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**CHILD ABUSE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ADOLESCENTS  
IN LESOTHO - A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

**by**

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## DEDICATION

TO: MY LATE BELOVED SISTER : NTSOAKI

MY PARENTS : 'MATUMELO AND SELOMI MONYANE

MY OTHER SIBLINGS : TUMELO, 'MALEFASO AND CHELETE

### **Declaration**

I 'Makhojane Monyane, sincerely and solemnly declare that this dissertation is my original and independent work and has never been submitted to any University or faculty for the degree purpose.

*M. Monyane*  
.....  
**M. Monyane**

## OPSOMMING

Kindermishandeling is die doelbewuste gebruik van geweld met die oog op die besering of benadeling van die kind. Mishandelde kinders word in die meeste gevalle gekarakteriseer deur 'n lae selfbeeld, wangedrag soos jeugmisdaad en stokkiesdraai, ongenoegsame taalontwikkeling, depressie, negativisme en 'n neiging om anti-sosiaal te wees. Die probleemstelling van die studie is om vas te stel of daar 'n verband is tussen kindermishandeling en akademiese prestasie. Die studie fokus op 'n groep adolessente van SOS-skool en Hleoheng primêre skool in Lesotho.

Die doel van die ondersoek is om aan te toon hoe kindermishandeling die akademiese prestasie van 'n kind kan beïnvloed sowel as die gevolglike gedragsverandering van die mishandelde kind. Die gesin en die skool as die opvoedkundige omgewing van die kind word verder bestudeer asook maniere waarop hierdie instellings bronne kan wees van kindermishandeling. Die oorsake van en tipes kindermishandeling word ook ondersoek.

In hierdie studie word relevante plaaslike en internasionale literatuur bestudeer. 'n Groep mishandelde adolessente van SOS-skool en Hleoheng primêre skool in Lesotho is gebruik as respondente. Gestruktureerde onderhoude is gebruik om data te versamel vir die doel van die studie. Familie-agtergrond, die tipe mishandeling, emosies, sosiale verhoudings, konsentrasie-vermoëns, potensiaal en spesifieke karaktertrekke is verder bestudeer as moontlike invloede op akademiese prestasie.

Die eerste deel van die studie definieer die konsep kindermishandeling. Die algemene oorsake en tipes kindermishandeling word bestudeer. Verskeie faktore beïnvloed ouers, of enige een wat in loco parentis optree om kinders te mishandel. Soortgelyk kan aangetoon word dat kinders self ook skuldig kan wees aan kindermishandeling. Ouers mishandel kinders egter op 'n verskeidenheid van maniere soos, onder andere, fisiese, seksuele, emosionele en ekonomiese mishandeling, sowel as verwaarlosing.

Die ideaal is dat die kind se huis die beste plek is vir sy opvoeding. Dit volg dus dat die gesin verantwoordelikheid moet dra vir die beswil van die ontwikkelende kind. Die skool, aan die ander kant, moet die kind tot hulp wees om sy of haar vermoëns te realiseer. Die gesin en die skool word beskou as die belangrikste opvoedkundige omgewings van die kind. Die gebrek aan verantwoordelike volwasse intrede en leiding gebaseer op beginsels van liefde, warmte en sekuriteit in die kind se lewe kan lei tot die funksionering van die gesin en die skool as instellings van mishandeling. Op so 'n wyse word die funksies van die gesin en die skool verander. Kinders word dus mishandel binne die struktuur van die gesin en die omgewing van die skool. Die mishandelde kinders presteer gevolglik swak akademies. Huidiglik reik SOS-skool in Lesotho uit na hierdie kinders in 'n poging om hulle op te voed ten spyte van vroeë lewensondervindings. Ongelukkig kan SOS-skool nie voorsien in die behoefte van hierdie vinnig-groeiende getal mishandelde kinders.

Hierdie navorsing bevestig die verband tussen kindermishandeling en akademiese prestasie.

## SUMMARY

Child abuse refers to the intentional use of force aimed at injuring or damaging the child. Abused children are in most cases characterised by a low self concept misbehaviour such as delinquency and truancy, inadequate language development, depression, negativism and abused children appear to be anti-social. The statement of the problem for this study is whether a relationship exists between child abuse and academic performance. The study focuses on a group of adolescents at SOS school and Hleoheng primary school in Lesotho.

The objectives of this investigation are to show how child abuse can affect the academic performance of a child and to identify subsequent behavioural changes of abused children.

The family and the school as the child's educational environments, are further investigated and ways in which these institutions can be the major sources of child abuse are studied. The causes and types of child abuse are also investigated.

In this study related local and international literature on child abuse and academic performance were reviewed. A group of abused adolescents from SOS school and Hleoheng primary in Lesotho were used as the target group for the purpose of this study. Structured interviews were used to collect data on the family background of abused children, the type of abuse they experienced, their emotions, how they relate with other people, their concentration potential, and specific characteristics that can be attributed to poor academic performance.

The first part of the study defines the concept of child abuse. The general causes and types of child abuse are examined.

Numerous factors influence parents or anybody in loco parentis to abuse children. In the same way, it has also been discovered that children can also be perpetrators of child abuse. Parents, however, abuse children differently, resulting in various forms of abuse namely physical, sexual, emotional and economic abuse as well as neglect.

Ideally, it is expected that a child's home is the best place of the upbringing of a child. Therefore, it follows that the family of a child is charged with the responsibility of nurturing a developing child. The school on the other hand should supplement the child's family to help the child realise his or her abilities. The family and the school are regarded as the major educational environments of a child. The lack of responsible adult intervention and guidance based on the principles of love, warmth and security in the life of a child results in many families and schools being the institutions of abuse of children. Hence, the ideal functions of both the family and the school are changed. The children thus find themselves being abused in the privacy of their own homes and in the school environment. The abused children consequently fail to perform well academically due to these complications in their upbringing. At present, only SOS school in Lesotho reach out to these children in an endeavour to educate them despite their early life experiences. However, due to the rapid increase in the number of abused children in Lesotho, SOS school is not in a position to cater for all these children.

This research confirms the relationship between child abuse and academic performance.

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# CHAPTER 1

## GENERAL ORIENTATION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Academic performance in schools is attributed to a number of factors (Mayekiso, 1989 : 61). Many researchers are of the opinion that child abuse as one of these factors impacts negatively on the child's academic performance. Parton (1985 : 166) illustrates the above point by arguing that "abused children score lower than the non abused children across a range of variables, including height, weight, language development, intellectual functioning, emotional development, aggressive behaviour, poor self-concept and school performance."

These arrays of factors, which affect the child's academic performance, are related to changes in our environment. For example, things like poverty which is more common and widespread today (Pelton, 1985 : 33) forces many parents to abuse their children and as a result, such children's academic performances are affected at schools.

This research arises out of the initiative to bring about an academic development orientated change in the educational environments of the Mosotho child. It delineates the management deficiency syndrome in the upbringing of the child in both the family and the school environment (Doyle, 1994 : 35). It is observed that such a deficiency is brought about by among other factors what is termed "child abuse" (Krugman, 1993 : 587).

Child abuse is a source of concern both in schools and societies. Attempts either legal, managerial or administrative are being made to prevent child abuse from increasing. In South Africa, for example, the government has

passed a law that protects children from abuse. This is stated in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa Section 28 (1) 108 of 1996. It reads as follows: "Every child has the right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation". Subsection 3 further states, "A child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child". This section emphasises the need for children's protection and is regarded as one of the legal steps that are being taken to prevent child abuse.

The phenomenon, child abuse, has a negative impact on education. Martin and Beezly (1977) in Calam and Franchi (1987 : 6) argue that "abused children are characterised by school learning problems". Many types of child abuse can be identified – physical, sexual, emotional, neglect and economic (Salter and Findlay, 1992 : 5) which have an influence on the child's academic performance. Having said these, the researcher will focus on the statement of the problem for the study.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The child's poor academic performance in schools is attributed to a number of factors. These include school related factors like a lack of qualified teachers, pupil related factors like emotional factors and parent/caretaker related factors like the socio-economic status of parents [which may lead to the abuse of children] (Motsau, 1990 : 10). Wagstaff and Kibel (1995 : 303) further support the above point by arguing that "the causes of school failure are complex and often multiple and include physical factors and family dysfunction such as alcoholism and child abuse.

The concept child abuse emanates from cultural/societal changes in behavioural patterns (Gil, 1970 : 4). A concise example here can be drawn from what used to happen in the past as far as women were concerned. It was believed that men were heads of the families and as a result, they were expected to work and maintain their families. On the other hand, the women

were expected to stay at home and raise the children. However, as countries undergo globalisation, structures changed. Mothers had to leave children at home and go to work to help their husbands in supporting the families. As a result many children were neglected, or rather abused and such children's (abused) performances were affected at school. Dubanoski (1984) in Vander Mey & Neff (1986 : 14) argues that "Child abuse is becoming recognised as a world-wide social problem, taking various forms with new forms emerging as countries undergo urbanisation, modernisation, and rapid social change".

If parents or anybody in *loco-parents* abuse a child in either way, that child's academic performance will greatly be affected (Parton 1985 : 166 and Martin & Beezly (1977) in Calan & Franchi 1987 : 6) and such a child is likely to:

- Drop out of school at an early age;
- Repeat grades due to lack of material such as books;
- Lack motivation which will help him or her perform adequately academically;
- Have a low self concept which can contribute towards his or her failure;
- Misbehave and fail completely;
- Lack concentration in class and fail;
- Conceive at any early age and under-achieve due to frustrations;
- Be truant;
- Have or develop a school phobia;
- Be overanxious and fail at school.

The purpose of this research however is to find out from students if there really is a relationship between child abuse and academic performance.

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The general objective of this research is to investigate the relationship between child abuse and academic performance. The study will also explore the different types of abuse, and their impact on a child's academic performance.

In this study, the following specific objectives will be dealt with:

- To show how child abuse can affect the academic performance of a child, that is, the relationship between child abuse and academic performance will be investigated.
- To investigate the behavioural changes of the abused child which can be attributed to the academic performance of a child.
- To investigate the family and the school as the child's educational environments and how these institutions can be major sources of abuse as far as children are concerned.
- To investigate the causes and types of child abuse.
- To make recommendations on how to deal with abused children.

### **1.4 RESEARCH METHOD**

In order to achieve the stated objectives of the study, a literature study and a qualitative investigation will be undertaken in the following way:

- Relevant books, journals and research reports which have been written on child abuse will be studied;

- Students at Save Our Soul school and Hleoheng primary school in Lesotho will be interviewed to gather personal information relating to the concept.

## **1.5 DEMARCATING THE RESEARCH AREA**

The study fits into the study field of educational psychology due to the following reasons:

- It shows how abuse can distort the child's life cognitively, affectively, and emotionally.
- It shows how abuse can affect the child's academic performance.

The research will focus on students ranging from 10 – 18 years at Lesotho in the Maseru and Leribe district. The researcher will specifically interview students at SOS in the Maseru district in Lesotho since that school is mainly concerned with educating abused and neglected children in Lesotho. The other two sexually abused children will be obtained from Hleoheng primary school in the Leribe district in Lesotho.

## **1.6 ELUCIDATION OF CONCEPTS**

For the sake of clarity it is essential that certain relevant concepts used in the study should be clearly defined. Below are definitions of some of the concepts, which have been used extensively in this research.

### **1.6.1 Abused child**

Barnhart, Whitney and Nault (1964 : 9) defines abuse as "to use wrongly or badly or to mistreat". Crystal (1994 : 28) on the other hand defines abuse as the unjust or improper use of something. This being the case, Crystal (1994 :

259) and the Terminology Committee for Social Work (1984 : 54) have concluded that an abused child is any child under the age of eighteen years old that is being physically or psychologically mistreated by the person in whose care the child is. An abused child is synonymous with a battered child.

### **1.6.2 Battered child**

A young child that shows symptoms (battered child syndrome) that results from repeated serious injuries, which have been administered to him/her over a period of time (Terminology Committee for Social Work, 1984 : 56).

### **1.6.3 Child abuse**

For the purpose of this study, child abuse is used in a generic way to refer to all types of maltreatment that can be practised on a child. Gill (1970 : iii) and Crystal (1994 : 259) refer to these types of maltreatment as acts of commission and omission.

### **1.6.4 Caretaker**

Caretaker refers to any person who is given custody over a child either temporarily or permanently. (Somebody who acts in *loco-parentis*).

### **1.6.5 Educational environment**

This refers to a building or place where children stay either temporarily or permanently. This will include the home of a child and the school.

### **1.6.6 SOS**

SOS an acronym for save our soul. Save Our soul School is a registered school for abused children in Lesotho. This school is located in the Maseru district. Its main aim is to educate the children who have been abused by their parents/caretakers and help those children overcome their problems. The American Government with the help of the Lesotho government founded this school in 1994.

## **1.7 RESEARCH PROGRAMME**

In order to achieve the stated objectives, the research will evolve as follows:

### **Chapter 2**

The concept child abuse will be placed within a theoretical framework. Apart from the historical view, the study will focus on the general causes of child abuse – inheritance/poor early childhood, stress, large families, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, young and/or insecure parents, unwanted/unplanned babies, aggressive parents, inadequate or mentally subnormal parents, alcohol, drugs and ill health, isolation, women who have been refused termination of pregnancies, inadequate social learning, dysfunctional family structures, parenting styles, divorce cultural ideologies, excessive demands from parents and working couples. The exploration of different types of child abuse – physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, and economic abuse will also be discussed in this chapter.

### **Chapter 3**

In chapter three the structure of the school and the family as institutions will be presented.

After presenting an initial description in a broad context of both the school and the family as institutions where the upbringing of the child occurs, the investigation will focus on ways in which those institutions can become harmful to the child.

The last section of the chapter deals with the relationship between child abuse and academic performance.

## **Chapter 4**

The methods of data collection will be presented in chapter four.

Students will be interviewed to gather information relating to child abuse and academic performance. The researcher will concentrate on the children in SOS school in the Maseru district in Lesotho since it is easy to reach and it is a registered school for abused children in Lesotho.

## **Chapter 5**

The findings of the empirical research will be analysed in this chapter.

## **Chapter 6**

The research will be finalised in the form of summaries, recommendations and conclusion.

## **1.8 CONCLUSION**

In summary, chapter one deals with the overall planning and organisation of the research. Moreover, it gives insights of how children's academic performance can be undermined by child abuse.

## CHAPTER 2

### CHILD ABUSE: CAUSES AND TYPES

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

What immediately comes into mind when the concept "child abuse" is mentioned is an image of a small child with mucus on his cheeks asking for food in the streets. Child abuse is a well known phenomenon which has attracted and forced many people like singers, writers and poets to write about it. Ngugi wa Thiongo (1976 :25) can be cited as one example of a writer who has written a poem of an abused child:

I'm ... tired ... of ... running  
 All my life I have been running  
 On the run. On the road  
 Men molesting me.  
 I was once a dutiful daughter  
 A nice Christian home  
 It was in the settled area  
 CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THIS HOUSE.  
 THE UNSEEN GUEST AT EVERY MEAL  
 THE SILENT LISTENER TO EVERY CONVERSATION.

I ran away from school  
 Because the headmaster wanted to do wicked things with me.  
 Always: You, remain behind.  
 You, take the wood to my house  
 You, take this chalk and books to the office.  
 Then he would follow me

And all he wanted was to touch my breasts.

So, I left school  
I wanted to stay home and teach  
Myself how to sew or do something with my life.  
But my father would have nothing of it.  
He called me an idler and sent me  
To pick tea leaves for that cruel settler, Mr. Jones.  
How he used to abuse and punish us!  
I had to run away from home  
From my father, from Mr. Jones.

In the city, it was the boys  
Always harassing me ...  
And yet I did not want to starve!  
I lost my virginity while trying to run  
Away from losing it.  
How else could I live?  
Yet, the money was so miserable  
And sometimes they would beat me afterwards  
Calling me a child.  
No. I'll not run away again  
A girl cannot run, run, run all her life.

(Ngugi wa Thiongo (1965) – "The trial of Dedan Kimathi").

This poem illustrates the magnitude and the seriousness of child abuse.

It is a well-known fact that a percentage of children all over the world are abused. This happens in both developing and developed societies. Children are exposed to poor pre-natal and post-natal care, malnutrition, disease and

poverty, all which characterise abuse. As Westman (1979 : 336) states "... in developing societies, children are mostly exposed to inadequate pre-natal and post-natal care ... thus denying/robbing them the first stage of essential health care which each and every child requires.

It therefore follows that parents are expected to play major roles during children's early lives. Parents are to be responsible for the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of their children. Their role should be a protective and nurturing one (Green 1980 : 9 in De La Rey, Norman, Tamara & Van Niekerk, 1997 : 159).

However, this is not true in most cases. Massive literature shows that some parents do not act in the interest of their children hence they are agents of child abuse (Korbin 1981 : 30, Gelles & Lancaster, 1987 : 17 and Le Roux, 1993 : 5).

An African writer, Ngugi wa Thiongo (1965 : 33) tells the story of a family that denied their daughter the opportunity to go to the initiation school. In fact, the father did that as the family was converted to christianity (Western culture) which regards initiation as an abusive practice. As a result, the child decided to rebel against her family because she could not betray the principles of the African culture she was brought up in. Unfortunately, that child died because of circumcision. However, she was happy that she died as a woman in her tribe.

This story therefore confirms the argument that child abuse is viewed differently in different cultures. Hence the reason why child abuse is prone to different interpretation by different people/cultures/nations. As (Korbin, 1981 : IX) argues; "definitions of child abuse vary from culture to culture and evolve over time, and they may reflect the necessities for survival of the group". Wagstaff and Kibel (1995 : 55) also adds that "... what constitute child abuse will vary in other cultural settings".

The next section presents a historical overview of the concept of child abuse.

## 2.2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Child abuse has been in existence since the inception of society. It is not surprising therefore, that today, due to urbanisation and impoverishment; it has become worse. Richter (1988 : 10) argues that: "the phenomenon of children who are abandoned, unwanted neglected or abused (today) has been linked to socio-structural factors which primarily through urbanisation and impoverishment cause distortions in family life and community life".

Child abuse as mentioned earlier has a very long history. It goes back to ancient times. De Mause, (1974) in Calam and Franchi (1978 : 1) argues that: "... children as a form of abuse were used for ritual sacrifices and unwanted children were thrown away to die".

The case of child abuse is further captured by the powerful and most famous Greek legend by Sophocles (1959 : 20). It relates a story of a parent's attempt to kill his own son because the traditional doctors had predicted that the child would kill its father and marry his mother. The father therefore decided to give his child to the shepherd to kill because he said the child was useless.

This shows the seriousness of the phenomenon of child abuse over the centuries. It has been rampant in nature. Shakespeare (1964 : 43 Act I, scene 7) in "Macbeth" captures the above point very well. He shows how Lady Macbeth was determined to kill her son for the sake of kinship. Child abuse is further illustrated in the Holy Bible (1995 : 16, Genesis - 22) where it is depicted that Abraham was willing to sacrifice his own son.

During the nineteenth century, child abuse took a different turn. In fact, it worsened as children were forced to leave schools and forced to work for long hours in the industries with little pay. This period is described by Parton

(1985 : 23) as: "a period of indifference and even active and cruel exploitation of children".

It was only towards the beginning of the twentieth century that children's rights began to be considered (Parton, 1985 : 30). The initiative to declare war against child abuse was taken up by the United Nations in 1989. It adopted the Internal Declaration of Children's Rights as tabled below: (Le Roux, 1993 : 53)

- regardless of race, colour, sex, language or religion, all children are entitled to these rights;
- children have a right to special protection and opportunities and facilities so that they can develop in a normal and healthy way, in freedom and dignity;
- children have a right to a name and nationality from birth;
- children have a right to be given enough to eat, to have a decent place, to live as well as to play and to receive good medical care when they are ill;
- handicapped children have a right to special treatment and education;
- children have a right to grow up with love, affection and security. Babies should not be separated from their mothers. Children should be brought up by their parents wherever possible. Children without parents should be cared for by the state;
- children have a right to free education;
- they have a right to be among the first to be protected in times of disaster;

- they have a right to be protected from all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation;
- children should not be made to work before a certain age or do work that endangers their health or prejudices, their education or physical or moral development;
- they should be protected from anything that causes racial, religious or other forms of discrimination. They should be brought up in a spirit of understanding, friendship, peace and universal brotherhood;
- children should be brought up to understand that their energy and talent should be devoted to the service of their fellow man.

It can therefore be concluded that child abuse is not a new concept at all. It has been in existence since the inception of societies.

### **2.3 DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE**

There are many definitions for the concept "child abuse". Gill (1975) in Cook and Bowles (1980 : 13) defines child abuse as: "inflicted gaps of deficits between circumstances of living which would facilitate the optimal development of children ... and their actual circumstances irrespective of the sources or agent of the deficit".

Carter (1974 : 22) has another definition for child abuse. According to him child abuse refers to: "a larger area of child maltreatment than the term battered child syndrome including the attitudes of parent or guardian as well as the child's injury". Herzberger (1996 : 3) also defines child abuse as "the intentional use of force aimed at injuring or damaging the child. Gelles and

Lancaster (1987 : 19) define child abuse as: "the battered child syndrome caused by deliberate physical assault by a caretaker or a parent".

The researcher is of the opinion that abuse does not only encompass physical assault. It embodies inter alia failure to thrive, sexual abuse, educational neglect and mental abuse. The researcher agrees with Korbin (1980 : 4) in Vander Mey and Neff (1986 : 52) when he defines child abuse as: "departure from culturally and socially acceptable standards that results in harm to a child or comprises his or her physical, emotional (sexual) cognitive, social or cultural development".

Corby (1993 : 43) further captures this point of view. According to him, child abuse, is perceived as: "the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child under the age of eighteen by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances which would indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened thereby".

The following conclusions can be drawn from these definitions. An abused child is the one who:

- is generally under the age of eighteen;
- is generally unable to escape his or her abuser or to tell others how she or he was injured;

The abuser on the contrary is:

- usually a parent or someone who stands in loco-parentis;
- comes from any level of society;
- somebody who generally seems to be a person whose life is filled with frustrations;

- offenders who are frequently persons who themselves have been the subjects of abuse during childhood. (Servamus, 1998 : 38).

However, the above conclusions are not exhaustive as there are many causes which might influence parents or caretakers to abuse their children and these would be discussed in the following section.

## **2.4 CAUSES OF ABUSE**

Child abuse is not the result of single causes but the outcome of complex conditions (Halperin, 1979 : 50). There are many causes of child abuse as will be shown below. These include inheritance, stress, large families, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, young and insecure parents, unwanted unplanned babies, aggressive parents, inadequate or mentally subnormal parents, alcohol or drug and ill health, isolation, women who have been refused termination of pregnancy, inadequate social learning, dysfunctional family structures, parenting styles, divorce, cultural ideologies, excessive demands from parents and working couples.

### **2.4.1 Inheritance**

To inherit means to acquire something from either a parent, a relative or a friend (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 1995 : 612). In this case, one may find that parents, who were abused as children, will in most cases abuse their children. This may be due to the fact that their parents did not give them the necessary love and guidance, which a child needs to develop into a responsible adult. As a result, such parents also lack those elements towards their children. In return, they tend to abuse their children instead of guiding them. Halperin (1979 : 57) argues that: "a predisposition to child abuse is an intergenerational phenomenon taught by one generation to the next ... thus the lack of intimacy between parent and child affects yet another generation".

Gelles and Lancaster (1987 : 157) further supports the above point by arguing that: "mothers who themselves had experienced disturbances in early attachment, effected by experimental separation from their own mothers in infancy, appeared to be at greater risk for subsequently abusing their own infants".

Therefore parents are a reflection of their parents. That is, they will exhibit the behaviour of their parents. Halperin (1979 : 58) argues that: "parents behaviour towards their children is almost a carbon copy of the maltreatment they experienced as youngsters ... whether a parent uses his hand, belt or a curtain rod in punishing his or her child is greatly determined by how he or she was hit or punished as a child".

#### **2.4.2 Stress**

There are many definitions for stress. Some educationists refer to it as any pain which a person experiences while other refer to it as any abnormality which might affect a person's way of functioning. However Norton in Louw, Gerdes, Louw, Meyer, Piek, Raubenheimer, Schoeman, Thom, Van Ede & Wait (1991 : 628) defines stress as "the physiological and the psychological reaction people exhibit in response to environmental events called stressors).

