 22:00 | |
| After 22:00 | |

Table 11: Number of friends

| | |
|----------|--|
| None (0) | |
| 1 – 3 | |
| 4 + | |