Stress has been found as another contributing factor to child abuse. Parents or caretakers under the influence of stress can find themselves abusing their children. This however, does not mean that "abusive parents are monsters but rather normal people with human needs (Carter, 1974 : 12). who under the influence of frustration abuse children. Stress factors according to Green (1980 : 90) may include: "current events that widen the discrepancy between the limited child rearing capacity of the parents and increased child rearing pressures".

These events that widen the gap between the child rearing capacity of the parents and the increased child rearing pressures may include poverty, under-employment, unemployment, and minority status. These factors may put pressure on the parent and such a parent may find himself or herself abusing his or her children. Halperin (1979 : 62) argues that: "actors like poverty, unemployment, underemployment, minority, status or insufficient education can be seen as elements that affect a parent's self-concept, and his or her ability to perform the parenting role adequately".

A number of researchers even argue that an unemployed parent is more capable of abusing his or her child as opposed to an employed parent. Gill (1970) in Giovannoni, Jeanne, Becerra & Rosina (1979 : 18) states that "the majority of parents who are unemployed abuse their children". Gladstone (1965) and Young (1964) in Green (1980 : 92) furthermore demonstrate the relationship between unemployment and child abuse: "In addition to financial problems, the lack of a job poses a threat to the father's self-esteem". Lower socio-economic status has also been found as another factor contributing to an increase in environmental stress. A family with financial problems will obviously not be in a position to provide enough for children. As a result, such a family will experience stress due to failure to provide for its children. Green (1980 : 93) argues that: "Low socio-economic status contribute to an increase in environmental stress through family disorganisation, problems of unemployment, inadequate income, poor housing and excessively large numbers of children".

Kibel and Wagstaff (1995 : 54) further strengthen the above points by arguing that: "socio-economic deprivation, social and cultural upheaval and isolated families are situations which predispose children to any form of abuse".

To avoid abusive acts, a family must have enough money to meet all the needs of the family. Green (1980 : 94) argues that little or no money contributes to parental stress, which leads to child abuse: "Lack of money,

inadequate, over crowded and unsanitary living conditions, family disorganisation, high crime rate and unsafe neighbourhood exert a stressful impact on family life and parental functioning and might trigger the onset of child abuse".

In conclusion, the researcher may say that stress is a contributory factor to child abuse.

### **2.4.3 Large families**

Many people today especially newly married couples prefer to have one child or no children at all. However, some researchers like Bermans and O'Hara (1984 : 16) have shown that couples with no children suffer from stress and loneliness. One childless parent who was interviewed over the media as quoted by Berman and O'Hara (1984 : 19) said: "Sometimes I will accidentally walk through the children's department of a large store, and then get this little tight feeling in my throat. And I start thinking how wonderful it would be to hug and dress, and care for a little baby". This suggests or shows how childless parents suffer though some of them did not like or wanted children initially.

Similarly, if parents have many children (large families) one may find those parents do not give attention to all the children. As a result, some children suffer from neglect from their parents. Berman and O'Hara (1984 : 13), however, further argues that "many families with four or more children ... experience some pressures (when it comes to maintaining those children) and as a result, abuse in the form of neglect occurs". Korbin (1981 : 29) argues that many children in a family place burdens on parents and this fact contributes to abuse. He continues that "due to large family size more parents experience intolerable burdens which might even force them to abuse their children".

In conclusion the researcher is of the opinion that large families might in one way or other contribute to child abuse as indicated above. Likewise, small families or one child families might find themselves lonely and end up adopting children which they might also abuse due to lack of blood ties between the family members. (Olthuis, 1975 : 30).

#### **2.4.4 Out-of-wedlock pregnancies**

According to many African cultures, it is a taboo for a girl (or a woman) to conceive outside wedlock. An example, which can be drawn here, is the Basotho culture. Culturally, it is a taboo for a Mosotho girl to conceive outside wedlock or engage in any sexual activities before marriage. Due to the above reasons, it is obvious that if a girl conceives outside wedlock, chances are that that a parent might abuse his/her child. Korbin (1981 : 39) argues that "out-of-wedlock pregnancies, divorce ... result in large numbers of children whose physical care and socialisation are likely to be less than optimal for the ultimate production of mature adults as defined by the standards of those societies".

In an interview with SABC 2 on 11 May 1998, a life motivator also reported that children born outside wedlock stand a high risk of abuse since they are a responsibility of one parent who might abuse the child in times of frustrations. The researcher in this case may like to argue that there are unmarried people today who might like to have children of their own and raise those children without abusing them

In conclusion, one may say that out-of-wedlock pregnancies coupled with other factors like poverty and lack of social support might lead to many parents abusing their children.

### **2.4.5 Young and insecure parents**

For every person to function efficiently in a society, he or she must be mature. Maturity in this context refers to a person's ability to cope with the demands made on him or her by the environment. Therefore, normally children who marry at a tender age tend to abuse their children. This may be due to the fact that they are very young and they cannot allocate enough time to their children for parental care (Little, 1989 : 225). Valida (1977) in First National Workshop on child abuse (1997 : 127) argues that "young and insecure parents are often over anxious and create their own problems. As a result, they do not give their children enough care". This is a form of abuse.

Apart from being young, parents can also be insecure. Many things can bring about insecurity in parents; for example, poverty can be one of the causes of parents' insecurity. Families characterised by poverty can feel insecure when they discover that they are not able to meet the demands of their child. As a result parents from such families stand a greater risk of abusing their children. Davies (1983) in Fitzgerald, Lester and Zuckerman (1995 : 275) argues that "child abuse occurs more frequently in poor families than in more affluent families".

In conclusion one can say that young parents, in terms of age stand a higher risk of abusing their children as opposed to mature parents. However, there are still mature couples who abuse their children due to other problems like poverty which bring about insecurities in families as indicated by Fitzgerald et. al earlier on. This does not, however, erase the fact that young and insecure parents abuse their children.

### **2.4.6 Unwanted, unplanned baby**

Normally, people plan their babies. This is why there are institutions like family planning clinics and the like to help people plan their families.

The concept "unwanted/unplanned baby" is more common among girls who are not married though this can also be the case with married couples. If a mother conceives and the pregnancy was not planned, it is highly possible that the parent is going to abuse that child either intentionally or unintentionally. Le Roux (1993 : 4) argues that "precipitation of many ... people into parenthood without preparation can create problems (like abuse) for mothers".

Parton (1985 : 135) further says "premarital conception, unplanned, unwanted and youthful parenthood have been identified as features in the life history of abusing parents". As mentioned earlier on people who conceive outside wedlock are at a higher risk of abusing their children as compared to married couples. However, married couples on the other hand stand a chance of abusing their children if these children were not planned especially in cases of families with financial problems.

It can therefore be concluded that an unplanned baby stands a high risk of abuse as opposed to a planned baby.

#### **2.4.7 Aggressive parent**

Aggression refers to "behaviour of a person characterised by forceful and/or assertive contact and communication with other people in order to promote own interests (Terminology Committee for Social Work, 1995 : 39). From this definition it can be deduced that an aggressive parent is the type of parent who is very rude and who does not relate well with his or her children. Aggression can however be divided into two sections, namely physical aggression and verbal aggression. A physically aggressive parent abuses his or her children physically and a verbally aggressive parent will say "bad" things to his or her children. For example, he or she can insult them.

Parton (1985 : 135) argues that aggressive parents are potential abusers since they are characterised by impaired impulse control and grossly immature personalities, so it is most likely that such parents due to their immature personalities would not be in a position to guide their children into responsible mature adults. This act is referred to as being abusive since parents should care for their children for better or worse.

It can therefore be concluded that an aggressive parent stands all the chances of abusing his or her children.

#### **2.4.8 Inadequate or mentally subnormal parent**

A mentally subnormal parent might have problems with his/her mental capabilities either temporarily or permanently. A parent can be subnormal in many ways. If it happens that such a subnormal person has children, it is quite obvious that he/she will encounter problems in bringing up the child. Halperin (1979 : 59) argues that "The parent who is marginally mentally retarded has difficulty handling many of the routine tasks of life including child care".

Barlow and Durand (1995 : 598) also argue that "people with mental retardation experiences difficulties with day-to-day activities. Although the degree of difficulty they face is both a severity of their cognitive deficits and the amount of assistance they receive". It is obvious that such parents will have problems raising their children due to their abnormalities. The children of such parents stand a high risk of being abused and neglected by their parents and they can also be abused by strangers as there will be no one to guide them, especially in cases where an abnormal mother or father does not have any relatives to help him or her with the upbringing of the child.

Some researchers are of the opinion that abuse of children by mentally retarded parents occur in situations whereby the parents fail to meet the

Parton (1985 : 136) strengthens the above point by arguing that many mentally retarded parents stand a great chance of neglecting their children. Parton (1985 : 35) argues that leaving children unattended is the most prevalent form of abuse.

In conclusion, the researcher may say that mentally subnormal parents stand a high risk of abusing their children like it has been shown above.

#### **2.4.9 Alcohol or drug abuse and ill health**

Parents who abuse alcohol or drugs and have problems with their health are found to be abusive in most cases. Herzberger (1996 : 148) argues that "it is much more likely that alcohol abusing parents will abuse their children or inflict psychological harm to them". Inciardi, Lockwood & Pottieger (1993) as in Herzberger (1996 : 148) further argues that parents who abuse alcohol and drugs will not only abuse their children, but they will also participate in violent activities outside their home (some of which embarrass their children).

Drug abusing parents may abuse their children: when they are drunk, they shout and mock their kids. Green (1980 : 50) even argues that "alcohol obliterates feelings of inadequacy, depression, support and self esteem". This means that all these feelings are temporarily removed from a parent. He or she sees himself/herself as a free person and regards other people as worthless. This on it's own is an abusive act for children as they have a right to be cared for. Green (1980 : 50) further argues that drug abuse "enhances the potential of child abuse by undermining inhibitions and brittle defences against pent-up rage and aggression". Herzberger (1996 : 150) further argues that people who abuse alcohol and other drugs are people who undergo severe economic or personal hardships and as a result, turn to alcohol and drugs and they may also take out their frustration on family members especially the children as they are defenceless.

In conclusion, it may be stated that subnormal parents are at a risk of abusing their children due to ill-health.

#### **2.4.10 Isolation**

According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of English (1995 : 633) isolation means "to keep or put something or somebody entirely apart from other people or things". If one says that a person is isolated it means that that particular person does not associate himself or herself with other people. He or she is alienated from other people.

Isolation has been cited as another cause of child abuse (Korbin, 1981 : 6). A parent/caretaker who is isolated from his or her family members or the rest of the society may end up abusing his or her children when encountering problems since there will be no one to share his or her problems. Carter (1974 : 24) argues that "parents who abuse their children appear to share a number of characteristics – they are often socially isolated and fail to establish satisfactorily marital relationships".

The communist philosophy does not advocate an individual to exist in isolation, implying that a person must relate well with his or her environment so that these relationships can console him or her in times of depression and frustrations. The Holy Bible also refers to God creating man and woman to live together because he saw that man needed a helper. In situations where a parent is isolated, abuse cases are likely to occur. Cook and Bowles, (1980 : 131) state that "lack of family roots in the community, lack of immediate support from extended families, social isolations contribute to child abuse".

On the contrary families that are characterised by love and support from other people do not stand a risk of abusing their children. Justice and Justice (1976 : 5) further add that "child abuse is more likely to occur in those

families which are socially isolated than it is in families which are emeshed in a net work of social support".

In conclusion, isolation has been found by many researchers to promote abuse as opposed to adequate social support. Extra-familiar support systems are very helpful and can serve as a source of practical and emotional support for parents experiencing family transition (which might lead to abuse) (Hethersington, 1993 in Walsh, 1993 : 220). This support from other people may partially relieve a parent as well as providing the child with another source of needed emotional support. Barlow and Durand (1995 : 278) support this view that adequate social support relieve tensions and prevent abuses. Their argument is based on the fact that when frustrated, a person with social support might turn to his or her friends for help instead of abusing that child. They argue that when confronted with problems or adversity of daily life, parents/caretakers might go to their friends or relatives for advice on how best to cope with the situation. Even if the situation turns out badly, friends and relatives will be there to support and reassure them. As the old saying goes, "good friends double our joy and divide our grief".

However, in situations whereby a person is living far away from his or her relatives or if he or she does not relate well with either relatives or friends, one can resort to support groups for social support. In this support groups, one is at a risk of developing different approaches to child rearing due to advices given to him or her by other members of the group.

Support groups refer to small organisations where people with problems are helped. They discuss, their problems with other group members. Procidano and Fischer (1992 : 75) state that "support groups have a range of approaches. Some offer an opportunity to talk about problems and issues while others include educational information and training". These groups provide a forum to discuss problems openly and help members realise that their experiences are not uncommon.

Through support groups, elements of isolation, which might contribute to abuse of children and feelings of hopelessness, are decreased (Procidano and Fischer, 1992 : 75). At support groups one can even find there are other people who share the same problems and that the very same people might have solutions to offer.

Isolation can cause parents to abuse their children. Jones, Pickett, Oates and Barbor (1982 : 251) argue that "isolated parents stand a greater risk of abusing their children as opposed to parents with adequate social support".

In conclusion, it can be stated that every person in life needs social support from people around him or her to avoid frustrations which might lead to abuse of children.

#### **2.4.11 Women who have been refused termination of pregnancy**

God created man with adequate mind to make decisions concerning the problems he or she encounters in his or her daily life. Every person has a right to make decisions concerning things relating to him or her. Children (anybody under the age of 18) are the only people who cannot make decisions concerning themselves. In this case, parents or caretakers are responsible for deciding for a child until that child reaches an age when he or she can decide for himself or herself. The South African Law has also taken this into consideration. According to its constitution (The constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Act 108 of 1996 (12) (2)) it is stipulated that a person has a right over his or her body: "Everyone has the right to bodily and psychological integrity, which includes the right:

- To make decisions concerning reproduction

- To security in and control over their body; and
- Not be subjected to medical or scientific experiments without their informed consent.

If it happens that a woman is not given a fair chance or rather is refused to terminate her pregnancy, it is possible that such a parent will not have enough time for the baby. Such parents might also tend to abuse their children because they were not prepared for them. However, in some cases one may find that a parent may want to terminate her pregnancy because of financial problems and if it so happens that she is denied access to terminate her pregnancy, she might not have enough money to raise the child and end up abusing such a child. Valida (1977) in The First National Workshop on Child Abuse (1977 : 127) reported that "woman who have been refused termination of pregnancy are most likely to abuse their children".

In conclusion it may be stated that it is dangerous to prevent a woman from terminating her pregnancy as she might abuse that child since it was not planned.

#### **2.4.12 Inadequate social learning**

It is possible for a parent/caretaker to abuse a child unintentionally. This may be a result of parents not gaining enough knowledge about their children to avoid abusive acts on the part of the child. According to Halperin (1979 : 59) "... (such parents) hamper their youngsters' development out of ignorance rather than as a result of personal psycho-dynamic factors".

Some researchers argue that parent/caretakers with inadequate social learning may not motivate their children in doing certain things and tend to abuse the children. Green (1980 : 46) argues that: "these parents are often unmotivated to seek help or even overtly hostile to the suggestion that they might experience emotional difficulties. They typically lack insight of normal

child rearing patterns and deny to project their problems onto other people or situations.

According to Halperin (1979 : 60) parents with inadequate social child rearing patterns may include both normal and abnormal parents. Such parents "may not understand the importance of good nutrition in the physical development of their youngsters while others fail to realise that children need intellectual stimulation to help them learn and grow".

The researcher agrees with Halperin (1979) because children of parents with inadequate social skills will suffer from neglect at the hands of their parents. Such parents will abuse their children when failure to meet parental expectations exists. Parents with inadequate social learning may expect miracles from their children. They might expect them to accomplish tasks for which they are not developmentally prepared and failure to perform such tasks lead to abuse. Halperin (1979 : 61) furthermore argues that: "... their parents see them as different, these youngsters are often in line for harsh physical punishment, neglect or emotional abuse."

To conclude, one may say that parents must be orientated with regard to child rearing.

#### **2.4.13 Dysfunctional family structure**

Another factor which has been found to lead to child abuse is dysfunctional family structure (Richter, 1988 ; 30). It is a well-known fact that the family is the major or primary institution in which a child grows up. In the family, a child is taught both societal and behavioural values. A child who grows up in a well caring family with both the mother and father living together is expected to love and relate well with other people. On the contrary, a child who grows up in a problematic family situation, that is, in situations where there is no peace or harmony, is more exposed to abuse. This will be so,

because parents will abuse the child while trying to get rid of frustrations. Gelles and Lancaster (1987 : 18) even argue that: "the family can be a potentially dangerous institution rather than the proverbial scene of love and tranquillity and this is the case in dysfunctional family structures where child abuse is apparent".

In conclusion, it may be stated that a family that is not well organised and harmonious stand a high risk of abusing its children as compared to a normal family.

#### **2.4.14 Parenting styles**

The personality of a parent can also contribute towards child abuse. For example, an authoritarian parent characterised by rejecting children; communicating little with the child and severely punishing the child is automatically abusing his or her child as parents are supposed to care for their children (Louw et. al, 1991 : 352). Uninvolved parents have also been found to stand a better chance of abusing their children (Louw et al, 1992 : 353). Such parents "make no demands (from/to) their children. They are indifferent to their children and may even reject them (abusive act). They do the minimum that is expected from them as caregivers of their children. They do, however, respond to certain short-term demands of their children (e.g. for food and clothes) but they fail to set long-term guidelines and goals for them".

It can therefore be concluded that what constitutes the personality of a parent can be harmful to the well-being of a child.

#### **2.4.15 Divorce**

Divorce refers to a situation whereby two people who were married separate. Normally, if parents divorce, one may find that the custody of children is given to one of the parents if the couple happen to have children. The parent who

is given custody over the children will definitely encounter problems when it comes to raising those children single-handedly. Walsh (1993 : 95) argues that "divorce triggers a series of adverse transactional factors such as economic decline, parental stress and physical and psychological dysfunction in family members".

Due to these pressures which a single parent experiences, one may find that such parents sometimes withdraw from their children. That is, they tend to neglect them (Walsh, 1993 : 213). This again is regarded as an abusive act since parents should care for their children. In some cases one may find that the parent who has been given custody over the children does not have enough money for proper schooling. As a result, children do not attend school. Halperin (1979 : 20) refers to this type of abuse as educational neglect.

Sometimes, the conditions, resulting from divorce, can force a parent to abuse his or her children. For example, a single parent due to a lot of work to attend to, may find himself or herself allocating some of the household work to children who might even not be mature enough to perform those duties. Walsh (1993 : 221) here argues that immediately following divorce household routines and roles break down and parents experience task overload, as a single parent attempts to perform the tasks usually assumed by two parents. In such situations children, especially girls in divorced families are often asked to assume responsibilities for household chores and care of younger siblings as a form of abuse.

Walsh (1993 : 217) argues that divorce causes many people to be emotionally disturbed and this affects the children as the well-being of the parent is related to the well-being of the child. An emotionally disturbed parent will tend to neglect his or her child and in the same way, the child will also be emotionally disturbed. Herzberger (1996 : 9) further emphasizes this

argument that the children from "single parent families are at a great risk of abuse as compared to children from two-parent families".

To conclude, it may be stated that single parents due to cases like divorce are at a great risk of abusing their kids as they cannot afford to raise the child single handed.

#### **2.4.16 Cultural ideologies**

According to Little, Fowler and Cowlson (1992 : 1016), an ideology refers to an idealised idol, that is, the set rules, governing individual cultures. Each culture has its own ideologies. Due to these differences in cultural ideologies one may find that certain cultures allow the use of physical force against children as a means of disciplining them. These physical forces used against children often lead to abuse. Jones et. al (1982 : 142) even argues that "cultural attitude permitting the use of physical force in child rearing is the common cause of all abuse of children".

Gil (1970 : 8) also points out that other cultures encourage the use of physical force against children. He argues that the educational philosophy reflected in the popular proverb "spare the rod and spoil the child" encourages most parents to abuse their children. Herzberger (1996 : 90) even argues that societal norms promote the abuse of children as one may find that parents exercise certain rights over their child and as a result, may practice all forms of maltreatment on their child.

In conclusion, one may say that different cultural ideologies result in parents to abusing their children.

#### **2.4.17 Excessive demands from parents**

Excess means more or extra (Oxford Advanced Dictionary of English, 1995 : 210). Many parents expect too much from their children. A parent/caretaker may expect his or her children to perform extraordinarily at school despite taking the child's capability into consideration (Van Rensburg, 1991 : 6). While children fail to achieve what their parents expect of them, the parents might feel very disappointed and some of them might even scold their children. Children on the other hand, according to Van Rensburg might tend to separate themselves from their parents or caretakers or decide to leave school completely, when failure to meet their parents expectations occurs.

To conclude, it may be said that excessively demanding parents will in most cases appear abusive as they demand what their children cannot provide.

#### **2.4.18 Working couples**

One would think that unemployed parents are the only people who can abuse their children. However, it has been found that if both parents are working, both parties very often do not have time to attend to the child and as a result, the child is neglected (Walsh, 1993 : 397). Working couples can also abuse their children due to the problems they encounter at work, that is, they can bring problems of work to their homes and punish or abuse their children in return.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the above statement is that all parents, whether working or not working can be potential abusers of their children.

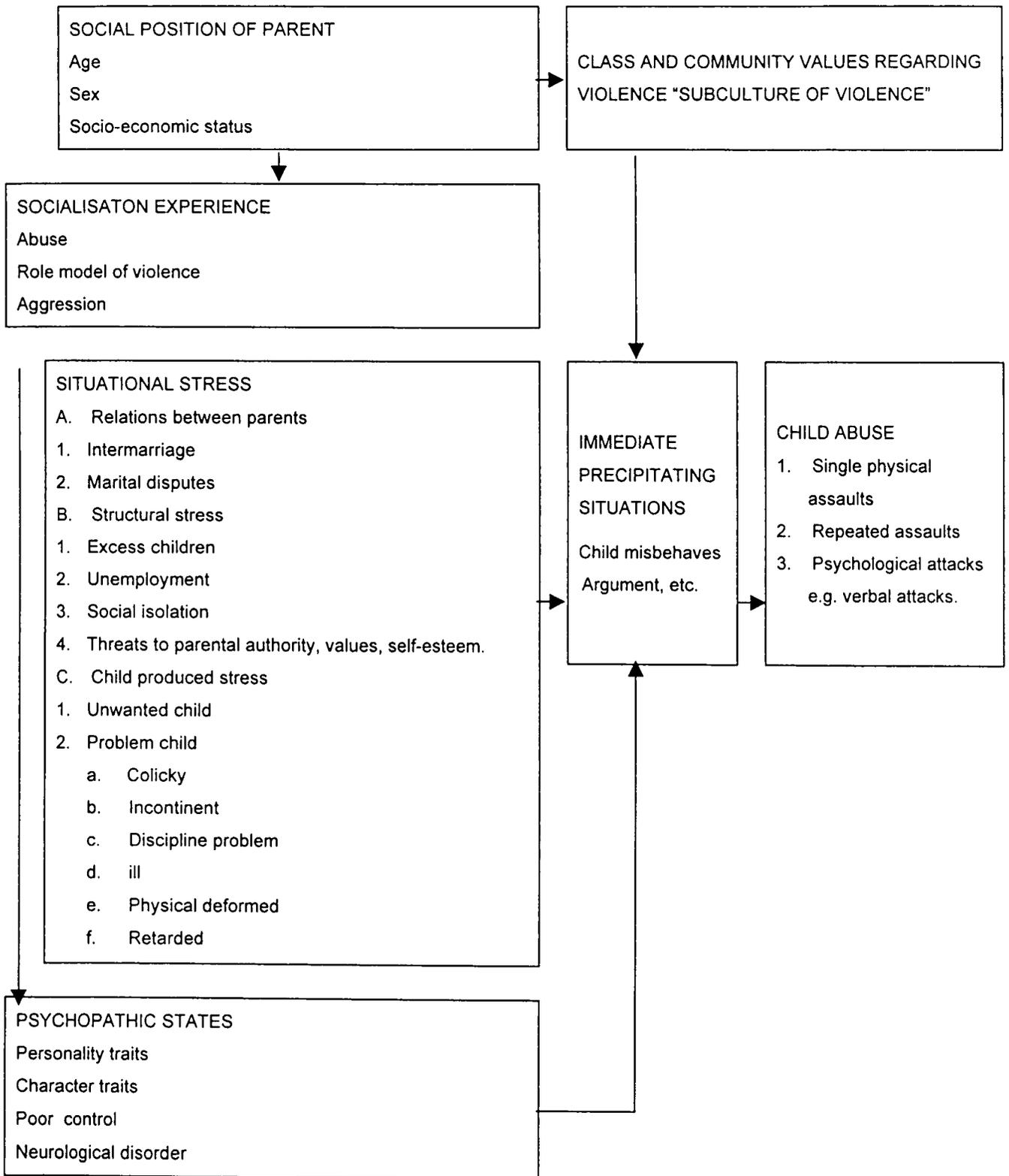
### 2.4.19 Interpretation

To conclude, it can be indicated that there are many factors which urge parents to abuse their children. Abuse is not just an act that happens haphazardly. Certain factors, can be attributed to its occurrence. Gelles and Lancaster (1987 : 369) have schematically summarised those causes in figure 2.1. Kibel and Wagstaff (1995 : 70) also characterise the factors that promote abusing situations in table 2.1.

In summary figure 2.1 shows how the social position of a parent, socialisation experience of a parent plus psychopathic traits of a parent link with situational stress, class and community values regarding violence resulting in different but related forms of abuse.

Table 2.1 shows the factors that promote abusing situations which can lay foundations for the causes of child abuse in societies. The first category shows the characteristics of the abuser, which can promote child abuse. The second category shows possible qualities possessed by an abused victim which can also promote child abuse and the third category indicates the situations which can promote child abuse.

**Figure 2.1 A social psychological model of the causes of child abuse**



(Source Gelles and Lancaster 1987 : 369)

**Table 2.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF A POTENTIAL ABUSER, AN ABUSE VICTIM AND THE SITUATION WHICH CAN PROMOTE ABUSE**

1 ABUSER	2 ABUSE VICTIM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childhood deprived of love and nurturance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young child (under five years of age).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor self control.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stepchild/adopted/fostered (biological).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unrealistic expectations of child.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hyperactive/behaviour problems.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor empathy with child.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No bond with mother.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor parenting skills</li> </ul>	
	<b>3 SITUATIONAL CONTEXT</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life stress events – loss of a job, death of friend, etc.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marital breakdown.</li> </ul>

(Source Kibel and Wagstaff, 1995 : 70)

## 2.5 TYPES OF ABUSE

Child abuse can take many forms. Halperin (1979 : 21) argues that child abuse takes a variety of forms, for it may include any act or omission that adversely affects a child's development.

Broadly stated, child abuse falls in the following categories: physical, sexual, emotional, neglect and economic abuse (Halperin, 1979 : 29).

### 2.5.1 Physical abuse

According to many researchers, this is the most common type of abuse and it is often reported. Halperin (1979 : 21) argues that: "physical abuse is the most easily recognised and most often reported kind of maltreatment for the marks of physical assault are visible on the child". (Refer to portraits as shown at the end of this section).

Salter and Findlay (1992 : 5) argue that physical abuse, was the first type of abuse to receive public and professional attention. However, Gill (1970 : 6) defines it as: "the intentional, non-accidental use of physical force or intentional, non-accidental acts of omission on the part of a parent or other caretakers, interacting with a child in his care, aimed at hurting, injuring or destroying the child".

Normally physical abuse takes place in the family. Parents or caretakers in most cases tend to (physically) abuse their children because of the frustrations of daily life combined with other factors (Halperin, 1979 : 65).

There are many factors which cause parents to physically abuse their children. Gillham (1991 : 25) argues that these factors include unemployment, poverty, large family size, and unsettled housing. However, some researchers are of the opinion that unemployment causes parents to abuse their children either physically, sexually, emotionally or economically. Carter (1974 : 27) states that: "many (abused) children come from socially neglected families where there is uprooting, lack of education, loneliness, unemployment, financial difficulties and inadequate housing".

Physical abuse by a parent/caretaker may include inappropriate corporal punishment, bites, burns and fractures (Kibel and Wagstaff, 1995 : 370). All these things may be due to the fact that parents are frustrated and they tend to threaten everything they come across. Halperin (1979 : 311) further argues

that "parents physically abuse their children when they are extremely agitated or angry". To identify whether a child is physically or mentally abused there are certain signs to look for in that particular child. According to the "Servamus" (1998 : 31) the factors to look for in physically abused children are indicated in table 2.2.

**Table 2.2: Factors that physically abused children possess**

BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS	PHYSICAL INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The child cannot recall how observed injuries occurred or offers a consistent explanation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Injuries (bruises, cuts, burns, fractures, etc) that are not consistent with the explanation offered, e.g. extensive bruising in one area.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wary of adults.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The presence of several injuries that are in various stages of healing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extremely aggressive/withdrawn.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presence of various injuries over a period of time.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displays extremely indiscriminate affection – seeking behaviour.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facial injuries in infants and pre-school children e.g. cuts, sores, etc.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extremely complaint or eager to please.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unexplained injuries e.g. burns, etc.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inconsistent injuries with the child's age.</li> </ul>

(Source: Servamus, 1998 : 30)

According to Gillham (1991 : 26) the age of physically abused children is lower than that of sexually abused children. Some researchers are also of

the opinion that the age of physically abused children range from six months to six years. These victims according to Ngeambu (s.a) in "First national workshop on child abuse" (1977 : 163) held in Johannesburg are "children who cry, suck their thumbs, live in a world of fantasy, are hostile to others, have poor self-concept and develop poor peer-relationship".

Normally the people who physically abuse children in most cases have been found to be parents/caretakers. Halperin (1979 : 21) further strengthens the above issue by arguing that there are signs in physical abuse that strongly suggest that the injuries are parent inflicted. These include:

- the identifiable imprint of an object on the skin (clothes, hanger, teeth marks, etc);
- an injury that curves around the body because it was made by a flexible object (belt, rope, etc);
- injuries centralised on the face and head;
- peculiarly shaped and sized injuries;
- bruises of different colours, indicating injuries occurring over a period of time;
- abrasions that are in various stages of healing, pointing towards continuing injury;
- injuries on different areas of the body suggesting the child has been struck from several directions;
- burns of the following descriptions:
  - glove-like burns inflicted by immersion in hot liquid
  - circle shaped burns on buttocks, caused by immersion in hot liquid

- burns more severe in the middle, indicating that hot liquid has been poured on.
- object-shaped burns from such things as cigarettes, pokers and cooking utensils.

The following portraits illustrate the extent of physical abuse (Servamus, 1998 : 30).

### PORTRAITS OF PHYSICALLY ABUSED CHILDREN





To conclude one may say that physical abuse of children is the most recognisable form of abuse since the marks of abuse are noticeable.

### 2.5.2 Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is cited as another type of child abuse. According to some researchers this is the most difficult type of abuse to identify because the victims do not always bear physical symptoms which are easily identifiable. Secondly, many victims are hesitant to report the abuse. Halperin (1979 : 23)

argues that: "unlike victims of physical abuse, the sexually abused (children) usually bear no external marks of the maltreatment they receive".

Weber (1977) in Vander Mey (1986 : 46) reports that "many (children) hesitate to report sexual abuse incidents due to shame, embarrassment or fear of repercussions".

There are many definitions for the concept sexual abuse. These definitions are related. According to Kempe and Kempe (1978 : 8) sexual abuse refers to: "the involvement of dependent developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend and to which they are unable to give informed consent and that violate the sexual taboos of family roles".

Halperin (1979 : 20) views sexual abuse along the same line as Kempe. He describes it as "any sexually stimulating act initiated by an adult and involving a child". Baker and Duncan (1985) in Gillham (1991 : 4) do not deviate from these two definitions. They view child abuse as the involvement of an adult in sexual activities with a child. He argues that: "a child (anyone under the age of eighteen years) is sexually abused when another person, who is sexually mature involves the child in any activity which the other person expects to lead to sexual arousal".

In the past, it was believed that children could only be abused by strangers. That is why many children were warned about not taking anything from strangers or not agreeing to go anywhere with them. However, it has been found that sexual abuse is mostly common among the family members. Robertson (1989 : 4) argues that: "...today we receive via television, radio and press, an increasing number of reports on children who are sexually abused by their parents".

Finkelhor (1979) in Vander Mey & Neff (1986 : 2) further strengthens the above point by arguing that: "Contrary to traditional stereotypes, sexual victimisation of children is usually a family matter rather than something perpetrated by a stranger".

Vander Mey & Neff (1986 : vii) states that: "the child's home has today become a cell of abuse rather than a place of love and care. According to Robertson (1989 : 3) child abuse falls under the following two categories:

- **Abuse within family**

The abuse in this case happens among family members. The abuser in this case will be a father, mother, grandfather, or any close relative of the victim. Baker and Duncan (1985) in Gillham (1991 : 46) refer to this type of abuse as "infra-familial abuse".

- **Abuse outside family**

The abuser in this incident is outside the family. He/she may be the next-door neighbour; the after school care centre worker, the sports coach or "the man in the car".

Sexual abuse can also take many forms either intra-familial or outside the family. These forms according to Parton (1985 : 177) are "rape, sodomy and incest assault". According to Parton rape is committed when "a male person has sexual intercourse with a woman/child against her will, sodomy is intercourse between two males and indecent assault is any sexual contact with a person against the person's will. This include any form of sexual fondling, masturbation, or other sexual acts that are not sodomy or rape".

Sexual abuse is an act, which is punishable by law. Halperin (1979 : 23) argues that "sexual abuse not only violates child maltreatment laws, but it also stands as a separate criminal charge". Vander Mey & Neff (1986 : 8) adds that sexual abuse of children has come under attack by women's and children's rights.

There are many factors, which lead to adults sexually abusing children. According to Wagstaff and Kibel (1995 : 374) circumstances, which promote sexual abuse and some of the common factors, which put a child at risk of being abused, are listed in Table 2.3.

**Table 2.3: Circumstances which promote sexual abuse**

<p><b>CHARACTERISTICS OF ABUSER</b></p> <p><b>Molester:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexually immature</li> <li>• No normal adult sexual relationship</li> <li>• Exclusive preference for children</li> <li>• Lack of self-control</li> <li>• Normal sexual orientation which break down at times of stress, marital conflict, substance abuse, loss of job</li> </ul> <p><b>Rapist</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power rapist – uses force to dominate</li> <li>• Sadist – urge to inflict pain</li> </ul>
<p><b>CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-ABUSING FAMILY MEMBERS</b></p> <p>Little cohesion</p> <p><b>Mother</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passive, dependent, sexually inhibited</li> <li>• Promotes/permits daughter taking over her role</li> <li>• Sexually abused during childhood</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pregnant during early adolescence</li> </ul>
<p>CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTIMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexually precocious</li> <li>• Timid, withdrawn, non-assertive</li> <li>• Intellectually impaired</li> <li>• Oldest girl in the family</li> </ul>
<p>SOCIAL CONTEXT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crowded sleeping facilities</li> <li>• Children exposed to adult sex act early</li> <li>• Presence of step-father</li> <li>• Poor family cohesion</li> </ul>
<p>SITUATIONAL CONTEXT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mother absent (incapacitated)</li> </ul>

(Source: Wagstaff and Kibel, 1995 : 374)

Some researchers argue that stress is a causative factor for child's sexual abuse. For example Gilmartin (1994 : 81) argues that "(child abusers) under stress regress and use children to meet their needs". Gebhard (1965) in Gilmartin (1994 : 81) further argues that in most cases "a person who has been sexually abused as a child will most likely sexually abuse his or her offsprings". However, not all victims of abuse tend to abuse their children in return. Calam and Franchi (1987 : 5) further illustrate the above point by saying that "not all abused children become abusing parents".

Some parents misuse their power as heads of the families and tend to abuse their children sexually. Russell (1984 : 248) in Gilmartin (1994 : 83) argues that "just as females are viewed as the property of males, children are almost universally seen as the property of their parents and some fathers assume that this includes the right of sexual access, particularly to their daughters".

Kaufman (1954) in Vander Mey & Neff (1986 : 52) states that: "parents who abuse their children are individuals from poverty-stricken backgrounds and alcohol abusers with little education who had been inadequately housed and received little support from their parents".

From many causative factors of child abuse, it has become evident that children from families characterised by low socio-economic factors are more exposed to child abuse than children from well off families. This point is further emphasised by Cartwell (1981) in Vander Mey & Neff (1986 : 47) when he says: "thus while child abuse including incest may be a potential in any family, it is clear that children especially those from lower class families are more at risk for virtually all types of abuse".

Table 2.4 shows the behavioural and physical indicators of a sexually abused child as a result of causative factors of child abuse mentioned above.

**Table 2.4: Sexual abuse**

BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS IN CHILD	PHYSICAL INDICATORS IN CHILD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The child displays age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, others, e.g. replication of explicit sexual acts.</li> <li>• Age inappropriate, sexually explicit drawings and descriptions</li> <li>• Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unusual or excessive itching in the genital or anal area.</li> <li>• Torn, stained or bloody underwear may be observed if the child requires bathroom assistance.</li> <li>• Injuries to the vaginal or anal areas, for example bruising, swelling or infection.</li> <li>• Venereal disease.</li> <li>• Pregnancy.</li> </ul>

(Source: Servamus, 1998 : 31)

Halperin (1979 : 23) furthermore argues that the behaviour of a sexually abused child totally deviates from the behaviour of a normal child. He says although a sexually abused child bears no external marks of abuse, she or he may:

- become withdrawn and fail to engage in acting out behaviour;
- he/she may cry often for no apparent reason or without offering an explanation;
- he/she may turn suddenly hostile and present behaviour problems;
- she may become extremely anxious when asked to undress for a school physical examination or a physical education class.

Apart from the above types of behaviour shown by sexually abused children some researchers believe that sexually abused children show other symptoms. For example, Robertson (1989 : 40) argues that "sexually abused children have nightmares and they wet or soil their beds".

Some researchers tend to disagree when it comes to the exact age at which children start being sexually abused. Kempe (1977) in Cook and Bowles (1980 : 103) argues that: "rape cases can start as early as a child is 2 years or during early adolescence while incest can start from toddler age and continue into adulthood".

Gilmartin (1994 : 87) on the other hand argues that: "female children, between the ages of eight and twelve, isolated from their peers, residing in homes where there is great deal of conflict, residing with a stepfather, and/or experiencing poor relationships with her parents are significantly more likely to be sexually abused".

It can therefore be concluded that age is not the only contributing factor to child's sexual abuse, it is also accompanied by the environment in which a child lives. Wagstaff and Kibel (1995 : 374) argue that "the social context of the child is one of the circumstances which promote sexual abuse".

When talking of the race which is more likely to sexually abuse its children, some researchers are of the opinion that each race sexually abuse its children. Gilmartin (1994 : 47) argues that there are no difference by race and class in child's sexual abuse. Vander Mey & Neff (1986 : 43) also argues that each race sexually abuse its children, however, in most cases incest victims are female.

In conclusion, it can be stated that sexual abuse of children is a worldwide problem which happens in every society and affects children of different ages.

### **2.5.3 Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is another type of child abuse. People are unique individuals with need to be approached/treated differently (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1985 : 353). A good parent is not excessively demanding on his or her child. They know their children very well and they set reasonable goals for their children. On the contrary, many parents are found to be very demanding on their children and as a result, tend to abuse their children if they do not achieve the set standards. Halperin (1979 : 26) argues that: "many emotionally abusive parents hold unrealistic expectations for their children and communicate their standards in critical and demanding language".

Many authors do not really define what emotional abuse is. Instead, they tend to discuss the circumstances surrounding emotional abuse. However, Halperin (1979 : 26) defines it as: "emotional abuse involves the actions of a

parent that interfere with the healthy personal and social development of a child".

Emotional abuse normally occurs at home or at places where children are cared for. According to "Servamus" (1998 : 30), emotional abuse is found to be less evident to outside observers. As mentioned earlier on the contributing factors to emotional abuse may be ridicule. According to "Servamus" (1998 : 30) emotional abuse includes "verbal insults, threats, belittling, comments and isolation from friends and family".

Some parents like or enjoy seeing their children unhappy. As a result, they might threaten them time and again and threaten them to severe beatings. Automatically children from such families live in fear and they are psychologically tortured, as they do not know what behaviour might appear appealing to their parents. Some researchers, however, argue that some parents emotionally abuse their children for the sake of pleasure. Calam & Franchi (1987 : 185) argue that: "... emotional maltreatment of children appear to give parents pleasure, in addition to enhancing their ability to control them. They enjoy seeing their unhappiness and fear..."

According to Halperin (1979 : 26) the other contributing factor to emotional abuse is "that other parents see in their children elements they dislike. Due to this factor, they emotionally punish their children". This can be illustrated with the mother who is afraid of her own sexuality and who views her innocent daughter's actions as seductive and as a result, emotionally abuse her child.

As compared with other types of abuse, an "emotionally abused child is less evident to outsiders" ("Servamus" 1998 : 30). According to some researchers there are many factors that can be exhibited by an emotionally abused child. According to Halperin (1979 : 27) these include the following:

- they believe that they are worthless or bad and so act out behaviour that confirms these judgements;
- some withdraw from contact with others through excessive daydreaming in the hope of insulating themselves;
- they anticipate all interpersonal relationships to be painful, such as those with their parents, therefore they opt for isolation rather than risk further injury;
- others become hyper aggressive and thus imitate their parents' attitude towards them.

"Servamus" (1998 : 31) agrees with Halperin who states that emotionally abused children are aggressive and depressed. Moreover, they provide a list, which shows the behavioural and physical indicators of emotional abuse. These are indicated in table 2.5

**Table 2.5 Behavioural and physical indicators of an emotionally abused child**

BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS IN CHILD	PHYSICAL INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe depression</li> <li>• Extreme withdrawal or aggressiveness</li> <li>• Overly complaint; too well-mannered; too neat and clean</li> <li>• Extremely attention seeking/pleasing behaviour</li> <li>• Displays extreme inhibition in play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enuresis (bed-wetting) and/or encopresis (soiling of pants) that is non-medical in origin</li> <li>• Frequent psychosomatic, complaints of headaches, nausea, abdominal pains</li> <li>• Child fails to thrive</li> </ul>

(Source: "Servamus" 1998 : 32)

Researchers do not mention the age at which children are mostly emotionally abused. Wagstaff and Kibel (1995 : 369) argue that: "emotional abuse, however, is prevalent in all communities and levels of society because of the ignorance of the elementary needs of the developing child, particularly when the caregivers themselves are victims of inadequate parenting".

#### 2.5.4 Neglect

Neglect is another form of child abuse. Children should be cared for by their parents. Wagstaff and Kibel (1995 : 372) argue that: "leaving children alone without adequate care is a serious and frequent act of abuse which can have disastrous consequences".

Neglect of children entails failure of the parent/caretaker to provide the child with the necessary conditions for living. Green (1980 : 109) defines it as: "failure of the parent/guardian to supply the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, medical care and supervision".

According to Salter and Findlay (1992 : 6) neglect cover problems such as poor hygiene, lack of attention to medical needs, insufficient food and inadequate supervision of children.

Halperin (1979 : 24) on the other hand, defines it as: "parental omissions that endanger the healthy development of youngsters". Wagstaff and Kibel (1995 : 372) also define it as: "persistent failure to provide adequate physical and emotional care of the child where the means are available".

Green (1980 : 110) states that: "failure to provide the child with adequate parenting to ensure the realisation of his potential for normal physical and psychological growth and development is neglect".

When compared with other types of abuse, one can come to the conclusion that neglect frequently entails sins of omission while abuse involves sins of commission (Green 1980 : 110).

Normally the occurrences of neglect takes place in the environment or a place in which a child grows up. It is obvious that the home of a child is the place where neglective acts can happen. Again, the parents or caretaker are the ones who can neglect the child, as they are the one' responsible for his or her upbringing. Halperin (1979 : 25) argues that: "parents are expected to provide supervision for their immature offspring, failure to do so constitute neglect".

Children can be neglected in different ways. According to Halperin (1979 : 21) these include physical neglect, medical neglect, emotional neglect, educational neglect and abandonment.

- **Physical neglect**

This entails failure to supply the necessities of life to the child. These include food, clothing, shelter, general care and reasonable protection from harm and supervision.

- **Medical neglect**

This is defined as "the failure of a parent to provide medical treatment for suspected or diagnosed physical conditions of a child except in those cases in which religious beliefs prescribe a doctor's care".

- **Emotional neglect**

Failure to provide prerequisites for healthy child development through omission rather than through action.

- **Educational neglect**

Failure of a parent to ensure that a child learns at home and at school.

- **Abandonment**

A total rejection of the parent-child relationship.

There are many factors, which cause neglect, but in some cases, one may find that a parent or a caretaker neglects a child due to circumstances prevailing at that time. Green (1980 : 110) argues that: "in many cases, neglect appears unintentionally and closely associated with substandard living conditions and inner-city slum areas".

Drug abuse has been found by many researchers to be one of the causative factors of neglect. Alcohol makes a person ignorant and carefree, as a result, an alcoholic parent will totally neglect his or her child. Green (1980 : 110) argues that: "(neglecting) parents are psychotics or alcoholics and they engage in anti-social activities".

Poor adult-child relationship has also been found to be a causative factor of neglect. A parent, who does not talk to his or her child or guides him or her, is totally neglecting that child.

Neglected children can be identified in a number of ways. Youngsters who are hungry, thin and stealing from others to satisfy their appetites are true examples of neglected children. These children according to Halperin (1979 : 24) "may be thin because they do not get enough to eat, or they may be overweight because their diets rely heavily on starchy food".

Since these children do not or are not given enough to eat, one may find that they encounter developmental problems. According to Malone (1967) in Green (1980 : 42) neglected children are characterised by:

- learning difficulties at school;
- diminished initiative and enjoyment in play;
- limited spoken language;
- concrete thinking;
- literalness and inflexibility;
- non-specific friendliness;
- use of imitative identifications;
- lack of body care and accident proneness;
- poor object permanence.

Halperin (1979 : 27) further adds that neglected children, especially the emotionally neglected children appear unhealthy because of lack of emotional support in their upbringing. He argues that: "emotionally neglected children frequently seem frail and unhealthy. They seem to lack the emotional requirements for healthy growth".

Every child requires a sense of emotional involvement with anybody *in loco-parentis* and, if there is nobody to provide that, that child will experience problems in life. To conclude one may say that neglect does not only affect the child physically, it also hampers his or her growth into a fully responsible adult.

### **2.5.5 Economic abuse**

The last form of abuse for discussion is economic abuse. Economic abuse is often ignored. This type of abuse is mostly common in women. "Servamus" (1998 : 30), however indicates that it has also been found to exist in children. The parent may economically abuse the child either by refusing to give the child the money needed for school activities or secondly, he or she may expect the child to work and support the family, that is, taking his/her role as the father/mother of the house. According to "Servamus" (1998 : 31) economically abused children appear depressed and they lack motivation in almost everything they do.

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, one may say that child abuse has become a source of concern today. Browne, Davies & Stratton, (1988 : 15) say that "child (abuse) regularly makes its way into news broadcasts and the front pages of our daily newspapers". Abuse of children can take many forms as has been shown in this chapter. The different types of abuse should not be confused especially emotional abuse and neglect. Neglect encompasses failure of a parent/caretaker to provide/supply the child with adequate care (Green, 1980 : 109) while emotional abuse may encompass total rejection from a parent or caregiver combined with ridiculing, criticising, or threatening a child. (Salter & Findlay, 1992 : 6).

## CHAPTER 3

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILD ABUSE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The saying goes that today's children are tomorrow's leaders. It is essential for parents to care for their children adequately from the time they are born so that those children develop into fully responsible adults. It has also been proved beyond doubt that a child's basic character is moulded in the first seven years of its life (Durban and Coastal Society for early childhood education - the SA Association for early childhood education, 1985 : 4). The above statement further emphasises the point that early childhood care is essential for the growth of a child. Normally a child lives in two different environments during the first seven years of its life. That is the home-/family environment and the school environment. Generally speaking, the home and the school can be held responsible for either building or distorting a child's life.

The family, however, has been found to be the primary environment in which a child grows up. Louw et. al (1991 : 348) argue that "the child's home is the place that offers the most security and his or her family is still the pivot on which his or her life hinges". In the family a child is taught cultural-societal values and principles of life. He or she is also taught how to love and to relate successfully with other people. Olthuis (1975 : 79) states that a child learns about love in the family. The family is his or her nursery, the child's first school; it is his or her initial world; and his or her launching pad into the big outdoors.

The school on the other hand is regarded as the secondary environment in which a child grows up in. This is so because children from six years of age

spend most of their time at school (Louw et. al, 1991 : 348). The education a child receives at home continues at school. However, one may find that the type of education a child receives at home is different from the one he or she receives at school. The school is more structured and learning that occurs in the classroom is highly ordered. At school, a child also learns certain acceptable and unacceptable norms of society. Gibson (1976 : 409) argues that at school "the child is exposed to a new environment. He or she meets a new authority figure: his or her teacher .... He or she confronts new social pressures ... Through interactions, he or she learns about what to say and what not to say ... how to obtain friendship, respect and affection from other children and from the teacher ... he or she is presented with an array of subject matter and skills to master".

On the contrary, the type of education which a child receives at home is unstructured to a certain extent. There is no formal teacher and learning occurs haphazardly. Charles (1964) in Van der Mey & Neff (1986 : 1) states that the family and the school are responsible for developing a child's personality and helping him or her to relate successfully with other people.

The school and the family can however become the institutes of abuse rather than symbols characterised by love, guidance and warmth. Little (1989 : 217) argues that "the word(s) family and school for most people conjure up strong images of warmth, caring, security and love. However, the facts about families and schools reveal a striking paradox: The family [and the school] are also the societies' most violent institutions".

These changes in the functions and roles of both the family and the school according to many researchers are due to factors such as globalisation in large cities or towns. People crowd in large cities or towns to seek for jobs and this leads to unemployment resulting in the abuse of children. Dubanoski (1984) in Vander Mey & Neff (1986 : 16) states "urbanisation, crowding and poverty are amongst the most underlying factors of abuse". Divorces, marital separation, stepfamilies lead to circumstances where children are more at

risk. Procidano and Fischer (1992 : 72) argue that "stepchildren ... are more likely to be abused by a step-parent than by a biological parent.... Abuse of children is more likely to occur by step relatives e.g. uncles, step-grandparents and through relations with stepsiblings".

Some children prefer being in the streets rather than face the abuse in their families and school ("Next magazine, 1996 : 9). Surprisingly, one may find that street children are normal kids with qualities such as love and kindness. Those qualities, however, are not given chance to develop. Maslow (1954) in Mwamwenda (1995 : 344) argues that "(street children) have an inherent capacity for constructive growth as well as the capacity to exercise qualities such as love, kindness, generosity and honesty. However, such qualities cannot flourish because of inappropriate environment".

It may be concluded that the home and the school are two important environments for the child. These two environments can either mould a child into a responsible adult or contribute towards bad behaviour in a child.

## **1.2 THE CHILD'S EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT**

The child's educational environments include both the family environment and the school environment, that is, the child learns both at home and at school (Olthuis, 1975 : 79 and Louw et. al, 1991 : 348). It is in these two environments that a child is moulded into a responsible, mature adult with the following characteristics (Gerdes, 1988 : 99).

- **Realistic perception.**

A mature person is able to set himself or herself reasonable goals and laughs at himself or herself when he or she has done something stupid.

- **Efficiency and task centredness**

This implies being fully committed in whatever one does and being in a position to do work efficiently.

- **Decision making and a focus of control.**

Being in a position to make reasonable decisions concerning life.

- **Acceptance of responsibility.**

A person can be responsible for any task. That is, make sure a certain task is carried out and completed successfully.

- **The capacity for intimacy, love and concern.**

A person is able to accept other people around him or her and wants to be associated with them. He or she is also concerned about them.

- **Self-acceptance.**

A mature person accepts himself or herself. That is, he or she knows all his or her weak and strong points.

- **The need for solitude.**

A mature person likes to be alone sometimes and fantasize about certain things in life. However, this does not mean that he or she is isolated and lonely.

- **Zest for life.**

A mature person is eager to live. If he or she is under stress, he or she is able to look for alternatives that can relieve him or her from stress instead of seeing stress as a threat.

- **A unifying philosophy of life.**

A mature person knows his or her past and present. As a result, he or she has goals for the future.

Despite the underlying factor that both the home and the school can mould a child into a responsible mature adult, one may find that those two institutions have different functions and roles to perform in the upbringing of a child. As such, the researcher would like to discuss those two institutions separately.

### **1.2.1 Family environment**

What immediately comes into mind when the concept "family" is mentioned is the composition of parents, sisters, brothers and relatives. Little et. al (1992 : 321) defines family as "a group consisting of one or two parents, their children and close relatives ... all people descended from a common ancestor. Different cultures, however, perceive the concept "family" differently. For example the African culture views it as the composition of a mother, father, children and relatives. On the contrary, Western culture will view a family as the composition of two biological parents and their offspring (Gibson, 1976 : 13). Whatever the case may be, a family is held responsible for the growth of a child. Olthuis (1975 : 80) states "... parents must guide, lead, educate, steer and nurture their children so that they come to see the norms that hold for life and so that they will be able to bear the responsibility of living according to these norms".

Herman (1992 : 184) further supports Olthuis by stating that by nature of birth, parents are the caretakers of their children. They (parents) should do everything for their children to ensure their smooth growth. He argues "parents are natural caretakers, protectors and educators of their children. When one or both parents fail in one of these areas, their children are immediately placed in a situation in which they are at risk and in which they may more easily become the victims of another maladjusted adult or fall prey to other adverse circumstance.

Munves, Fernandez and Fleck (1965 : 15) emphasise that "doing things together in a family promotes understanding and unity among the family members and other people".

It is also in the family, where certain things are taught to the child. For instance, parents are expected to teach their children moral values that are acceptable in their individual cultures. Gibson (1976 : 13) states "the family is the primary transmitter and interpreter of culture". It is also at home where a child is taught how to relate well with other people. Munves et al (1965 : 7) point out that "at home we discover how to enjoy living in constant relationships with others. It is in the home environment that children are taught the essentiality of making allowances and adjustments for other people".

Giamatti (1989 : 254) expands on this aspect: "home is an English word virtually impossible to translate ... It is a concept, not a place. It is a state of mind where self-definition starts. It is origins – the mixture of time and place and smell and weather wherein one first realises one is an original, perhaps like others especially those one loves .... Home ... remains in mind as a place where reunion, if it were ever to occur, would happen ... it is about restoration of the right relations among things ...".

The family has also been found to provide a sense of security for a child. A child who grows up in a good family is able to identify his or her origin without difficulties. Olthuis (1975 : 79) supports the above point by arguing that in the family a child learns to express his or her feelings, know himself or herself and to find his or her identity. Hence without the family, a young child is unprotected against the world.

It is in the family that primary basic skills like respect and love are taught to the child and these skills are further emphasised at school by the teachers. To strengthen the case for the family Kadushin (1974) in Westman (1979 : 107) summarises the functions of the family as follows:

- To provide an income that will meet the needs of the child for food, clothing, shelter, education, health care and social recreational activities.
- To provide love, security, affection and the emotional support necessary for the healthy emotional development of the child.
- To provide the necessary stimulation for intellectual social and moral development.
- To help socialise the child through teaching behaviour that is customary and acceptable to the social group and through disciplining the child.
- To protect the child from physical, emotional and social harm.
- To maintain family interaction on a stable satisfying basis so that an effort is made to meet the significant needs of all members of the family and to resolve discomforts, frictions and dissatisfaction and to meet emotional needs through accepting affectionate responses.
- To provide a fixed place of abode, so as to legitimise the child's membership in the larger social group.

Having outlined the functions and roles of a family as related to the child, the school as another environment where a child grows up will be discussed.

## 1.2.2 School environment

According to the Little et. al (1992 : 808), school is defined as "an institution for educating people especially children".

Fowler and Fowler (1969 : 476) defines school as the "institution for educating boys or girls or both or for giving instructions in a special subject... circumstances or occupation serving to discipline or instruct".

From these two definitions, it can be deduced that school refers to an institution for educating people.

Many researchers, however, regard the school as the secondary environment in which a child grows up in. This may be due to the fact that the basic skills that are taught to the child at home are further emphasised at school. Gibson (1976 : 25) argues that "the primary transmitter and interpreter of culture to the young child is the family (so obviously the school will stand secondary)".

Normally, the school is composed of teachers (as authority figures) and learners. The teachers at school are responsible for transmitting knowledge and insights to the pupils (Child, 1981 : 99). At school, a teacher is regarded as a leader - somebody who should guide and lead the students (Gibson, 1976 : 448). Gibson further argues that for a teacher to be fit to transfer certain skills to the learners, he or she must have the following characteristics:

- **Appreciation for diversity.**

A teacher should or always be willing to hear new ideas from either other people or books and should encourage full and open debate in class.

- **Willingness to be energetically accountable.**

Conflicts are necessary in any educational system, but they can be resolved beneficially if the teacher is willing to negotiate.

- **Recognition that some conflicts are irreconcilable.**

A teacher should be able to handle conflicts intelligently and know how to prevent violence.

At school a child lives with students from different cultures and through socialisation, he or she learns more about different cultures. It is also in the school environment that children are taught to acknowledge different cultures. Caudil (1969) in Gibson (1976 : 19) argues that "through socialisation, certain patterns of behaviour characteristics of (different) cultures are transmitted from one child to the other through school as a media".

The self-concept of the child is one aspect which is developed at school. According to Coopersmith as cited by Howcroft (1993) in Mwamwenda (1995 : 363), self concept refers to "the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself or herself; it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself or herself to be capable, significant and worthy. By interacting at school with teachers, peers and the various tasks and responsibilities, a child's self concept is developed. Louw et al (1992 : 340) further support the above point by stating that "schools help children to develop emotionally, morally and in all aspects of reality".

Avenant (1990 : 385) summarises the functions of school as follows:

- **Education regarding religious development.**

The school must give its teaching a Christian character. For example, in a history class, a teacher must demonstrate the hand of God in our national

life. Biology and science must teem with opportunities to illustrate the wonders of God.

- **Promotion of healthy life and worldviews.**

It is apparent for every school to assist pupils in constructing a positive philosophy of life through normal subject tuition. The influence of negative ideologies should be counteracted, but no teacher has the right to impose his or her own viewpoint on pupils, especially if this viewpoint is reactionary or extreme.

- **Promote patriotism**

Almost every school subject lends itself to a certain degree to the cultivation of patriotism in its pupils. The history period teems with opportunities to examine aspects such as the national festivals, tradition and the like. The science syllabus lends itself to bringing our beautiful scenery, nature reserves and protected plants and animals to the pupils' attention. Language teachers can talk about language pollution and gymnastics teachers about nature pollution. Furthermore it is every teacher's duty to discuss aspects such as discipline, obedience to school rules, and national laws, respect for the property of others, vandalism with his or her pupils.

- **Promote healthy human relationships**

A truly educated person must be able to live together with his or her fellow men in peace and harmony. Therefore, each teacher should through his or her teaching of any particular subject attempt to impress the importance of human relationships.

- **Promote economic independence**

Every school should make a contribution to encouraging thrift and carefulness in its pupils.

- **Promote physical welfare**

Schools should make students aware of dangers they might be exposed to and how to avoid those dangers.

- **Promote healthy school relationships**

School is responsible for helping students build healthy school relations. Schools must educate pupils to build a healthy pride in their school and eliminate negative dispositions such as truancy.

- **Promote healthy cultural interest**

All schools contribute to the cultural and aesthetic education of their pupils.

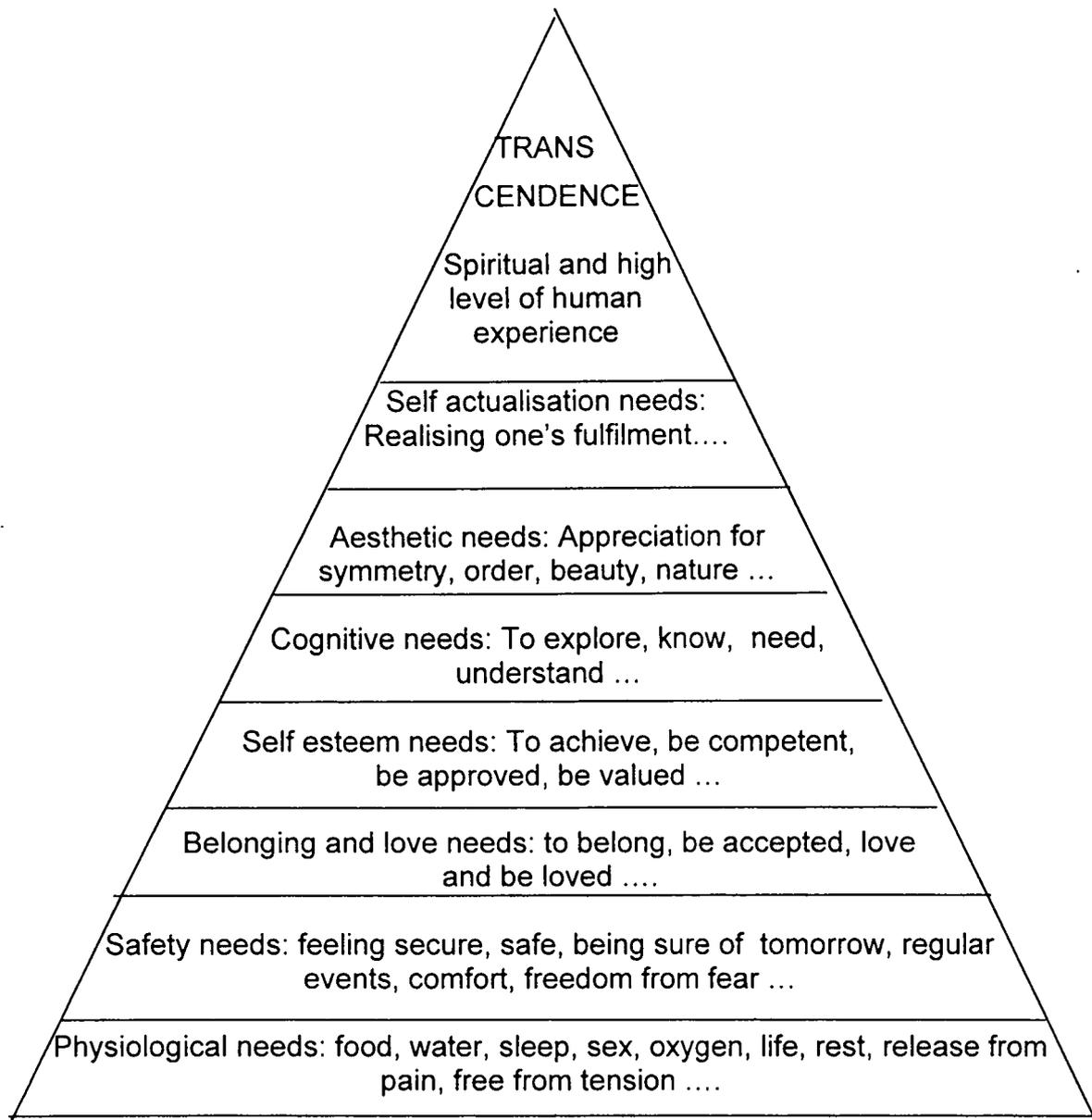
- **Promote healthy self-concept**

Children are taught to construct healthy self-images. By treating pupils with respect and regard, a teacher can prevent feelings of inferiority and frustration. In addition teachers can help to build self-respect and healthy self-concept. Further by pointing out to the pupils that each of them is unique and distinctive and has talents in some direction.

Given the above information, one can conclude that children's educational environments are very influence on their behaviour either negatively or positively. Wiseman (1969 : 3) argues that "the child's home, his or her parents and immediate family, his or her neighbourhood and the school most intimately and busily interact with his or her personality, his or her life and behaviour".

Therefore, it follows that an environment which is very poor and abusive will stunt the intellectual growth of a child beyond the point of remedy (Wiseman, 1969 : 4). Child (1981 : 201) underlines the fact that an environment, which is very poor, is not conducive to the development of a child. He argues that "an adverse environment is relatively more devastating for the intellectual development of a child". On the contrary, a rich environment will contribute towards improving the intellectual growth of a child (Wiseman, 1969 : 4). The conducive school and home environment can enable a child to develop the hierarchy of needs essential for a mature person. Such needs are illustrated by Maslow as in Mwamwenda (1995 : 345) figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1** Personality development based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs.



(Source: Mwamwenda 1995 : 346).

However, the school and the family can perform completely different roles. Apart from being responsible for the upbringing of the child, they can be institutes of abuse. This will be shown in the following section.

### 3.3 FAMILY AND SCHOOL AS INSTITUTIONS OF ABUSE

The home and the school environment can be found to be very harmful to the child's development especially if they are not conducive to his or her development. This has been confirmed by Doyle (1994 : 28) indicating ways in which children can be abused both at their homes and in the school environment.

#### 3.3.1 Family

Ideally a family is an institution charged with the responsibility of child rearing (De La Rey, et. al, 1997 : 159). However, throughout history, families have been found to abuse their children. (De Nause (1974) in Calam and Franchi, 1987 : 1). Theatre quotes Spiro (in Franchi and Calam 1978 : 10) on the rights of a parent over a child during Roman times: The parent had the right to

- kill the child;
- sell the child;
- have the child adopted;
- marry the child;
- divorce the child;
- control his/her child's possessions.

It is not surprising that today some families have become the institutes of abuse rather than the places of "joy, rest and authenticity" (Olthuis, 1975 : 82). Parents today still harm their children and as a result, it is difficult for abused children to find peace anywhere since they are abused in their own homes. Herman (1992 : 84) argues that "parents can cause their children great harm and assisting abused children may be difficult because the children are damaged in the privacy of their own homes. The very home which would normally have been a safe haven".

Consequently, children leave their homes in search for peace and love.

Le Roux (1993 : 59) argues that street children have left their homes because they have been severely abused by their parents. Surprisingly, when interviewed street children prefer being in the streets rather than face the abuse in their families (SABC2 "Inside info", April 1998). This again shows how some families are dangerous for the children's growth. Bagley (s.a.) in Schlesinger (1986 : 30) argues that "child abuse is very much a family problem rather than an act performed by strangers". Bagley (s.a) as in Schlesinger (1986 : 30) further argues that most children suffer from abuse at the hands of their parents. Bentovim (1992 : 2) further supports Bagley as in Schlesinger (1986 : 30) by stating that "the family (of a child) is an institution prone to violence rather than care".

Breiner (1990 : 239) on the other hand, shows how some families simply abandon their children as a form of abuse instead of caring for them. He states that as a form of abuse "some parents do not consider the child to have personal value and pay no attention to him or her. The child is (then) left to his or her own devices, with a variety of other (who might even abuse him or her more) raising him or her and functioning as surrogate parents".

Abuse in the family can, however, take many forms. These include physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional and economic abuse. These forms of abuse will be discussed below.

### **3.3.1.1 Physical abuse in the family**

It has been mentioned earlier on that physical abuse refers to the use of physical force intended to hurt the child (Gil, 1970 : 6). David (1993 : 18), however, gives another definition of physical abuse of the child. He defines it as the "physical injury to the child including deliberate poisoning where there

is definite knowledge or a reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented".

Most families have been found to physically abuse their children (Breiner, (1990 : 240). A parent who punishes a child by severely beating that child is physically abusing that child. This however does not mean that parents should not punish their children. It means that parents must be considerate when they punish their children. They should not injure them in any way (Department of Health (GB), 1988 : 30).

Some parents when hurt or angry with the child, may decide to lower the children in boiling water. Parents who smoke cigarettes may also burn their children with cigarettes when they are angry with the child (Verschoor, Fick, Oosthuizen & Jonck, 1989 : 61 and Lee, 1978 : 15).

Obviously, the children tortured in these way (physically) experience serious problems in life since some of them may even become wary of adults for life (The Servamus, 1998 : 31).

Physical abuse of children according to some researchers is inflicted on a child by a parent/caretaker. Halperin (1979 :21) argues that "the physical indications of physically abused children are a clear indication that the abuser is the parent of the child or a caretaker". This is so, because the marks possessed by physically abused children may be on different areas of the body suggesting the child has been struck from several directions by somebody who lives with that child permanently.

There are many reasons behind parents abusing their children physically. These may include stress among other things. Cruz and Essen (1994 : 8) state: "parents who physically abuse their children have been found to manifest higher levels of stress from multiple sources like unemployment and financial difficulties and are deficient in coping skills to deal effectively with

such stress". Cruz and Essen further argue that things like social isolation and low self-esteem can result in frustrating other parents and urging them to abuse their children physically.

Due to frustrations, parents can expect their children to perform certain parental tasks and failure to do so result in physical abuse. Cruz and Essen (1994 : 8) argue that "physically abusive parents have been observed as having frustrated dependency needs. This dynamic underlies the concept of the role reversal in which the parents unrealistically expect their child(ren) to satisfy their needs like nurturing and housekeeping".

In conclusion, it can be stated that the children who are physically abused appear depressed and they sometimes or more often cry when approached by adults (The Servamus 1998 : 31 & Lee, 1978 : 18).

### **3.3.1.2 Sexual abuse in the family**

Apart from physically abusing a child, the family can also abuse the child sexually. Elliot (1980) in Doyle (1994 : 10) defines sexual abuse as "any sexual exploitation of a child under the age of 16 for the sexual pleasure or gratification of an adult or significantly older person (or of the same age or slightly younger than the victim)". Issues such as incest, which implies the acts of sexual intercourse between relatives (Porter 1984 : 3) are a clear indication that sexual abuse within the family exists. Gillham (1991 : 16) even refers to this type of abuse as "intrafamilial abuse" to show that it is something which occurs among people of the same blood.

Sexual abuse within the family according to the Department of Health (G.B.) (1988 : 30) may range from penetration, oral/genital contact with a child, anal or vaginal intercourse, exploitation for pornography and exposure to pornography. Elliot in Doyle (1994 : 10) further adds to the above list by arguing that sexual abuse may include "obscene telephone calls, indecent exposure and voyeurism such as spying on a child, undressing in front of a

child, attempted rape or child prostitution". Elliot further argues that sexual abuse of a child may be a single incident or events which occur over a number of times.

The intra-familial abuse may be attributed to a number of factors. A failure of one partner to meet the sexual needs of his or her partner may lead to the latter abusing the child sexually (Boon (s.a. as in Schlesinger, (1986 : 186) to satisfy himself or herself. O'Hagan (1989 : 113) further supports the above view by arguing that "the person who has no satisfactory sexual relationship with his or her partner may resort to the child". Schetky and Green (1988 : 34) argue that parents who have problems with their relationship deviate to the child for satisfaction. They state that "such parents become sexually attracted to their children when their adult relationships become conflictual".

The other cause of sexual abuse in the family is severe communication problems within the family. A parent whose family is characterised by severe communication problems stands a better chance of sexually abusing his or her child since the child will have no one to reveal his or her problems to and as a result, nobody will ever know of the abuse (Dale, Davies, Morrison & Waters, 1986 : 117)

Alcohol abuse has also been cited by many researchers as a causative factor of sexual abuse amongst children. Parents who abuse alcohol tend to see their children as people they can have sexual relationships with instead of caring and nurturing them. Schetky and Green (1988 : 33) and Doyle (1994 : 51) have even concluded that there is a link between child sexual abuse and alcohol abuse. De Young (1982) as in Doyle (1994 : 51) also finds that perpetrators of child sexual abuse committed their offences while under the influence of alcohol.

Parents who are socially and physically isolated are found in most cases to abuse their children (Schetky and Green, 1988 : 34). A person who is isolated has nobody to discuss his or her problems with and as a result, when frustrated, he or she may abuse the child sexually. O'Hagan (1989 : 113) argues that parent(s) who sexually abuse their children, are "... pathetic, weak, and socially isolated individuals who had never had any real bond with the child". Doyle (1994 : 53) also argues that parents who abuse their children have in common "low self esteem, difficulty in forming relationships and a sense of emotional isolation".

The last causative factor of child's sexual abuse of children is domineering and tyrannical parents (Schetky and Green, 1988 : 33). The sexually abusing perpetrator maintains his or her dominant position in the family or over the victim (whom he or she abuses) through violence or threats. Perpetrators of sexual abuse of children within the family (especially fathers) who lack adequate knowledge concerning adolescents' growth may be sexually aroused by their behaviours and as a result, find themselves sexually abusing their children (Porter, 1984 : 9). Hundreds of men who are accused in high courts today for abusing the children sexually are found to be the children's (victims) closest relatives if not their biological parents or caretakers. Dale et. al (1986 : 31) argue that "it is an unpleasant reality that the vast proportion of children who are seriously physically assaulted and sexually abused are victims within their family environment".

Normally sexually abused children are characterised by having inappropriate sex knowledge (Servamus, 1998 : 29). This implies that they might have more knowledge about sexual matters inappropriate to their age.

Therefore, it can be concluded that sexual abuse can be harmful to the well being of a child as has been shown above.

### 3.3.1.3 Neglect in the family

Apart from both physical and sexual abuse, children can also be neglected in their homes. David (1993 : 17) defines neglect as "the persistent or severe neglect of a child", such as, starvation, exposure to danger, which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development including non-organic failure to thrive. Neglect of children in a family may include many forms. These are lack of education, neglect, medical neglect, social neglect and economic neglect (Halperin, 1979 : 20).

According to Halperin, (1979 : 20) an educationally neglected child is one whose parents are less concerned about his or her schoolwork. The child goes to and comes back from school without the parents' concern. According to the "Department of Health (G.B.) (1998 : 30) educationally neglected children are characterised by a "persistent failure to attend school" since there is nobody at home who motivates the child to go to school.

Medical neglect may involve a parent or a caretaker's failure to take a child to a doctor or a clinic when sick (Halperin, 1979 : 21). This on its own is a form of abuse because parents or caretakers are not supposed to neglect their children. The law forces them (parents or anybody in *loco parentis* to protect their children from any dangers they may be exposed to. The International Declaration of Children's rights which was adopted in the United Nations in 1979 states that: "children have a right to be given enough to eat, to have a decent place to live as well as to play, and to receive good medical care when they are ill".

Abuse in the family may even go to the extent that children are left without food by their parents. These may be due to unemployment, which result in poverty in most families. Zigler (1993 : 15) argues that the ramifications of living in poverty are numerous, including assaults on children's physical and mental health, (neglect) and the other forms of abuse by their caretakers.

The other contributing factors to neglect may include physical illness (Doyle, 1994 : 52) and lower socio-economic status of parents (Schetky and Green, 1988 : 33). Parents who are physically ill may neglect their children in that they cannot always be there for children when they are needed. Parents/caretakers characterised by lower socio-economic status may even not be in a position to provide enough for the children and as a result, abuse in the form of neglect occurs since parents will tend to omit some of the child's necessities.

Generally speaking, the children who are neglected portray the following characteristics:

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self-esteem
- Neurotic behaviour
- No social relationships
- Pining away from either home, school or both
- Compulsive stealing/scavenging (David, 1993 : 95)

It can be concluded that neglect has a serious impact on rearing a child.

#### **3.3.1.4 Emotional abuse in the family**

Children can also be abused emotionally in the home setting. David (1993 : 18) refers to emotional abuse as "the severe adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child caused by persistent or severe

emotional ill treatment or rejection". Emotional abuse in the family may include preferring other children in the family to others (David, 1993 : 8). A parent who does not love his or her children equally, that is if he or she prefers child A over child B will obviously do more things for child A and neglect child B to a certain extent. The parent might even scold child B if he or she does something wrong. Such a child who is disliked will ultimately be isolated from other children especially the ones loved by the parents and he or she will not see himself or herself as part of that family. This type of abuse is referred to as emotional abuse. (Verschoor et. al, 1989 : 61).

Verschoor further argues that parents of a family, who dress a boy in female clothes is emotionally abusing that child because that particular child is not comfortable in those clothes. However, because of fear of his parents, he will not voice out feelings. In addition parents of a family who expects their children to do work not appropriate to the child's age are emotionally abusing that child since the child is denied the experiences of childhood. Dale et. al (1986 : 186) argue that "a child who is expected to become a little mother to younger siblings or to look after a parent is emotionally abused because he or she is denied the childhood developmental experiences".

Emotional abuse in the family may be due to maladaptive communication patterns (Cruz and Essen, 1994 :10). This refers to ineffective communications in which the family members have difficulty expressing their real feelings and thoughts openly, directly and respectfully. So, if it happens that in a family, children are not permitted to voice their feelings openly, they (children) may end up isolating themselves from their parents and emotional abuse thus occur. Such children are characterised by what is termed "children-should-be-seen-and-not-heard" according to Cruz and Essen (1994 : 10).

Children who are emotionally abused lack motivation and they tend to isolate themselves and are isolated from other people.

To conclude the researcher may say that abusing children emotionally is dangerous for the well being of a child.

### **3.3.1.5 Economic abuse in the family**

The last form of abuse which can occur in the family is economic abuse. This type of abuse is mostly ignored by many researchers. However, according to the "Servamus" (1998 : 30)", a family can economically abuse the child by refusing to give a child money for educational purposes., "The Servamus" further states that economic abuse in the family may be caused by unemployment of parents or due to the fact those parents are over protective. Doyle (1994 : 47) also argues that unemployment is a causative factor for various forms of abuse.

In conclusion it has been indicated that in certain instances the child's family can be very dangerous to the child's life. Davies (1986 : 32) even argues that families can be systematically and sadistically cruel to their children instead of referring to strong images of warmth, caring and security (Little, 1989 : 217). To emphasise the cruelty of some parents to their children (Dale, Davies, Morrison & Waters 1986 : 32) refers to the story of Heidi Koseda in Britain who was locked up in a dismal dark room by her parents and literally starved to death. The little child however, tried to keep alive by eating wallpaper, which was of no use. This again shows how cruel some parents can be.

Little (1989 : 218) summarises the factors, which can contribute to violence in the home, that is, those factors that may urge some parents to stop abusing their children:

- **Time at risk**

The proportion of time spent interacting with family members are high, thus, there are many opportunities for disagreements or confrontations that escalate into violence.

- **Range of activities and interests**

There are many occasions from child rearing to leisure – over, which there are, disputes, which might lead to abuse of children.

- **Intensity of involvement**

What happens in families is important to people. How family members should act and how things should be done can be a source of intense disagreement which can lead to abuse of children.

- **Impinging activities**

Conflicts are apt to arise because many actions in families result in one person losing while another gains. Which TV programme to watch, which car to buy, where to go on vacations, and the like can become sources of dispute.

- **Right to influence**

Family members usually imply the right to influence values, attitudes and behaviour of others. Parents expect to be able to control their children. Failure to have these expectations met can initiate or intensify violence on children.

- **Age and sex discrepancies**

The family is made up of very different individuals, especially during the child rearing years. The family often becomes the arena of conflict rooted in the cultural differences between the young and the adults. For example, the adults might expect their child(ren) to do certain things in a way which is not convenient for the child and if a child refuses, violence occurs.

- **Family privacy**

The belief that whatever happens in families is private and not the concern of outsiders isolates families from outside control and promote abuse.

- **High level of stress**

The changes in the structure of the families like the birth of kids, maturation of kids, ageing, retirement and death and similar events that affect individuals such as unemployment, illness, can increase the susceptibility of conflict and violence.

- **Socialisation into violence and it's generalisation**

The family is often the place where most people first see and experience violence particularly in the form of physical punishment. Love can become associated with violence. Children can learn that those who love them are also those who hit and have the right to hit. Therefore, that early experience with physical punishment lays the groundwork for the normative legitimacy of all types of violence but especially intra-family violence.

- **Normative approval**

Cultural norms, both legal and informal are sometimes quite accepting of family violence. For example, historically in western culture, it has been legally acceptable for parents to use violence against their children.

- **Ascribed roles**

Family relationships, usually reflect and reproduce social inequalities. Roles and responsibilities are often assigned according to age and sex rather than according to interest or competence. In addition, there are widespread sexist beliefs about the "proper" role of family members in decision making and even the appropriateness of violence directed at others to enforce domination.

- **Involuntary membership**

Families are relatively hard to leave even when the situation is violent. This is obviously true for young children, but it is often the case also for spouses, especially women who may become "trapped" by social, emotional, economic or legal contingencies.

### **3.3.2 School**

Apart from educating a child into a mature responsible adult (Goldstein, Apter & Harootunian, 1984 : 203) the school can perform a different role completely. It can be an institute of child abuse. Gil (1970 : viii) further supports this point by arguing that "children are being abused physically, emotionally, (sexually, economically and neglected) not only in their own homes, but also in the public domain, in schools and in other child care settings ..." Most children today even prefer to be in the streets rather than face the abuse at schools. The school can therefore also provoke delinquent behaviour. Eliot and Voss

(1974) as in Goldstein et. al (1984 : 202) argue that "(Due to abuse) the school has become a critical generating milieu for delinquency ... it creates ... all the necessary conditions for aggressive or disruptive behaviours".

Eliot and Voss (1974) as in Goldstein et al (1984 : 202) further argue that "a youngster commitment to violent behaviour is largely a consequence of negative school experience". It can therefore be deduced from the above arguments that a child who is abused at school will definitely resort to bad behaviour. Abuse in the home environment, as well as abuse at school can take various forms namely physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. School children can either be abused by their teachers in the school environment or by other students (David, 1993 : 57). These forms will be shown in 3.3.2.1.

### **3.3.2.1 Physical abuse at school**

Children can also experience physical abuse at school. This may range from severe beating of the pupil by teachers to giving students assignments, which are above their age. However, punishment in schools should not be equated with abuse. A teacher can punish a pupil without abusing him or her. But once the teacher physically injures a child, not by accident but in anger or deliberately it is termed physical abuse (Gil, 1970 : 50).

Apart from beating students, a teacher can also physically abuse students at school by instructing them to do work which is degrading or above their age. This may for example include instructing a twelve-year-old girl to dig a toilet pit. This work is on its own hard or difficult and a twelve year old child can in no way be expected to do it.

Surprisingly enough, teachers are not the only people who can abuse the children physically at schools. Some students, however, are potential abusers of other children at school. David (1993 : 57) argues that "physical abuse sometimes happens in schools in the form of bullying (of some

students over other students). One may find that at school, there are some students who may like to bully other students and beat them if they do not act according to their liking. David (1993 : 58) further states that "boys are likely to employ physical and verbal bullying while girls employ verbal bullying".

There are various reasons that might cause teachers to abuse students at school. For example, students who are always late for school might urge their teachers to physically punish them severely. A teacher can do this with the intention of decreasing the likelihood of future occurrences. However, many researchers have observed that physical punishment does not obliterate abnormal behaviour, instead, it promotes it. Hyman (1978) and Maures (1974) in (Goldstein et al, 1984 : 67) also argue that "corporal punishment fails to yield sustained suppression of inappropriate behaviour. It increases the likelihood that the youngster will behave more aggressive in other settings". Maccoby and Levin (1957) in Child (1981 : 93) agree with this argument. They state that "physical punishment fail to eliminate unwanted behaviour rather it promotes it".

Children who are physically abused at school may even develop a negative attitude towards school as a whole since they view it as a place of threat or discomfort. Halperin (1979 : 101) states "fear of physical (abuse) causes many children to withdraw from school. It stifles their creativity and robs them if the opportunity to learn self-control and self "discipline".

Apart from being truant, physically abused children also appear aggressive and wary of adults (Servamus, 1998 : 31).

### 3.3.2.2 Sexual abuse at school

Students can also experience sexual abuse at school. Nowadays the media often reports instances of teachers who abuse students sexually at school. Doyle (1994 : 28) even state that sexual abuse of children is a worldwide problem, which can occur in any setting. Sgroi (1982 : 13) argues that the perpetrators of child sexual abuse is likely to be someone in the child's own family or someone within the child's daily sphere of activities. Sgroi's argument therefore emphasises the fact that a school teacher can also be a perpetrator of child sexual abuse as he or she is the person the child spend most of his or her time with at school.

There are many factors, which can be attributed to teachers abusing students at school. It has been argued that perpetrators of child sexual abuse can include people who have inadequate knowledge concerning adolescent behaviour and become sexually aroused by their behaviour (Porter, 1984 : 9). The employment of unqualified teachers who have little knowledge concerning teenage growth may also give rise to incidents of abuse.

On the other hand, some researchers argue that people who were sexually abused as children stand a better chance of sexually abusing other people. Zigler (1980) in Calam and Franchi (1987 : 5) argue that although not all (sexually) abused children become abusing parents/adults or abusing teachers appear to have been victims of deprivation and abuse themselves. Schetky and Green (1988 : 35) also state that perpetrators of sexual abuse are characterised by a background of sexual victimisation. The other type of abuse which can be practised at school is emotional abuse.

### 3.3.2.3 Emotional abuse at school

Children are afraid of people who yell in anger or scowl constantly (Gibson, 1976 : 16). Therefore, if a teacher likes to insult students or call them by names (for example, "stupid fool" in class), one may find that such students do not enjoy school since they see it as a place of frustrations and loneliness. According to Krugman (1993 : 587) such students' academic performance even drop. Those students will be found in most cases to dislike answering questions in class since they know how their teachers would react to their responses. Gibson (1976 : 118) argues that emotional abuse creates high levels of anxiety in students – occasionally, a child will become so inhibited that he or she is too frightened to answer or to ask any question – even to ask for permission to use the toilet.

The factors that may urge a teacher to emotionally abuse students may include, among other things, inability of students to perform in a way that the teacher expects. Gil (1970 : 32) states "a child who fails to perform in a way to make the teacher feel good ... becomes an evil environment so to speak. Anger, resentment and fury are aroused in the teacher and emotional abuse thus occurs".

### 3.3.2.4 Neglect at school

Children can also be neglected at school. Normally, the teacher stands a better chance of neglecting the children since he or she is the one with whom students identify. The parents of students also see the teacher as the person who should guide and lead their children. Avenant (1990 : 377) states "every teacher is responsible ... for the welfare of a child placed in his or her care. If he looks on silently while a child needing assistance is led to destruction, as an adult he is co-responsible and will have to answer for his actions before God".

If a teacher turns his or her back on students, it is regarded as neglect since his or her work evolves around helping those students to realise their capabilities and develop into responsible adults.. Louw et. al(1991 : 341) argues that "if inadequate encouragement and support are absent and if children are unable to cope with their feelings of inferiority, they develop feelings of inferiority and develop a negative attitude towards school".

Steyn (1984 : 29) further supports the above point by arguing that "the teacher's task is to guide children to overcome an egocentric and egoistic attitude and to accept responsibilities". If a teacher decides not to do this, one may find that students develop into adults who are not responsible at all.

If again a teacher does not approach each student differently in the classroom as students are unique individuals who need to be approached differently, (Avenant, 1990 : 200) it can be regarded as an abusive act since the student as a personal being would not be enhanced (Steyn, 1984 : 153).

### **3.3.3 Interpretation**

In conclusion, the researcher emphasises that the child's educational environments (home and school) can in certain instances be very dangerous. Children need love, security and warmth and if those things are not provided either at their homes or at schools they can end up running away from their homes to the streets and become street children.

## **3.4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILD ABUSE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Due to the arguments raised in 3.3 one can argue that there is a relationship between child abuse and academic performance. This will be further discussed.

Throughout history, child abuse has been found to have a negative impact on the child whether the abuse is being physical, sexual, emotional, economical or neglect. Children exposed to abuse have been found to have little hope of growing into happy, healthy, competent adults (Browne, Davies and Stratton, 1988 : 203). In the school situation, abused children have been found to portray certain characteristics, which cause them to underachieve. Leiter and Johnson (1997 : 564) argue that child (abuse) is widely believed to be closely related to poor school performance. Several studies report high rates of school problems among maltreated children for example (Eckenrode, Rowe, Laird and Brathwarte, (1995 : 1128). The behavioural abused children will be discussed in 3.4.1.

### **3.4.1 Characteristics related to underachievement**

Underachievement in schools is attributed to a number of factors (Du Toit in Kapp, 1991 : 24). These may include among others, low self concept/esteem, misbehaviour, inadequate language development, mental retardation, depression, negativism, lack of motivation and being fearful. The impact of each characteristic will be discussed below.

#### **3.4.1.1 Low self concept**

Self concept refers to "the totality of the perceptions that we have about ourselves – our attitudes towards ourselves and the language we use to describe ourselves" (Child, 1981 : 187). A person with a low self-concept is not confident with himself or herself at all. He or she tends to doubt everything he or she does. His or her dignity is low and he or she sometimes debates whether living is worthwhile or not. Children who are abused or who have been abused have been found to have a low self-concept (Parton, 1985 : 66). If such people are placed in a classroom situation, one may find that he or she is not competent at all. He or she does not want to respond in the classroom if a certain question is asked because of fear that if he or she responds incorrectly, the other students will ridicule him or her. As a result,

schoolwork suffers and underachievement thus occurs. Browne et. al (1988 : 209) argue that "a lack of self-concept (poor self-concept) and fear of failure may be well another reason that these children underachieve in schools". Parton (1985 : 166) further argues that "abused children score lower than the non-abused across a range of variables including height, weight .... and school achievement".

Children with a low self-concept have also been found to be less ambitious and they tend not to care about their future. They do not exert themselves in their schoolwork. Whitmore (1980) as quoted by Booyse in Kapp (1991 : 151) argues that a poor self-concept (portrayed by abused children) is associated with school under-achievement. On the other hand Leiter and Johnson (1997 : 564) argue that "the combination of trauma of maltreatment and the resulting experiences of betrayal and powerlessness can lead to diminished self concept ... problems in managing anger and mistrust of adults and authority figures. All these share a clear potential to weaken the child's ties to school (and as a result, underachieve).

Based on these arguments on self-concept and academic performance, many people may conclude that child abuse and poor self-concept are cause and effect. This according to many researchers is not true. The two concepts are just found to be associated with one another. Whitmore (1980) as quoted by Booyse in Kapp (1991 : 151) further illustrates that "the association between underachievement and unrealistic self-concept should not be seen as cause-and-effect but rather an associated event". This implies that underachievement is not a necessarily result of a poor self-concept but it is related to it.

Mwamwenda (1995 : 311) also advocates the point that a low self-concept affects a child's performance at school. In his study, he shows how a positive self-concept is associated with achievement. He states that "a pupil with a positive self concept stands a better chance of performing than a pupil with a negative self concept." Child (1981 : 53) further argues that "the better the self

concept ... the higher the achievement" illustrating how a person with a low self concept stands a higher risk of underachieving.

Since many teachers and researchers are aware that a poor self concept is associated with low academic performance, many teachers or rather educators today have become increasingly interested in the ability of schools to enhance students' self concepts as a means to end academic frustration (Reck, 1980) in Mwamwenda (1995 : 31).

#### **3.4.1.2 Misbehaviour**

Abused children have been found to be characterised by misbehaviour. This may include to a larger extent destructive behaviour (Breiner, 1990 : 232). Leiter & Johnson (1997 :564) further emphasise the point that abused children exhibit destructive behaviour which cause them to academically underachieve at school: "Abused children may apply what they have learned about violence at home to their school lives developing disruptive behaviours that may interfere with their learning".

A concise example in this case can be drawn from a physically abused child. Such a child may portray aggressive behaviour. If then placed in a classroom situation, he or she might be very aggressive towards other pupils in the classroom and among his or her peers. (Leiter and Johnson, 1997 : 565). Leiter and Johnson (1997 : 566) further illustrate that such a behaviour might cause a child not to accommodate other people and at the same time be very bullying. Automatically the academic performance of such a child will fall below normal since she or he will not be willing to share his or her ideas with other students (group work) and to get different ideas from different students.

Apart from being aggressive an abused child can also portray some behavioural patterns which are not associated with school academic achievement at all. Truancy, has been cited as one example of behaviour that can be shown by abused children. The concept "truancy" in itself is

associated with under-achievement at school. An abused child, especially a child abused by his or her teachers might resort to truancy as a way of getting rid of frustrations and abuse at school. Kapp (1991 : 149) argues that: "truancy has its origin in the child's need to learn, but because of boredom, frustrations and (abuse), he prefers to seek refuge in truancy (which causes low academic performance/failure)".

Another behaviour which has been found to be common in abused children is delinquency. Delinquency refers to any behaviour on the part of a juvenile (under 18 years of age) to which the more senior members of a society object (Child, 1981 : 277). This behaviour according to Sabation (1978) in Kapp (1991 : 100) may be a result of truancy. A delinquent child as a result of abuse might find himself or herself engaging in bad behaviour like drug abuse, rape and other serious crimes. All these factors will impact negatively on the child. His or her academic work will suffer since he or she will be occupied with other things rather than schoolwork. In fact, he or she can develop what is called school phobia (fear of school).

#### **3.4.1.3 Inadequate language development**

To be able to communicate adequately with other people, a person requires a fully developed language. Abused children have been found to be characterised by poor language development. This on its own is a clear indication that they lack one of the skills necessary for life. Calam and Franchi (1987 : 8) argue that the language expression of abused children is very poor. This may be due to the fact that communication between them and their environment is very poor due to abuse and as a result they fail to develop language skills. In the classroom situation, such children are also found to score lower marks. Eckenrode , et al (1995 : 1130) report that: "in a study of abused and non-abused children, the abused children were found to have scored lower on standardised test scores in reading and maths and they showed discipline problems".

Breiner (1990 " 232) further argues that since inadequate language development is associated with school learning problems, it is not surprising that abused children are in most cases found to under-achieve. This discrepancy in language development has been found by many researchers to continue into adult life and causes a person to have communication problems (Browne et. al, 1988 : 206) while at the same time they do not perform well academically.

#### **3.4.1.4 Mental retardation**

This is another factor, which has been found to be present in abused children. Some physically abusive parents have been found by many researchers to hit children on their heads and affect the children's brain functioning. Halperin (1979 : 21) further supports the above argument by saying that: "physically abused children show injuries centralised on the face and head" (showing that they were hit on those particular parts).

Such problems can however cause a child to experience certain problems when it comes to learning since mental disfunctioning has nothing to do with school achievement. Some researchers have, however, found that children with mental problems encounter serious problems when it comes to learning. Brown, Davies & Stratton (1988 : 206) argues that: "... abused children show mental retardation... have a history of trauma and they are likely to show developmental delay or intellectual retardation".

#### **3.4.1.5 Depression**

Depression has been cited as another effect of abuse on a child (Calam and Franchi, 1987 : 20). Depression refers to the inability of a person to experience any pleasure whatsoever from events happening around him or her including interactions with family and friends, accomplishments at work or at school (Barlow and Durand, 1995 : 241). Symptoms of depression include motor retardation, appearance of sadness, despair, and suicidal ideas or threats (Friedman and Doyal, 1974 in Gibson, 1976 : 422). Children who in most cases do not report their abuse appear depressed. This may be so because of the fear that their stories would not be believed and as a result, the child's inner feelings are affected. When placed in a classroom situation, such children are found to be less interested in activities. They do not fully involve themselves in school activities and as a result, their school performance is affected. Elmer (1976) in Calam and Franchi (1987 : 20) argues that abused children cannot even adjust themselves at school and as a result "they do not cope with their academic work".

#### **3.4.1.6 Negativism**

Abused children have been found to exhibit a negative attitude towards their abusers. According to "Servamus", (1998 : 3) these children may cringe if touched unexpectedly. This being the case, a child abused by his or her teachers at school will develop a negative attitude towards the teachers. He or she will have nothing to do with the teacher. As a result, his or her academic performance will drop since he or she will associate the teacher and the content with abuse. Du Toit in Kapp, (1991 : 264) argues that: "the teachers' attitude towards the child determines to a great extent the child's attitudes towards his academic performance thus the teacher can stimulate or inhibit the child's learning initiative".

From these arguments it is obvious that a child who is abused at school will exhibit a negative attitude towards the school and in turn his or her schoolwork will suffer. That is, he or she will not perform well academically.

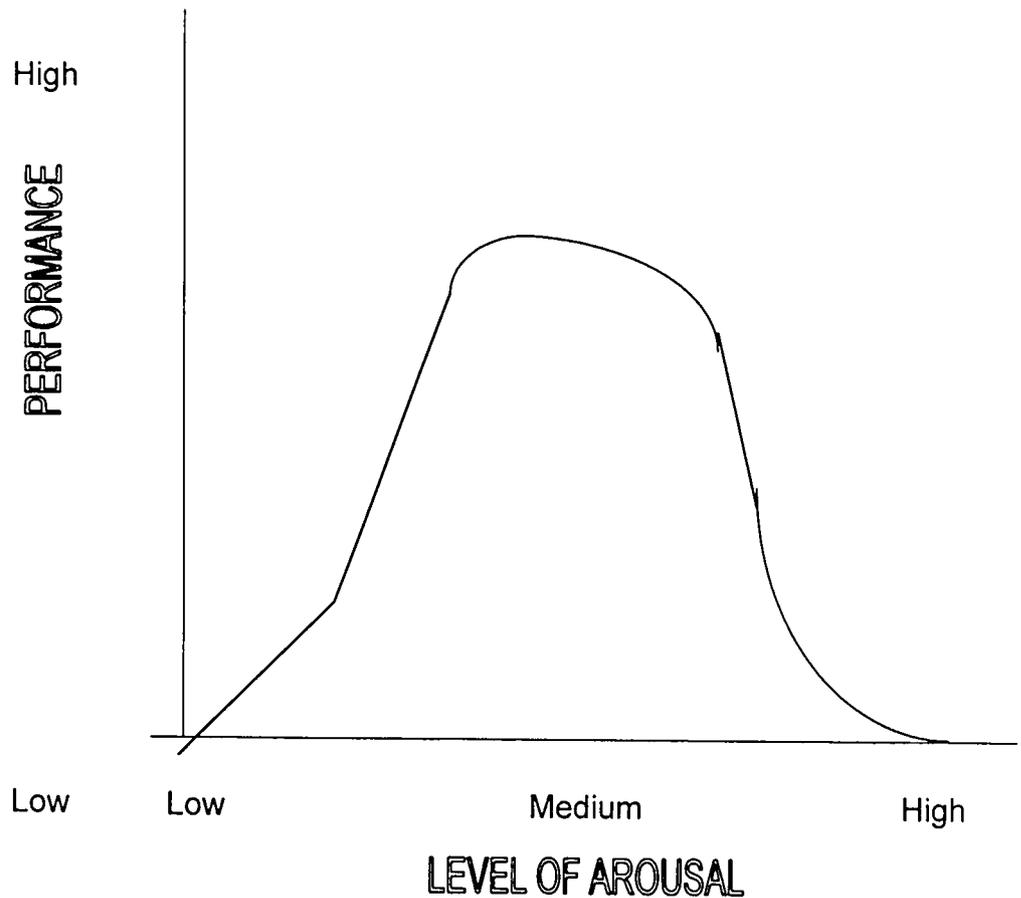
#### **3.4.1.7 Lack of motivation**

For every task to be completed successfully, motivation is required. An unmotivated person in life does not seem eager to take part of complete or do an activity. Child abuse causes children to lack motivation. According to Martin Breezly (1977) in Calam and Franchi (1987 : 6) abused children are characterised by impaired capacity to enjoy life or lack of motivation and hyper vigilance. Generally speaking, the children who are neglected by their parents tend to be those who lack motivation. Green (1980 : 109) argues that: "neglective parents fail to provide their children with adequate care in relation to good health and education. As a result such children lack motivation to do any activity".

In the school environment, such children will be unmotivated to do their school work and at the same time, school work will drop. Krugman (1993 : 587) argues that "the school performance and behaviour of abused children have been found to deteriorate sharply from bad to worse due to lack of motivation". He furthermore argues that "such children tend to lack self control and it is very difficult for them to learn regardless of how good the education program is".

Child (1981 : 54) also confirms the relationship between motivation and performance. He argues that lack of motivation leads to low performance, in the same way high motivation also leads to low academic performance because highly motivated students tend to ignore their work and perform low academically. So, neutrality in motivating students is the key to adequate academic performance. This is demonstrated in figure 3.2 by Yerkes-Dodson, in Child (1981 : 58).

Figure 3.2

**Idealised representation of Yerker-Dodson Law**

Van der Merwe (1964) as quoted in the HSRC Report of (1988) in Kapp (1991 : 157) further argues that lack of motivation shown by abused children is associated with poor academic performance. He argues that abused children with lack of motivation experience difficulty in co-operation. They create the impression that they do not want to be involved and just want "to get it over". They quickly lose interest, they cannot make decisions and it appears that under-achievers have poor intrinsic work motivation.

Abused children due to lack of motivation thus are incapable of enjoying themselves in anyway or being caught up in the excitement of play or fun (Parton, 1985 : 167). In the classroom, such children do not enjoy anything.

They have what is termed "impaired capacity for pleasure" (Green, 1980 : 55) which greatly influences them to under-achieve.

To emphasise the relationship between lack of motivation shown by abused children and academic performance one reporter (SABC 2 on April the 8<sup>th</sup> 1998 "Inside Info") reported that: "child abuse causes children to lack motivation to do their school work and in such cases, school work suffers and ultimately academic performance drops".

#### **3.4.1.8 Fearfulness**

Fearful implies being afraid to do something. This characteristic has been proved by many researchers to be present in many abused children (Johnson-Morse, 1968 in Green 1980 : 55). According to these authors abused children are "stubborn, unresponsive, negativistic, depressed, fearful, apathetic and unappealing". An abused child therefore would not be free at all at school. He or she will create a gap between himself or herself and other people and at the same time his or her schoolwork will be affected negatively. Fearfulness is often associated with under-achievement.

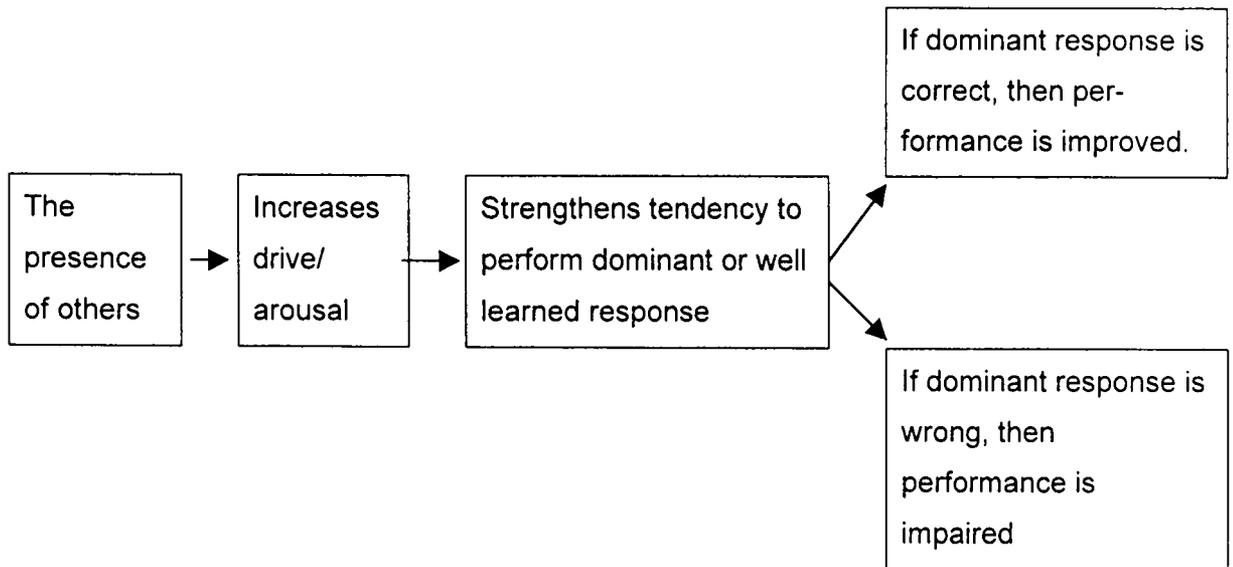
#### **3.4.1.9 Anti-social**

Abused children have also been found to be anti-social (Stratton et al, 1988 : 208). Abused children do not know how to relate successfully with other people. They tend to isolate themselves from other people. If such students are placed in the classroom situation, one may find that they under-achieve academically since they are not willing to share their ideas with their peers or ask the teacher for any clarifications where they encounter problems (Green, 1980 : 55).

Taylor, Peplau and Sears (1994 : 338) also argue that the presence of others facilitate performance in all its forms (academic, social, etc). An isolated person underachieves academically although not all under-achievers are

isolated. Taylor et. al (1994 : 339) illustrate the relationship between the presence of others and performance schematically as follows:

**Figure 3.3 How the presence of others affects performance: social facilitation versus inhibition.**



### 3.4.2 Other effects

Apart from the above characteristics shown by abused children which cause them to perform inadequately academically there are other general effects of abuse on the academic performance of a child. These include grade repeating and early school leaving.

#### 3.4.2.1 Grade repeating

Abused children encounter serious problems when it comes to school adjustment (SgROI, 1982 : 44). Due to their poor language development, aggressive behaviour, lack of motivation, depression and mental retardation, they do not perform well academically and they find themselves repeating the same grade in school. Krugman (1993 : 586) reports that "both the abused

children and neglected children (due to academic failure) had experienced grade repeats at school (at least more than once)".

#### **3.4.2.2 Early school leaving**

As a result of abuse which children suffer at home and at school, one may find that most of them perform poor academically. As a result the majority end up dropping out of school at an early age (Du Toit, s.a. in Kapp 1991 : 28). Leiter and Johnson (1997 : 581) also state that children subject to abuse at home or school may drop out of school as part of their flight from poor school performance and abuse.

#### **3.4.2.3 Discrepancy between the attained and the attainable levels of achievement**

Abused children achieve below their capabilities academically. David (1993 : 87) states that: "children who are abused are unable to achieve their academic learning potentials owing to the psychological and physical effects of abuse".

#### **3.4.3 Conclusion**

In conclusion, it can be stated that a child's poor academic performance in schools can be attributed to a number of factors including child abuse (Wiseman, 1969 : 3). Leiter and Johnson (1997 : 564) also state that: "child abuse is widely believed to be closely related to poor school performance. Students, whether abused at home or at school, will automatically develop behavioural characteristics such as depression, lack of motivation, negativism and being fearful which are all related to poor academic performance.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is concerned with the academic performance of abused students. A qualitative research attempts to describe, interpret and reconstruct the subjective world of respondents (Schusink, 1989 in Lourens, 1996 : 18). In this study the respondents are abused adolescents from Lesotho. Furthermore, the chapter includes the aims of the empirical investigation, the preparation for the empirical study, the area of concentration, the sampling of the respondents, research method, ethical measures, validity and reliability of the study, the role of the researcher in data collection and a conclusion.

#### **4.2 AIMS OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

The aims of the empirical investigation are to determine the abused students' attitude on:

- Different types of abuse;
- Behavioural implications of the abuse they underwent;
- The relationship that exists between their abuse and their academic performance.

In order to achieve the aims of the empirical investigation, certain procedures are discussed in the following sections.

#### **4.3 PREPARATION OF THE STUDY**

Permission was obtained from the principals of the SOS school and Hleoheng primary school in Lesotho to undertake an investigation at the schools. The school (SOS) is mainly concerned with the education of abused and neglected children in the Kingdom of Lesotho although 25% of the students in that school

are not abused. Hleoheng primary school on the other hand is just an ordinary public school.

#### **4.4 AREA OF CONCENTRATION**

The SOS school is the only registered school for abused and neglected children in Lesotho. The researcher regards the school appropriate for this research since these children have been taken away from their abusers or from the streets with the sole aim of educating them despite their problems.

The researcher was also interested in interviewing certain students ranging from 10 to 18 years of age because the focus of the research is on adolescents. The researcher interviewed more girls than boys because at SOS school, more girls are victims of various forms of abuse as opposed to boys. In fact, the majority of the boys there are the victims of neglect.

The other two students were taken from one primary school in the Leribe district in Lesotho because they provided the researcher with the information the researcher failed to obtain at SOS school and their cases of abuse were reported to the police. The researcher was also able to obtain the academic performance or school achievement of these two students before and after the abuse.

#### **4.5 SAMPLING**

The SOS school is the only registered school of its type in Lesotho according to the information the researcher obtained from the Ministry of Education in Lesotho. This school provides education for abused children from pre-primary up to standard 7, that is during pre-primary and primary education. When students complete standard 7 at that school, they are sent to secondary schools of their choices to continue with their studies. However, SOS children's village remains their permanent home.

The principal of SOS school also told the researcher that the overall population of children in that school is roughly one thousand two hundred. She could not give the exact figures because the student number grow at an alarming rate. The above figure constitutes both the abused and the non-abused group. The researcher was, however, told that 75% of the students there were abused and their cases were reported to the police.

Two sexually abused children were taken from Hleoheng primary school in the Leribe district in Lesotho. The other seven children were from SOS school. From this number, only nine abused children were selected to be interviewed. They were selected because of the type of abuse, their availability and their ability to verbalise. In summing up, two sexually abused children, two emotionally abused children, two neglected children and three physically abused children were selected to represent the victims of various types of abuse. Brink (1991 : 15) states that "the qualitative researcher does however, identify potential types of persons or events to be sampled depending on the needs of the study and according to specific qualities". Brink (1991 : 15) further argues that the number of subjects in qualitative research is very small since in qualitative research one is interested in the context obtained from the respondents. That is, whether it relates to what the researcher wants and not the number of respondents. This is further supported by Cates (1985 : 62) who argues that in qualitative research, one is not interested in large sampling, but the type of responses obtained from the selected respondents.

The interviews were conducted in an informal and confidential manner. They were conducted in one of the classrooms at the schools, with only the researcher and the interviewed student present. The researcher also gave the students the assurance that their names would not appear anywhere. One student was interviewed at a time.

## 4.6 RESEARCH METHOD

In order to understand the phenomenon studied, the researcher decided to conduct the research qualitatively because the quantitative approach limits the discovery of essential meanings and components of the study and does not appropriately answer all the questions (Brink, 1991 : 14). In order to avoid restricting the information from the students, the researcher had to opt for a qualitative research which comprised open-ended questions.

Apart from the above argument, the major aim for choosing to conduct a qualitative study is because of its explorative nature on somewhat unknown territory (Sliep, 1995 : 35). In this study, the researcher endeavours to explore the academic and behavioural problems experienced by abused children. A qualitative research is also descriptive in that it describes that which exists as accurately as possible (Mouton & Marais, 1988 : 44). The purpose of this research is therefore to obtain a description of abused children in the classroom situation, that is, their behaviour, how they relate with other people and their academic performance in general.

Lastly, a qualitative method was chosen for the purpose of this research because it is contextual (Strauss & Corbin, 1990 : 101). This implies that it confines itself to the context of exploring and describing the experiences of an abused child as vividly as possible.

## 4.7 ETHICAL MEASURES

Qualitative research has ethical considerations pertaining to the safety and rights of humans (Brink, 1991 : 16). The research respondents therefore were assured of anonymity during the interviewing session. Brink (1991 : 16) further states that qualitative researchers are probably more vulnerable to violations of ethical principles. Being a Mosotho, it was easy for the

researcher to undertake a survey study in Lesotho since she knows what is socially acceptable and unacceptable in Lesotho.

#### 4.8 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

In qualitative research, the researcher is directly involved in data collection as he or she asks the respondents the questions. On the contrary a quantitative researcher is not directly involved in data collection as he or she only presents the questionnaire to the respondents to complete on their own (Brink, 1991 : 15). According to Brink, a qualitative researcher has to do the interviews personally in a natural field situation which may be a school.

#### 4.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Both qualitative and quantitative researchers agree that research findings need to be reliable and valid (Woods & Cantanzaro, 1998 in Brink, 1991 : 16). However, it must be noted that researchers label, define and evaluate the two characteristics differently. Brink, (1991 : 16) distinguishes between these two concepts in the following manner:

Qualitative research	Quantitative research
<p><b>Validity:</b> Concerned with confirming the truth value or believability of the findings that have been established by the researcher, that is, the extent to which the data provides insight.</p> <p>Measurement is not the goal but rather knowing and understanding.</p>	<p><b>Validity:</b> Refers to the degree an instrument measures what it is supposed to be measuring.</p> <p>Measurement is the goal.</p>
<p><b>Reliability:</b> Focuses on identifying and documenting recurrent accurate and consistent or inconsistent features as</p>	<p><b>Reliability:</b> Looks for the degree of consistency or accuracy with which an instrument measures an attribute.</p>

<p>patterns, themes, world views, life ways and any other phenomena under study in similar or different human context.</p>	
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The strategies which will be used to ensure trustworthiness in this research will be:

**Credibility:**

Adequate time will be spent with the interviewees in order to establish whether recurrent themes and patterns appear. This will enable the researcher to check perspectives and allow the interviewees to be well known by the researcher. Open-ended questions will therefore be chosen as the response modes (Lourens, 1996 :23).

**Dependability:**

This strategy will relate to the consistency of the findings. Summary of every case and interpretation will be provided (Lourens, 1996 : 23).

#### 4.10 CONCLUSION

In conclusion an outline of the planning of the empirical study was presented. The following chapter will therefore concentrate on the analysis and synthesis of the collected data.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In chapter four the planning and lay-out of the empirical investigation were discussed. This chapter aims at discussing the different types of abuse that are practised on children and their causes. An account of how the family and the school can function as institutions of abuse will be presented and lastly the relationship between child abuse and academic performance will be investigated based on the analysis of individual interviews held with the students of SOS school in the Maseru district in Lesotho.

#### **5.2 OPERATIONALISATION OF FIELD WORK**

The fieldwork pertaining to this study was undertaken with the assistance of the SOS school principal, the social worker and the village father of the SOS school who supplied the researcher with the names of pupils suitable for interviews. Selection of students was done on the basis of the ability of the students to verbalise their type of abuse.

After arranging with students to engage in interviews, the researcher was given an office in which she was to conduct her interviewing sessions. The researcher conducted interviews with students ranging from 10-18 years of age. The interviewed children are inmates at SOS Children's Village and attending school at the SOS school in the Maseru district in Lesotho and the other ones are pupils from Hleoheng primary in the Leribe district in Lesotho.

Before each interview started, the specific student was set at ease and assured of his or her anonymity in order to establish trust with the interviewer.

## 5.3 ANALYSIS OF DATA

The analysis of data obtained is based on the interviews held with the students at the SOS school. The researcher wrote down everything that the students said, that is, the students' responses to the questions were noted word for word. These responses were thus and this contributes to the validity of this study (Lourens, 1996 : 24).

Through data analysis, seven main themes have been identified, namely:

- family background of the abused child;
- abuse;
- emotions of the abused child;
- social relationship with other people;
- academic performance of the abused child;
- concentration in class;
- punishment at school.

In the following section, the above themes will be discussed as experienced by individual students, namely child 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

### 5.3.1 Child 1

#### 5.3.1.1 Family

Child 1 is a girl aged 12 who comes from a two-parent family. Her father works at a factory and he is 36 years old. He passed standard 7. Her mother is a domestic worker aged 34 and the child does not know her school achievement. Child 1 has 3 siblings aged 10, 9 and 7 respectively. At that stage her aunt was staying with them and the respondent did not like her at all.

### **5.3.1.2 Abuse**

Child 1 has been physically abused by her own father. It seems that the father expected much from the child and failure to do so ended in abuse. The child reported that she was eight years old when the abuse started and it occurred regularly, that is, whenever she failed to do what she was expected to do, for example, milking the cows and cooking for the whole family.

When asked if she reported the abuse to anyone, child 1 agreed and said that she told her mother but her mother was powerless. Child 1 has scars on her back, on her head and her left arm does not function properly due to abuse.

### **5.3.1.3 Emotions**

Child 1 assured the researcher that she loved herself, but she hated her father very much. She also reported that she could not even face her own father due to what he had done to her and she had no intentions of returning home but would rather stay at SOS village.

### **5.1.3.4 Social relationship with other people**

Child 1 reported that she had friends before the abuse and agreed that she still had friends at SOS. However, she insisted that she did not relate well with other pupils because older children like beating others therefore she did not like them that much. When asked if she had ever been punished because of beating other students at school, child 1 agreed and added that she had done it regularly because there were other students who teased her. As a result, she hit them when they teased her.

#### **5.3.1.5 Academic performance**

Child 1 agreed that she attended school before the abuse but she reported that her parents were not concerned with her academic performance. As a result, she performed badly in her studies as nobody motivated her at home.

Child 1 showed that her school work improved since she arrived at SOS school. However, she said she did not feel free to ask questions in class because of her bad English. The medium of instruction at SOS school is English. This being the case, child 1 repeated standard 3. This child also indicated that she loved school and she had no intentions of going home.

#### **5.3.1.6 Concentration in class**

Child 1 showed many problems when it came to the issue of concentrating in class. She reported that she wanted to concentrate in class but she could not do it because she kept thinking of her father and how he beat them.

#### **5.3.1.7 Punishment at school**

When asked if they were punished at school, child 1 agreed but added that she loved all her teachers at school because they were fair towards students. If they made a mistake in class, they were punished fairly.

### **5.3.2 Child 2**

Child 2 also stays at SOS children's village and she attends school at SOS school.

### **5.3.2.1 Family**

Child 2 is a girl aged 12. She also comes from a two-parent family. Her father aged 36 does not work. He is an alcoholic. Her mother aged 30 sells apples and she has only passed standard 5. Child 2 comes from a family of four children aged 12, 6, 4 and 2 respectively. She is the first born in the family. Her grandmother stays with their family and she loves her very much.

### **5.3.2.2 Abuse**

Child 2 is a victim of physical abuse. Her father always beat them when he came home at night, drunk. Unfortunately her mother was also a victim of the father's abuse. Child 2 reported that she was 11 years old when that happened and it happened every time the father came home drunk. The child reported that her father used to beat them with a stick and a belt. However, she reported that the night she escaped from home to the streets was worse. She said, she was beaten with a belt until she could not cry anymore.

Child 2 did not report the abuse to anyone, and only explained that she escaped from home. Child 2 has abuse marks on her back, on her face, on her head and her right eye was still blue due to the severe beatings.

### **5.3.2.3 Emotions**

Child 2 reported to the researcher that she never felt happy at home because even before the abuse, her parents used to fight on a daily basis. She also reported that she still loves her mother and her siblings but she could not go home because she hates her father. She said she loves SOS school because they are not severely beaten there.

#### **5.3.2.4 Social relationship with other people**

Child 2 reported that she had friends before the abuse, that is, while she was still at home and she also has friends at SOS Children's Village. However, child 2 agreed that she had been punished because of beating other students at school because she said certain children like pushing them when they are playing. As a result she hit them and showed aggression.

#### **5.3.2.5 Academic performance**

Child 2 reported that she attended school before the abuse, but did not perform well because she had to do cleaning chores when she arrived at home as the mother was away selling apples. As a result, she did not have enough time to do her school work.

Child 2 also said that her parents did not motivate her and her father did not want her to attend school. He said she should go to her grandfather's place and look after the animals. Growing up in such an environment resulted in poor academic performance.

However, child 2 showed that since she attended SOS, her academic performance had changed. She was progressing well though she encountered problems in mathematics. She said she always obtained lower marks than she expected because the maths teacher hates her since she (child 2) was always fighting with other students.

Lastly, child 2 reported that she was repeating standard 4 because she had not completed it the previous year. When asked if she would like to go home, child 2 answered that she would love to go home just to see her mother and come back.

#### **5.3.2.6 Concentration in class**

Child 2 indicated that she had no problems with concentrating in class, but she was bored during mathematics lessons.

#### **5.3.2.7 Punishment at school**

When asked if they were punished at SOS school, child 2 said that their teachers beat them if they made mistakes in class and she hated that since she felt that she was beaten enough at home. She also said that some of their teachers liked calling them names like "scarface" or "rubbish" and she hated that especially because she has a scar on her face.

Child 2 seemed to love school despite the fact that she was always punished because of beating other children.

### **5.3.3 Child 3**

Child 3 is also staying at SOS Children's Village and attends school at SOS school.

#### **5.3.31 Family**

Child 3 is a girl aged 10. She comes from a two-parent family. Her father aged 35, is an unqualified primary teacher who has passed form E (former matric or Grade 12). Her mother is a housewife aged 30 who has only passed standard 7 (Grade 7). Child 3 comes from a family of four kids aged 10, 8, 7 and 5. She is the first born in the family. Her uncle stays with her family and she hates him.

### **5.3.3.2 Abuse**

Child 3 is a victim of physical abuse. Her father used to beat her severely. Child 3 reported that her father always beat them when they asked for money to buy anything. However, he sometimes gave his brother money and told them to ask their mother money who was a housewife. This child also reported that her father would sometimes not come or sleep at home. He beat her mother when she asked him where he spent the night.

Child 3 indicated that she was 8 years old when the abuse first occurred and she reported the abuse to her mother who unfortunately was also a victim. Child 3 has scars on her face and neck as a result of physical abuse. She also reported that on certain days their father would banish them from home without food to eat.

### **5.3.3.3 Emotions**

Child 3 reported that she loved herself but she hated her uncle very much because the minute he moved into their home, everything went wrong. Child 3 also protested that she could not live with her father again, because she was afraid of him and she feared that he might beat her again. She also reported that she was afraid of men because her friend at SOS school told her that her father used to sleep with her.

### **5.3.3.4 Social relationship with other people**

Child 3 reported that she had friends while she was still at home and she also had many friends at SOS school. This child also reported that she still related well with other students except that there were certain older girls who liked beating others at school and she hated them.

Child 3 stated that she had never been punished because of beating other students at school, and said that she hated to see other children unhappy.

#### **5.3.3.5 Academic performance**

Child 3 reported that she attended school before the abuse but she did not know how she performed academically since her father did not tell her anything as he was the one whom her school reports were addressed to.

Child 3 encountered problems in class at SOS. She said she did not understand English as she was taught in Sesotho at the school she previously attended. She also said that she did not feel free to ask questions in class since she could not express herself clearly in English and they were not allowed to speak Sesotho at SOS school.

When asked about her academic performance, she said that she was not performing well due to language problems and she protested that she was not happy when her scripts were returned by the teacher because of marks which were always low.

Child 3, however, reported that she had not repeated any standard and she liked school very much. She also reported that she would not like to go home.

#### **5.3.3.6 Concentration in class**

Child 3 said that she had concentration problems because she sometimes found it difficult to concentrate because she did not understand the language.

### **5.3.3.7 Punishment at school**

Child 3 reported that she did not like all the teachers at SOS school because they ridiculed them in class. Sometimes she was called by names such as "monkey" resulting in other students laughing at her. She also reported that they were beaten at school although it was not severe.

When asked if she sometimes felt like running away from school, child 3 agreed because she said that she hated to be beaten although she liked beating other children at school.

### **5.3.4 Child 4**

Child 4 also stays at SOS Children's Village permanently since he has been removed from his abusers.

#### **5.3.4.1 Family**

Child 4 is a boy aged 19. He comes from a two-parent family. Both his parents do not work and he does not know their ages. He comes from a family of 10 children and he is the first born in his family. Apart from his family, there is an aunt and a grandmother who stay with them. Child 4 showed that he had no ill feeling towards those people.

#### **5.3.4.2 Abuse**

Child 4 is a victim of neglect. His parents did not care for him mainly because they did not have money. The child also reported that despite lack of food in the house, their father was always drunk at night.

When asked if he reported the abuse to anyone, child 4 said that their neighbours were aware of the situation in their family and they used to give them food sometimes. The child also reported that the situation had been like

that at his home since he was old enough to realise what was happening. Child 4 does not have any marks of abuse.

#### **5.3.4.3 Emotions**

Child 4 reported to the researcher that he had always been abused at home. He was happy at SOS Children's Village because there is food to eat and there are people who care for them.

Child 4 also made it clear to the researcher that he could not go home despite the fact that he missed his family. He reported that depending on the neighbours for food was not a good experience, therefore he could not go back home and starve again.

#### **5.3.4.4 Social relationship with other people**

Child 4 reported that he had friends at home and at SOS though he preferred to be alone most of the times. However, he made an effort to be friendly and relate well with other students. This child also reported that he had never been punished at school for beating other students because he was alone most of the times.

#### **5.3.4.5 Academic performance**

Child 4 did not attend school while he was at home because there was no money even for food and clothing.

Child 4 was currently attending school and said that their village father (SOS School Village father) was paying his fees. He said that he performed well academically although he repeated Standard 2 due to inadequate understanding of English. He further reported that he always obtained the marks he expected, especially in mathematics.

This child seemed to love school and he said that he had no intention of going home, as he would not be able to attend school.

#### **5.3.5.6 Concentration in class**

When asked if he had any problems with concentrating in class, child 4 reported that he had no problems and he was always attentive in class.

#### **5.3.5.7 Punishment at school**

Child 4 said that he liked all his teachers at school, but stated their teachers sometimes punished them without explanation. He disliked that because they were not always punished fairly. Child 4 never considered running away from school and said that he liked school very much.

Child 4 also told the researcher that girls were the favourites of male teachers in their class and that there were some students who liked bullying others at school. He stated that he was not one of them.

### **5.3.5 Child 5**

Child 5 also lives at SOS Children's Village permanently and attends school at SOS school.

#### **5.3.5.1 Family**

Child 5 is a girl aged 18. She comes from a two-parent family. Her father aged 38 is a mine-worker and her mother aged 40 is a salesperson who passed standard 4. Child 5 comes from a family of four children. A grandmother and a distant brother live with her family. Child 5 indicated that she did not love her family much.

### **5.3.5.2 Abuse**

When asked how she was abused at home, child 5 reported that her parents did not care for her like other children. She even doubted if she was their biological daughter because her parents catered for her siblings not her. She furthermore said that she was not given money to attend educational trips. Her siblings were given money for trips and her parents did not pay for her school fees.

She furthermore reported that her parents had always neglected her while she was at home. When asked if she ever reported the abuse to anyone, child 5 disagreed and said she used to cry by herself because there was nobody to talk to. She didn't even quite remember how old she was when the abuse started but she said it had always been there.

### **5.3.5.3 Emotions**

Child 5 had a negative attitude towards her parents. She said that she never felt the warmth of parental love at home but she found peace at SOS because the village mothers cared for them and they were loved. Child 5 also made it clear to the researcher that she could never live with her parents again.

### **5.3.5.4 Social relationship with other children**

Child 5 reported that she had one friend while she was at home but said that she did not have any friends at SOS. She told the researcher that she did not relate well with other students and she saw others as being selfish. When asked if she had ever been punished because of beating other students at school, child 5 agreed and said that she hit them if they did not do what she asked she them to do. She said that this happened regularly.

#### **5.3.5.5 Academic performance**

Child 5 reported that she attended school while she was at home but her academic performance was poor because nobody was concerned about her. As a result, she also ended up hating school despite the fact that they were obliged to attend school. Child 5 reported that she still did not perform well academically because she had completely lost interest in school. She said she did not feel free to ask questions in class because other students laughed at her when she made mistakes or did not speak English correctly. She was the eldest in class.

When asked about the marks she obtained, child 5 said she always scored lower marks than she expected due to inadequate knowledge of English and lack of concentration in class.

This child also admitted that she had repeated Grade 3 twice and she said she did not think that she was going to pass at the end of that year. She concluded by saying that if she had a chance, she would leave school the following day because she did not see any progress in her work. However, she made it clear to the researcher that she would not like going home again. She said she would rather go to the streets. She said she would hate to see her parents.

#### **5.3.5.6 Concentration in class**

Child 5 said that she had problems with concentrating in class because school itself was boring and she did not understand English very well.

#### **5.3.5.7 Punishment at school**

When asked about the school environment, child 5 said that she did not like all her teachers at school because they beat her when she beat other students.

She also reported that the schoolteachers were unfair because they beat her even if she did not make any mistake because they said she was a troublemaker.

This child also reported that the teachers at school had a tendency of calling her "stupid girl" and "silly baboon" and she disliked that. Child 5 further told the researcher that she liked bullying others at school and their teachers only liked the students who pass.

### **5.3.6 Child 6**

Child 6 is a girl aged 11 who stays at SOS Children's Village permanently and attends school at SOS school.

#### **5.3.6.1 Family**

Her mother died while she was still a child and her father who is a mineworker aged 39 married again. Unfortunately, her father died and she was left with her stepmother who is a salesperson. She has three biological siblings aged 18, 16 and 10. Her stepmother has a child aged 6. After the death of her biological father, her stepmother married again and they had to stay with their stepmother and their stepfather. Child 6 mentioned that the relationship between herself and her stepparents was bad because they were always fighting with the children.

#### **5.3.6.2 Abuse**

Child 6 is a victim of emotional abuse. Her stepmother insulted and beat them. Sometimes her stepmother came home drunk and started beating and insulting them especially if she found her own child crying. The child reported that her stepmother also told them that they killed their own mother.

The child stated that she had always been abused. Child 6 reported that she told her grandmother about the abuse but the grandmother did not do anything because she was also afraid of their stepmother. Since the grandmother was powerless, child 6 and her biological siblings then moved out to their uncle's house. This happened when she was nine years old.

#### **5.3.6.3 Emotions**

Child 6 said that she loved herself and her biological parents but when her mother died, the whole situation changed. She also told the researcher that she could not stay with her stepparents because she hated them. She disliked her stepmother because she took their father away from them and stayed with another man at their father's place.

#### **5.3.6.4 Social relationship with other people**

When child 6 was asked if she had friends while at home, she admitted that she had a few friends but said that she preferred being alone most of the times. She also reported that she had been punished several times at school for beating other students because she thought that beating other students was the solution to force them to respect her.

#### **5.3.6.5 Academic performance**

When asked about her academic performance before the abuse, child 6 reported that she attended school while her mother was still alive and she was performing well. She also told the researcher that her biological parents used to praise her for her academic performance.

However, child 6 had encountered many problems since her arrival at SOS school. Her performance deteriorated as a result of the memories of her stepmother. She did not feel free to ask questions in class because she did

not speak English properly and the other students laughed at her when she made mistakes. She also revealed to the researcher that she always scored lower marks than expected though she did not explain why she could not obtain such marks.

Child 6 further reported that she repeated Grade 2. However, child 6 indicated that she loved school and had no plans of leaving. She had dreams of studying medicine. Lastly the child reported that she could not go home because she hated her stepparents.

#### **5.3.6.6 Concentration in class**

Child 6 reported that she had problems with concentrating in class because she missed her parents very much and she kept thinking of them all the time.

#### **5.3.6.7 Punishment at school**

Child 6 reported that their teachers gave them moderate beatings. She did not like the punishment because it reminded her of her stepmother. Child 6 also reported that some of their teachers had a tendency to call them names such as "stupid fool" which she disliked.

When asked about her feelings towards school, child 6 said that she loved school and had no plans of running away. However, she admitted that her teachers were not fair. They favoured clever students at the expense of dull ones. Child 6 also admitted that there were certain students who liked bullying others at school although she was not one of them. She, however, told the researcher that she would fight if she was forced to.

### **5.3.7 Child 7**

Child 7 is a girl aged 10. She also stays at SOS Children Village and attends school at SOS school.

#### **5.3.7.1 Family**

Child 7's father is a mineworker and her biological mother died long ago. After her mother's death, her father married another woman. Her stepmother is a housewife. Child 7 comes from a family of four children and she does not know her siblings' ages. Her grandmother lives with her family and she likes her.

#### **5.3.7.2 Abuse**

Her stepmother abused child 7 emotionally. The child reported that her stepmother insulted them regularly. She accused them of waking up very late and not cleaning the house. However, she did not expect her biological child to work. Child 7 also reported that her stepmother would always tell them that their mother was a prostitute and she died of aids and they would also become prostitutes and die of aids.

She never reported the abuse to anyone because there was nobody to talk to. As this abuse continued, child 7 decided to run away from home and live in the streets because nobody insulted her in the streets. This child could not quite remember her age at the time of the abuse.

#### **5.3.7.3 Emotions**

This child reported that she was happy when her biological mother was still alive but her emotions changed when her stepmother arrived. She told the

researcher that she could never stay with her stepmother again because she wanted to kill her for what she did. She reported that the day she ran away from her home, her stepmother was away and she was left to look after her stepsister. She then ran away and left the child alone. The child (child 7) also reported that the relationship between herself and her stepmother had always been bad since the stepmother only loved her own daughter and their father (her husband).

#### **5.3.7.4 Social relationship with other people**

Child 7 admitted that she had friends before the abuse but after the abuse she developed a negative attitude towards other children. She furthermore reported that their village mother at SOS forced them to play with other children.

The researcher found child 7 very aggressive because she said that she was often punished because of beating other students at school.

#### **5.3.7.5 Academic performance**

Child 7 reported that she attended school before the abuse though she did not mention how she performed academically at that stage.

At SOS school, the child reported that she was not performing well because she did not feel free to ask questions in class. As a result, she failed most of the time.

When asked if she sometimes scored lower marks than she expected, child 7 said that this was always the case. She explained that whenever she expected a B grade, she obtained a D grade. The child felt that this problem was due to the fact that she did not always understand the questions properly.

Child 7 also revealed that she once failed and had to repeat that grade although she did not mention the grade she repeated. The child also disclosed to the researcher that she loved school although her academic performance was not satisfying.

Child 7 did not want to go back to her home and said that she hated her stepmother and she founds peace at SOS Children's Village.

#### **5.3.7.6 Concentration in class**

Child 7 stated that she had problems with concentrating in class and said that this was caused by her inadequate knowledge of English.

#### **5.3.7.7 Punishment at school**

Child 7 reported to the researcher that they were physically punished at school when they made a mistake. However, the student hated certain teachers at school because she said that they liked to embarrass other students by calling them names such as "stupid fool" and "big fool".

The student indicated that if given a chance, she would leave school the following day because she hated the teachers who shouted at them at school.

Child 7 admitted that there were students who liked bullying others at school and she was one of them. She reported that she hated seeing other children unhappy.

#### **5.3.8 Child 8**

Child 8 is a boy aged 16 who lives with his uncle and aunt permanently. He attends school at Hleoheng Primary in Lesotho. He is a standard 5 student.

#### **5.3.8.1 Family**

Child 8 comes from a two-parent family. His father, aged 40, is a soldier by profession and his mother is a domestic worker aged 39. His mother has only passed standard 7. Child 8 comes from a family of two children. His sister aged 10 stays with their grandmother at their grandmother's place. There is no one living in the house except child 8 and his mother.

#### **5.3.8.2 Abuse**

Child 8 is a victim of child sexual abuse. His mother has sexually abused him. Since his father stayed at the barracks and his sister with his grandmother, child 8's mother forced him to sleep with her.

The child also reported that it occurred the previous year while he was 15 years old and since then it has occurred regularly. When asked if he ever reported the abuse to anyone, child 8 said that he told his father about the abuse. His father seemed not to believe his stories and as a result, he ran away from home to his uncle's place since he could no longer stay with his mother. The child claimed to have no marks of abuse though the memories of what used to happen between himself and his mother still haunted him.

#### **5.3.8.3 Emotions**

Child 8 reported that he loved himself and his mother before the abuse. However, he recently developed a negative attitude towards women and girls after what had happened to him. The child also swore that he could not ever stay with his mother because he was afraid that she might abuse him again. He was also afraid that his mother would beat him if he should go home because he had revealed the secret to his father.

#### **5.3.8.4 Social relationship with other people.**

Child 8 reported that he had friends (both male and female) before the abuse but after the abuse he became afraid of female friends. When asked if he still related well with other students, child 8 said that he had problems with relating with girls because he hated them. However, this child told the researcher that he had never been punished because of beating other students at school.

#### **5.3.8.5 Academic performance**

Child 8 reported that he attended school before the abuse and his academic performance was average. The child also reported that his parents used to praise him for his academic performance.

However, after the abuse, the child's performance deteriorated although the child could not give reasons for his performance, which changed from average to poor. The child also reported that he sometimes scored lower marks than he expected. When asked if he had ever repeated the same grade more than once, child 8 reported that he was repeating standard 5, the reason being that he did not complete it the previous year and he had to repeat it that year.

Child 8 also reported that he had no intentions of going home again because he was afraid of his mother and he was afraid that his father would kill him because he did not believe his stories.

#### **5.3.8.6 Concentration in class**

This child indicated that he had problems with concentrating in class because his mind was filled with the memories of what his mother used to do to him.

### **5.3.8.7 Punishment at school**

Child 8 reported that they were punished physically at school if they made mistakes although they were sometimes punished unfairly. When asked if he liked all his teachers at school, child 8 reported that he liked male teachers more than female teachers. This child also reported that he sometimes felt like running away from school because he wanted to attend a school for males only. He also reported that he hated some of the teachers at school because they knew what had happened to him and they reminded him of that, especially the female teachers.

When asked if the teachers were fair in class, child 8 reported that certain teachers favoured certain children and he argued that teachers liked students who did not have problems. The child also admitted that there were some students who liked bullying others at school although he was not one of them.

### **5.3.9 Child 9**

Child 9 is a girl aged 11 years. She stays with her relatives and attends school at Hleoheng.

#### **5.3.9.1 Family**

Child 9 comes from a two-parent family. Her father aged 32 sometimes work as a gardener. He has only passed standard 7. Her mother is a housewife aged 36. Child 9 comes from a family of two children and she is the second born in that family. Her grandmother stays with her family and her uncle visits her home regularly. The child does not like the uncle.

### **5.3.9.2 Abuse**

Child 9 is a victim of sexual abuse. Her uncle had repeatedly raped the child. This started when the child was nine years old. The uncle always raped the child when the child's parents were away. The child reported that her uncle made her touch him and that he also touched her. The child also disclosed that her uncle said she should act like a big girl and should not make a noise before he raped her.

Child 9 did not report this to anyone because she said that her uncle said he would kill her if she told anyone. However, this case came into the open because the child couldn't walk properly at school and her teachers called her and asked her questions. The child did not say anything and she was taken to a nearby clinic where the rape was revealed.

### **5.3.9.3 Emotions**

Child 9 reported that she loved herself before the abuse and her mother used to tell her that she was a pretty little girl. When asked about her feelings after the abuse, the child reported that she felt dirty and she did not like herself anymore. She also reported that she hated her uncle and could never stay with him again. She furthermore reported that she would kill herself if she was forced to stay with him because she was afraid that he would do it again.

### **5.3.9.4 Social relationship with other people**

The child reported that she still related well with other children but she did not trust men. The child also told the researcher that she had never been punished because of beating other children at school because she hated to see other children hurt.

#### **5.3.9.5 Academic performance**

Despite the rape, child 9 still performed well academically because she said that her parents supported her very much. She also reported that she still lived at home and attended school and had no plans of leaving school. This child, however, seemed to encounter problems in class. She reported that she did not feel to ask questions in class because she became very irritated when other students laughed at her when she did something wrong. She furthermore added that she sometimes felt as if they were ridiculing her.

Child 9 reported that she sometimes scored lower marks than she expected although she did not know why this happened. Child 9 concluded by saying that she loved school and had no intentions of leaving.

#### **5.3.9.6 Concentration in class**

Child 9 seemed to encounter problems to concentrate in class. She reported that she could not concentrate in class because she kept remembering sleeping with her uncle. Those memories recurred very often especially when she was in class.

#### **5.3.9.7 Punishment at school**

When asked if the students were punished at school, child 9 reported that they were beaten if they made a mistake in class and sometimes their teachers punished them without explanations and she hated that. When asked if their teachers sometimes said things which she did not like in class, child 9 agreed and reported that their teachers had a tendency of saying "nxa!" in class and she disliked that a lot.

## 5.4 SYNTHESIS OF DATA

This section aims at presenting certain conclusions after analysing the data. The section will therefore be divided into the following categories:

- family,
- abuse;
- emotions of the abused child;
- social relationship with other people;
- academic performance;
- concentration in class; and
- punishment at school.

### 5.4.1 Family

The conclusion that the researcher can draw from the interviews with the students, is that the family is a potential institution of abuse as compared to a school (refer to paragraph 3.3.1). This may be so because children spend most of their time at home with their parents who are responsible for their upbringing. However, due to frustrations caused by unemployment, excessive demands from parents, and unwanted children, parents find themselves abusing their children (refer to paragraph 2.4). This is shown in Table 5.1

Table 5.1 Family as a potential institution of abuse

Abuse victim	Abuser
Case 1 - Girl	Biological father
Case 2 - Girl	Biological father
Case 3 - Girl	Biological father
Case 4 - Boy	Father and mother
Case 5 - Girl	Father and mother
Case 6 - Girl	Stepmother
Case 7 - Girl	Stepmother
Case 8 - Boy	Mother
Case 9 - Girl	Uncle

All nine abused children are victims of family abuse (refer to paragraph 3.3.1). The conclusion that can therefore be drawn from the above information is that at SOS school in Lesotho, more girls are victims of the different types of abuse as opposed to boys. One of the reasons for the occurrence of abuse in Lesotho may be the fact that many people are unemployed and uneducated in Lesotho and as a result, they resort to their children to get rid of their frustrations.

The other reason may be that the law is not strict towards perpetrators of child abuse and children are still regarded as properties of their parents. Gender, on the other hand, seems to be a contributing factor to abuse as far as the respondents were concerned in Lesotho. This is likely to be so because a boy can be hired as a shepherd in Lesotho as early as six years old while girls stay at home and this urges some parents to abuse them. As a result more girls at SOS school are exposed to abuse.

In summary the researcher can conclude that child abuse seems to be a family affair as illustrated by the respondents in Lesotho.

#### 5.4.2 Abuse

All the children that were interviewed for this research were the victims of child abuse. Of the nine children that were interviewed, three were victims of physical abuse, two of neglect, two of emotional abuse and the other two are victims of sexual abuse (refer to section 2.5). This is shown in table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Types of abuse

Victim	Type of abuse
Case 1	Physical
Case 2	Physical
Case 3	Physical
Case 4	Neglect
Case 5	Neglect & economic
Case 6	Emotional & physical
Case 7	Emotional
Case 8	Sexual
Case 9	Sexual

Since the researcher focused on a group of adolescents, it became evident that some children at SOS school are exposed to various types of abuse. One of these types of abuse is economic abuse.

Economic abuse seemed not to be common but this however, does not mean that it is not present (refer to paragraph 2.5.5). There are still some parents who fail to give their children money even if the child needs the money for

necessary things, such as buying schoolbooks and even food. Child 5 was neglected by her parents in more than one way. She also suffered from economic abuse. She reported that she was not given money for school fees and educational trips like her siblings. In her case neglect was coupled with economic abuse because her parents did have money for her siblings and not for her.

Child 6 is also an example of two kinds of abuse. Her stepmother emotionally and physically abused this child.

### 5.4.3 Emotions

All the interviewed children were scared of their abusers (refer to table 2.1). They had developed negative attitudes towards people who abused them. Some of them revealed that they hated themselves and felt dirty. This is summarised in table 5.4.

Table 5.3 Emotions of abused children

Victim	Emotions
Child 1	Hates father
Child 2	Not happy
Child 3	Afraid of men
Child 4	Happy
Child 5	Hates parents
Child 6	Hates stepparents especially the stepmother
Child 7	Hates stepmother
Child 8	Hates women
Child 9	Hates herself (low self concept)

It can therefore be concluded that abuse has a negative impact on the child. Children tend to develop negative attitudes towards their abusers and some of them also develop low self concepts (refer to paragraph 3.4.1.1)

#### 5.4.4 Social relationships with other people

Almost all the children that were interviewed tend to have poor social relationships with other people (refer to paragraph 3.4.1.9). This is due to the fact that some of them were never loved and cared for by their parents and as a result, they saw no need to care for other people. Some of them even portrayed some behavioural characteristics such as aggression (refer to paragraph 3.4.1.2) as is shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Behavioural indications of abused children

Victim	Behaviour
Child 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggressive (refer to paragraph 3.4.1.2)</li> <li>• Withdrawn</li> </ul>
Child 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggressive (refer to paragraph 3.4.1.2)</li> </ul>
Child 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Withdrawn from people who like hitting others (refer to paragraph 3.4.1.2)</li> </ul>
Child 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Withdrawn from other children</li> </ul>
Child 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly aggressive</li> <li>• Bully (refer to paragraph 3.4.1.2)</li> </ul>
Child 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly withdrawn and anti-social (refer to paragraph 3.4.1.9)</li> </ul>
Child 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bully</li> <li>• Aggressive (refer to paragraph 3.4.1.2)</li> </ul>
Child 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-social (refer to paragraph 3.4.1.9)</li> </ul>
Child 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Withdrawn from males</li> </ul>

In conclusion, it can be stated that some abused children in SOS school showed certain behavioural problems although some of them undergo counselling especially those at the school.

#### **5.4.5 Academic performance**

Child abuse has a negative impact on the children at SOS school (refer to paragraph 3.4.1). This is so because out of the nine children that were interviewed, only 2 students indicated that they were still performing well.

Child 1 reported that she performed badly while she was at home due to the abuse from her father. However, she said that there were changes in her academic performance since her arrival at SOS school. Her average marks were 58% (first quarter), 41% (second quarter) and 52% (third quarter).

Child 2 reported that she also performed badly before she came to SOS school but that changed. Her average marks were 61% (first quarter), 59% (second quarter) and 60% (third quarter).

Child 3 only knew that she passed, but she was never shown her school report. She seemed to encounter problems at SOS school due to inadequate knowledge of English which is the medium of instruction. As a result, she did not perform well. This child also indicated that she was not always satisfied when she received her scripts because the marks were always lower than she expected. Her average marks were 52%, 54% 56% for the same period as in the above cases.

Child 4 never attended school. He only started attending school after his arrival at SOS children's Village and he indicated that he was progressing well. His marks were 54%, 60% 32% for the period indicated above.

Child 5 reported that she did not perform well because she was not motivated and she developed a negative attitude towards school. Because of her personal problems she also experienced grade repeating. Her average marks were 27%, 18%, 22% for the same period.

Child 6 reported that she did not perform well academically at the time of the abuse, that is, before she went to SOS school. She also did not perform well academically at SOS school. She experienced grade repeating and she admitted that she did not feel free to ask questions in class. Her average marks were 32%, 38%, 44% for the above period.

Child 7 also showed that she was not performing well at the time of the abuse and similarly she was still not performing well academically at SOS school because she was feeling tense in class. Her marks were 42%, 50% and 46% for the indicated period.

It was not possible for the researcher to get hold of the record of the interviewed students' academic performance before the abuse because all of them had arrived at SOS school after the abuse. Some of the children did not attend school before their arrival at SOS school. The researcher therefore only got hold of their academic record since their arrival at SOS school which indicated that these students were not performing well. This record of marks is presented in table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Record of marks of students' performance

Case (child)	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter
1	58	<u>41</u>	52
2	61	59	60
3	52	54	56
4	54	60	<u>32</u>
5	<u>27</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>22</u>
6	<u>32</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>44</u>
7	<u>42</u>	50	46

Despite the fact that all these seven students have been at SOS school for the past two to three years, they were still not performing well academically. This is reflected in Table 5.5. Only two students out of seven had never failed. The other five students each experienced failure at least once. Out of these findings, one can therefore say that most children at the SOS school do not perform well academically. Their performances can be linked with their negative experiences in life.

The other two remaining children who were interviewed attended school at a different school and they were not staying at SOS Children's Village. This was done because the researcher was not allowed to interview the sexually abused children at SOS school, the reason being that those children are very sensitive. The researcher, therefore, decided to interview two additional children whose cases were reported to the police (see addendum 3). These two children are in an ordinary government school. Child 8 stays with his uncle

and aunt because he ran away from his mother who sexually abused him. Child 9 still lives with her biological parents. Her uncle abused her sexually.

These two children also reported that their academic performances deteriorated after the abuse. Deterioration is reflected in their academic record after the abuse. This is indicated in table 5.6 and 5.7.

Table 5.6 Marks before the abuse

Child	Marks			
	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter
Child 8	50	48	46	52
Child 9	70	69	68	70

Table 5.7 Marks after the abuse

Child	Marks			
	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter
Child 8	48	40	36	-
Child 9	68	60	61	-

The conclusion that can be drawn from the above results is that child abuse impacts negatively on a child's academic performance as far as the respondents were concerned. It can therefore be said that some of the abused adolescents academic performance are affected negatively by abuse.

#### 5.4.6 Concentration in class

Out of the 9 abused children that were interviewed 8 revealed problems with concentrating in class due to their abuse. The other children indicated a lack of concentration in class because they were haunted by the memories of what

had happened to them (child 6, 8,9). Child 5 reported that she found school boring and as a result, she could not even concentrate in class. Child 2 indicated that she was always concentrating in class though she sometimes became bored.

From the above interviews it can be concluded that child abuse has a negative impact on these children's performance. The children who have experienced abuse scored low on many things including concentrating in the classroom as the above information reflects.

#### **5.4.7 Punishment at school**

Based on the material obtained from the students it can be concluded that the families of these children are potential institutions of abuse since all the students were abused at their homes. However, six children (2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9) reported that their teachers insulted and ridiculed them at school which can also be regarded as a form of abuse (refer to paragraph 3.3.2). It can therefore be stated that in this case children are more exposed to physical punishment but not to abuse at school.

### **5.5 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, it can be argued that child abuse has a negative impact on a child's academic performance. Abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic and neglect. Abused children, however, do not only experience problems with their academic performance but they also have problems with themselves. They cannot adapt to society due to the abuse they experienced. Some of them also engage in bad behaviour like truancy and delinquency due to their early experiences in life. When such abused children are placed in a

classroom situation, one may find that they encounter serious problems in their schoolwork. Some of them have inadequate language development and as a result, they fail to express themselves in class and consequently fail. Abused children have also been found to be characterised by fear of adults or other people, and subsequently have problems with adapting to the school environment.

## **5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The researcher encountered various problems during the course of the study. Firstly, she was not allowed to interview the sexually abused children at SOS school. Since the researcher needed such students, she had to opt for another school in the Leribe district where she interviewed two sexually abused children.

Secondly, it was not possible for the researcher to obtain any academic results of the students at SOS school before attending SOS school. As not all the students' cases were reported to the police, the researcher had to struggle to get hold of students whose cases were reported to the police.

Lastly much can still be added to each type of abuse but for the purpose of this investigation the limits of this investigation will be exceeded. In the following chapter a final summary, recommendations and conclusion will be presented.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 SUMMARIES

##### 6.1.1 Statement of the problem

This study investigated the effect of abuse on academic performance, especially the general causes and types of child abuse and the relationship between child abuse and academic performance.

##### 6.1.2 Causes and types of child abuse

There are many factors which urge parents, caretakers and others to abuse children. Perpetrators of child abuse are characterised by isolation, poverty, alcohol or drug abuse and ill-health, inadequate social learning, divorce, parenting styles, women who have been refused termination of pregnancies, mentally or subnormal parents, unwanted or unplanned babies conceived out-of-wedlock, stress and inheritance such as poor child up-bringing.

Abuse of children can take various forms, namely: physical, sexual, emotional, economic abuse and neglect. Physical abuse entails inappropriate punishment of a child by either a parent, caretaker or anybody in authority.

Sexual abuse refers to the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent, or that violate the social taboos of family roles (Kempe & Kempe, 1978 : 60). Emotional abuse is when a parent interferes with the personal and social development of a child.

Neglect entails leaving a child alone or unattended for excessive periods. It also includes failure of a parent or a caretaker to provide things like housing, food and medication for a child. Lastly, there is economic abuse which refers to failure to provide the child with the money he or she needs.

### **6.1.3 The relationship between child abuse and academic performance**

Ideally both the family of a child and the school are two institutions which are responsible for the upbringing of a child. It is in the home situation that a child is taught basic skills like respect and how to live harmoniously with other people. However, these skills which a child acquires at home are further developed at school. Both the family of a child and the school supplement each other in ensuring that a child develops into a responsible adult who can make responsible decisions in life.

However, due to urbanisation and modernisation, the family and the school have taken different dimensions altogether. Today, cases are reported of children being abused in their families and in the school environment. The cases used in this study revealed that some families and schools have become institutions of abuse rather than the places of love and warmth. Parents, teachers and strangers abuse children and as a result, children are left with no one to trust. This results in large number of street children today.

Children today are more exposed to abuse than children in the past (refer to paragraph 2.2). Abused children under-achieve due to problems they experienced. Such children do not enjoy life at all especially if there is lack of counselling. These abused children become afraid of other people and the majority tend to isolate themselves from other children. As a result, their academic performance drops due to changed behaviours. In short, an abused child finds himself or herself in a dysfunctional education situation.

A dysfunctional education situation, implies that an abused child's performance is under-actualised: he or she scores low on a number of things relating to academic performance like language development and behaviour. There will also be a discrepancy between what a child is capable of achieving and what he or she actually achieves.

In conclusion, it may be stated that an abused child is hampered to actualise his or her potential. Such a child does not realise his or her potential and abilities due to the abuse and it is therefore essential that a social worker and a psychologist should intervene to help such a child to cope with the situation in order to improve academic performance.

#### **6.1.4 Objectives of this study**

The objectives of this investigation were formulated as follows:

- To focus on how the academic performance of the abused child is affected, that is, the relationship between child abuse and academic performance.
- To investigate the behavioural changes of the abused child which can be attributed to the academic performance of a child.
- To investigate the family and the school as the child's educational environments and how these institutions can be major sources of child abuse;
- To investigate the causes and types of child abuse.

The above objectives have been achieved in this study in the following way:

- Paragraph 3.4 of the literature study showed the relationship between child abuse and academic performance. The empirical study conducted in paragraph 5.4.2 confirmed the relationship. Cases of child 8 and 9 showed how those children's academic performance deteriorated after the abuse (Table 5.6).
- The literature study conducted in paragraph 3.4.1 investigated the behavioural changes of the abused child which can be attributed to the academic performance of a child and this aim is confirmed in paragraph 5.4.3, 5.4.4 of the empirical where behavioural characteristics such as aggression, a low self concept, withdrawal and anti-social behaviour which lead to a poor academic performance are discussed..
- Paragraph 3.2 of the literature study identified the typicality of the family and the school as the child's educational environments and the way in which these institutions can be major sources of abuse. This again is reflected in paragraph 5.4.1 of the empirical study. The cases of all the children illustrated the way in which some families can be dangerous to their children.
- Paragraph 2.4 and 2.5 of the literature study indicated the causes and the types of child abuse respectively. The empirical study synthesised in paragraph 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 confirmed this as follows; unemployment, inadequate social learning about children, excessive demands from parents and unwanted children are the causes behind some parents abusing children at SOS school and Hleoheng primary in Lesotho. Physical abuse, emotional, sexual, economic and neglect are the types of abuse relating to the respondents in the qualitative study.

The following recommendations can be presented based on the way in which certain objectives have been achieved.

## 6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, the researcher aims at making certain recommendations based on the collected data.

### 6.2.1 Protection of children's rights

#### □ Rationale

At present, children's rights in Lesotho are not protected. Children are still regarded as properties of their parents and as a result, parents exercise power over their children in an unacceptable way.

Identification of child abuse is hampered by the fact that children's rights are not protected because Basotho children are abused in the privacy of their own homes. It is therefore vital for the Lesotho government to protect children's rights. Laws should be strict towards perpetrators of child abuse.

#### □ Recommendations

Recommendations are:

- Children's rights must be protected in Lesotho similar to countries like South Africa and America.
- The law must be very strict towards people who violate these rights.

### 6.2.2 Compulsory and free education for children

#### □ Rationale

Some children in Lesotho become victims of abuse because their parents cannot afford to pay their school fees. As a result, such children become

victims of neglect which is a form of abuse. Due to neglect at home some of these children end up in the streets and they ultimately become delinquents since they have to survive on their own in the streets.

Although the Lesotho government is not in a position to provide free education for the Basotho children at present due to financial constraints, it is vital that free education should be provided to reduce the rate of abuse in that country.

#### □ **Recommendations**

Recommendations are:

- Education should be free and compulsory for all Basotho children from the age of 6 to the age of 12 years (primary education);
- The government should subsidise high school education since most parents fail to pay for their children as school fees are very expensive at that level.

### **6.2.3 Parental involvement in children's education**

#### □ **Rationale**

Parents in Lesotho are not very actively involved in the education of their children. Most of the decisions at school are done by the academic staff with the help of the Ministry of Education where necessary. As a result, parents end up being little concerned about the education of their children. The parents do not see the need to send their children to school because they do not take responsibility for the education of their children.

□ **Recommendation**

Recommendation is:

- Parents must be involved in the education of their children through institutions like governing bodies.

## 6.2.4 Education for all

□ **Rationale**

Education is vital for the development of everyone in society. Similarly, every human being has to be educated in order to earn a living. Educated people are able to make reasonable decisions. The concept of child abuse has come into existence partly because not everyone in society is educated. As a result, many people are jobless and they end up abusing children in order to get rid of their frustrations.

Education also results in being aware of other people, their abilities and potentials. At present, many people in Lesotho are not educated and such people often abuse their children as they are idle most of the times. Due to these problems, it has therefore become very difficult to minimise the rate of child abuse.

Although the Lesotho government stated that it cannot afford to educate everyone, it is essential that everyone is given a fair chance to education.

□ **Recommendations**

Recommendations are:

- The government must subsidise education so that at least every person can afford it;

- Compensatory education should be provided for those people who never had a chance to attend school. This can be done by the introduction of adult education.

### **6.2.5 Orientation of parents into child care**

Many parents in Lesotho have little or no knowledge concerning child rearing (refer to paragraph 2.4.12). As a result, they lack insight as to how a child should be cared for so that he or she develops into a responsible mature adult. The majority of these parents stand a high risk of abusing their children because they are not in a position to provide the love and warmth a child needs to develop adequately.

Parents must thus be orientated and assisted with the concept of child rearing.

#### **□ Recommendation**

The recommendation is:

- Parents must attend health clinics where guidance on child care is provided

### **6.2.6 Establishment of SOS schools country-wide**

Most of the abused children are cared for at SOS school in the Maseru district in Lesotho. This school aims at educating these children into responsible and mature adults despite their earlier experiences in life. The children that are kept at that school have been removed permanently from their abusers and are cared for in a responsible way at SOS school. Some of these children have also been taken from the streets.

However, the major problem Lesotho is still facing despite this establishment of a good school is that, the school is located in Maseru and the authorities seem to be concentrating only on the urban children who have been abused, whereas child abuse is prevalent in the rural areas of the country.

It is therefore essential that the government should do something about the children in the rural areas who fall prey to abuse because those children also need to be helped to realise their potential despite the damage that has been done to them.

#### □ **Recommendations**

Recommendations are:

- The government (Lesotho) should establish more special schools like SOS school in the rural areas.
- Trained teachers should be employed to teach such children as they are sensitive and have special educational needs as opposed to the non-abused children;
- Apart from the trained teachers, provision must be made for psychologists and social workers in such schools.

### **6.2.7 Appointment of school social workers**

#### □ **Rationale**

Once the schools for abused children are established, it is essential that social workers are appointed in such schools.

As the majority of the abused children are characterised by a low self-image, social workers will also be able to address issues like these.

□ **Recommendations**

Recommendation is:

- School social workers must be adequately trained and made available at every special school

### **6.2.8 Introduction of sex education in schools**

□ **Rationale**

We are living in a rapidly changing world and it is vital to equip students with the skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding that will enable them to make responsible choices in future. Therefore, sex education should be incorporated into the school curriculum so that students have knowledge of the way in which physical, mental, emotional, social, economic and psychological phases of human relations are affected by male and female relationships (Van Staden 1997).

In Lesotho, sex education is not included in the school curriculum whereas many children are abused due to lack of knowledge about sex. Therefore, it is essential that sex education should be included in schools.

□ **Recommendations**

Recommendations are:

- Sex education should be included in the school curriculum;
- The Ministries of Health and Education should work in collaboration to ensure that this is realised;

- The family and the school must supplement each other in teaching sex education life to students.
- Aids education should also form an integrated part of the school curriculum.

### **6.2.9 In-service workshop for teachers**

#### **□ Rationale**

Some of the victims of child abuse are abused in the school environment and not only within the family. It occurs at any place and under any circumstances.

Abuse of children in schools is promoted by lack of in-service workshops and basic qualifications of teachers. Some of the trained teachers still do not know how to approach a child if such a child has made a mistake. Instead, he or she abuses a child either emotionally or physically. In this in-service workshops, teachers should be equipped with the knowledge of how to control their tempers in the classroom situation and how to handle and approach problematic children in spite of abusing them.

These workshops can be held at least twice annually or during the school holidays.

#### **□ Recommendations**

Recommendations are:

The Ministry of education should organize in-service workshops for teachers.

These workshops should be aimed at helping teachers improve classroom techniques and their overall approach towards the children.

#### **6.2.10 Establishment of a child protection department in Lesotho**

##### **□ Rationale**

At present in Lesotho, there is no department which is strictly or mainly concerned with children's affairs. Support structures that exist within the present educational system have nothing to do with children's rights. Consequently, many children are abused in the country as there is no department which firmly takes responsibility for the rights of the children.

It is therefore vital to establish such a department which will effectively deal with child's rights.

##### **□ Recommendations**

Recommendations are:

- A children's protection department should be established to ensure the safety of children;
- This department must cooperate with the police and social workers and take necessary legal steps against perpetrators of child abuse.
- This department must arrange or organise gatherings for children where they are educated concerning their rights.
- The government must open free life lines for children in need of help.

### 6.3 CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that there is a strong relationship between child abuse and academic performance. Abused children are deprived in numerous ways including academic performance and behaviour.

There are many factors that can be attributed to the occurrence of child abuse. These include among other things unemployment, poverty, inheritance, stress, large families, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, young and insecure parents, aggressive parents, inadequate or mentally subnormal parents, alcohol or drug abuse and ill-health, isolation, women who have been refused termination of pregnancies, parenting styles and divorce (refer to paragraph 2.4).

However, in Lesotho, the focus of this study, it was found that child abuse is mostly caused by unemployment, poverty, inadequate social knowledge about children's growth, unwanted children and isolation.

Child abuse can also take various forms, namely: physical, sexual, emotional, economic and neglect (refer to paragraph 2.5). All these forms of abuse can occur at any place under any circumstances but the family has been found to be the major source of abuse (refer to paragraph 3.3.1). Abused children have, however, been shown to perform poorly on a number of things including language development, academic performance and behaviour. Hence the reason why there exists a relationship between child abuse and academic performance.

### 6.4 FINAL REMARK

It is trusted that this study will be valuable to various governments with regard to dealing with child abuse and meeting the needs of abused children. It is also hoped that this study will brighten the future of abused children in both SOS school and Hleoheng primary in Lesotho.

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# **ADDENDUM**

**ADDENDUM 1**

Free State University  
Box 339  
BLOEMFONTEIN 9300

18 September 1998

The Principal,  
SOS  
Maseru 100  
**LESOTHO**

Dear Madam,

**REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE A SURVEY STUDY AT YOUR SCHOOL**

I hereby apply to undertake a survey study at your school. I am currently doing a research on "The relationship between child abuse and academic performance - a qualitative study" as a requirement for my Masters degree in educational psychology at the University of the Orange Free State.

It is therefore felt that the contribution of your school will be of great value. The material that is going to be collected is for the purpose of the study and nothing else. It will not be used against anybody.

Thanking you in advance for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

*M. Monyane*

**MAKHOJANE MONYANE (9737111)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

NAME: .....

DATE OF BIRTH: ..... SEX: ..... AGE: .....

SCHOOL: .....

ADDRESS: .....

.....

**FAMILY**

FATHER: ..... AGE: .....

OCCUPATION: ..... QUALIFICATION: .....

MOTHER: ..... AGE: .....

OCCUPATION: ..... QUALIFICATION: .....

STEPFATHER'S NAME: ..... AGE: .....

OCCUPATION: ..... QUALIFICATION: .....

STEPMOTHER'S NAME: ..... AGE: .....

OCCUPATION: ..... QUALIFICATION: .....

SIBLINGS: NAME(S): ..... AGE: .....

NAME(S): ..... AGE: .....

NAME(S): ..... AGE: .....

TELEPHONE NUMBERS: .....

ANYONE ELSE LIVING IN YOUR HOUSE? .....

.....

RELATIONSHIP WITH THAT PERSON: .....

**ABUSE**

DO YOU LOVE YOUR FAMILY AT LARGE? .....

HAS ANYONE EVER ABUSED YOU IN YOUR FAMILY? .....

HOW WERE YOU ABUSED? .....

WHEN DID THAT TAKE PLACE? .....

HOW OFTEN DID THAT HAPPEN? .....

DID YOU REPORT THAT TO ANYONE? .....

WHO IS THAT? .....

IF YES, WHY DID YOU DO IT? .....

WHAT DID YOU DO THEN? .....

HOW OLD WERE YOU THEN? .....

DO YOU HAVE ANY MARKS OF ABUSE? .....

WHAT TYPE/KIND? .....

**EMOTIONS**

HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT YOURSELF BEFORE THE ABUSE: .....

.....

WHAT ABOUT NOW? .....

.....

.....

CAN YOU FACE YOUR ABUSER? .....

.....

.....

CAN YOU STAY WITH THAT PERSON AGAIN? .....

.....

.....

WHY? .....

.....

.....

HOW CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOURSELF AND YOUR  
ABUSER? .....

.....

.....

**SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PEOPLE**

DID YOU HAVE FRIENDS BEFORE THE ABUSE? .....

.....  
HOW ABOUT NOW? .....

.....  
DO YOU STILL RELATE WELL WITH OTHER PUPILS? .....

.....  
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN PUNISHED BECAUSE OF BEATING OTHER STUDENTS AT SCHOOL? .....

.....  
HOW OFTEN DID THAT HAPPEN? .....

.....  
WHY DID YOU DO IT? .....

**ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

**SCHOOL**

DID YOU ATTEND SCHOOL BEFORE THE ABUSE? .....

HOW DID YOU PERFORM ACADEMICALLY BY THEN? .....

.....  
DID YOUR PARENTS EVER PRAISE YOU FOR YOUR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE?

.....  
.....  
DO YOU STILL ATTEND SCHOOL NOW? .....

.....  
.....  
WHO PAYS FOR YOUR SCHOOL FEES? .....

.....  
.....  
HOW DO YOU PERFORM ACADEMICALLY NOW? .....

.....  
.....  
ARE YOU FREE TO ASK QUESTIONS IN CLASS? .....

.....  
.....  
WHY? .....

.....  
.....  
DO YOU SOMETIMES SCORE LOWER MARKS THAN YOU EXPECTED? .....

.....  
.....  
IF SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE CAUSE OF ALL THESE? .....

.....  
HAVE YOU EVER REPEATED THE SAME CLASS MORE THAN ONCE? .....

.....  
IF YES, WHY? .....

.....  
IF YOU HAD THE CHANCE, WOULD YOU LEAVE SCHOOL TOMORROW? .....

.....  
NOW THAT YOU STAY AWAY FROM YOUR ABUSER, HOW DO YOU PERFORM  
ACADEMICALLY? .....

.....  
CAN YOU GO HOME NOW? .....

.....  
WHY? .....

**CONCENTRATION**

.....  
DO YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS WITH CONCENTRATING IN CLASS? .....

.....  
CAN YOU GIVE REASONS FOR YOUR CONCENTRATION PROBLEMS? .....

.....  
.....  
DO YOU SOMETIMES JUST FEEL BORED IN CLASS? WHY? .....

.....  
.....

<p><b>PUNISHMENT AT SCHOOL</b></p>
------------------------------------

DO YOU LIKE ALL YOUR TEACHERS AT SCHOOL? .....

.....  
.....  
IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE IN CLASS, DO YOU RECEIVE EQUAL PUNISHMENT FROM YOUR TEACHERS? .....

DO YOUR TEACHERS SOMETIMES PUNISH YOU WITHOUT EXPLANATIONS? .....

.....  
.....  
WHAT KIND OF PUNISHMENT DID YOU RECEIVE? .....

.....  
.....  
DO YOU THINK THE PUNISHMENT WAS JUST/FAIR? .....

.....  
.....  
WHAT DOES YOUR TEACHERS SOMETIMES SAY TO YOU WHICH YOU DISLIKE MOST?  
.....

.....  
DO YOU SOMETIMES FEEL LIKE RUNNING AWAY FROM SCHOOL? WHY? .....

.....  
DO YOU THINK THERE ARE SOME STUDENTS WHO ARE FAVOURED MOST BY YOUR  
TEACHERS? WHY? .....

ARE THERE OTHER STUDENTS WHO LIKE BULLYING OTHERS AT SCHOOL? .....

.....  
ARE YOU ONE OF THEM? .....

.....  
OK, IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE ME TO KNOW ABOUT YOURSELF? .....

.....  
(THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION. I REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR  
HELP)

Eleoheng Primary Sch.  
P.O. Maputsee 350  
Lesotho.

15/10/98

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Miss 'Makhojane Monyane interviewed two pupils who had been sexually abused.

Yours faithfully

*S.E. Monyane*

S.E. Monyane

Case number: *MAPUTSOE REC: 78-10-98*  
*REC: 89-10-98*



*2/30/98 Maput.*