

**PERCEPTIONS ON HOW INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS AFFECT THE  
QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

by

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## DEDICATION

This study is dedicate to my wife Monica, my two daughters, Nyiko and Khensani and my sister Nettah.



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## **ABSTRACT**

This research essay is an attempt to ascertain the perceptions of educators on how living in an informal settlement affects the quality of secondary school education. The setting for the study was schools in Etwatwa informal settlement. The study explores through the combination of interviews and direct observation what educators perceptions are about the issue.

The study sought to find out whether living in an informal settlement effects the quality of education for secondary school pupils. Research findings reveal that the quality of education in secondary schools situated in formal settlements differs from the quality of education in secondary schools that are situated in informal settlements.

Research findings suggest that many learners in informal settlements secondary schools, experience more socio-economic problems such as child-abuse, lack of parental care, poverty, violence and crime in their area and homes. Evidence also reveal that many children live in highly congested homes where it is almost impossible to study. These factors impact in a negative way on their schooling.

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# SECTION ONE: OVERVIEW

## 1 INTRODUCTION

For the past decade or so, South Africa has been experiencing an enormous growth of informal settlements in all parts of the country, especially in the periphery of many towns. This mushrooming of informal settlements has forced the government to supply essential services such as water, sanitation, electricity and education to these areas. The provision of quality education is one of the most essential needs of any country. Hillary (1991:6) states that the provision of physical and social services including schools, to the informal communities, clearly now has to find its way into the mainstream planning.

This research study has been prompted by an assumed difference in the standard of education between schools in formal townships and those in informal settlements. Education seems to be running comparatively smoother in formal township schools than in those in informal settlements. Fleisch and De Clercq (1993) state that there will never be parity or equity for rural education or for communities, because the whole education continues to be conceptualised in middle-class urban terms. In this research study an attempt is made to ascertain the perceptions of teachers who teach in secondary schools situated in the free-standing informal settlement of Etwatwa as well as the students. The aim of this research study is to assess whether the setting of a school, in this case in Etwatwa informal settlement does affect the education of the students particularly in secondary schools in our country.

The research is purely an exploratory study aimed at recording the perceptions of secondary school teachers in Etwatwa. The study will harness data through the combination of personal interviews with nine educators and six students selected from three different secondary schools in and around Etwatwa informal settlement. Reviewing of important artifacts, such as school documents, academic records and students' daily attendance class registers, will also be done.



## 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Etwatwa is an informal settlement adjacent to Daveyton Township. Daveyton is a formal settlement, situated about 10 km east of Benoni. Etwatwa informal settlement was established in 1981 to circumvent the growing problem of housing in Daveyton. It is adjoined to the old township of Daveyton on the eastern side. Etwatwa informal settlement emerged unplanned, due to the internal rivalry amongst the then Daveyton councilors. All services rendered started after the area has been invaded by squatters, who were organised by political figures in the community. The planning for essential services such as education, water, health centres, sanitation and electricity could not take place beforehand, due to the spontaneous emergence of Etwatwa informal settlement.

The demographic composition of this area is very complex. It consists of black ethnic groupings from over South Africa, as well as the neighbouring countries such as Mozambique, Swaziland, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Malawi. The population is estimated at 130 131 people. The greater Benoni town council estimate the size of this area to be about 1 209 573 hectares. The number of secondary schools in this area is five. It is obvious that there is an acute shortage of secondary schools, given the fact that there should be one secondary school per 250 sqm as stated in the new formula of school provisioning (Jacklin, 1991).

The problem investigated in this research study, is the effects of living in an informal settlement on education. The research will endeavour to find out whether education is affected by the social conditions of this informal settlement area, or not. The Etwatwa informal settlement is characterized by a lack of infrastructure and services. Most homes do not have electricity, running water or toilet facilities.

Furthermore, due to its unplanned growth, no recreational amenities such as parks and sport fields are available to children of Etwatwa. These circumstances are perceived to be detrimental to school-going children and will impact on their educational development and their eventual contribution to their communities as

adults.

## **1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The primary aim of this inquiry is to assess the perception of secondary school educators on how informal settlements affect the quality of secondary education in Etwatwa.

The aims and objectives of the study are as follows:

- To consider the effects of recent growth of informal settlements on education in the Etwatwa informal settlement.
- To identify any differences between Etwatwa and Daveyton on educational standards, resulting from socio-economic and demographic character of the inhabitants of Etwatwa.
- To identify significant differences if any, in the perceptions of educational needs among teachers.
- To make pertinent recommendations towards the improvement of education.
- Since the study focusses on how teachers perceive the effects of informal settlements on education, the research results may stimulate further research in future on this topic.

## **1.3 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following three research questions emanated from the research problem:

- (i) What are the teachers' perceptions of the effects of informal settlements on the quality of education?

- (ii) What are the causes of poor results in secondary school education in Etwatwa informal settlement?
  
- (iii) What are the educational problems that secondary school learners experience in Etwatwa?

#### **1.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODS**

The data collection activities in a research study can be carried out in close proximity to a local setting for a specific period of time (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this research I will conduct in-depth interviews with nine teachers and six students who will be selected from three secondary schools in Etwatwa informal settlement. Three teachers and two students will be interviewed at each school. In addition, artifacts such as the academic results grade nine to grade twelve will be reviewed to determine the academic progress of students. According to Patton (1987), in-depth interviews involve open-ended questions, listening to and recording the answers, and then following up with additional relevant questions.

Patton (1987) classifies qualitative interviewing into three approaches. These are: the informal conversational interview, the general interview guide-approach and the standardized open-ended interview. In this research study I will follow the standardized open-ended interviews and the general interview approach. Patton (1987) describes standardized open-ended interviews as consisting of a set of questions carefully worded and arranged for the purpose of taking each respondent through the same sequence and asking each respondent the same questions.

The general interview guide is a list of questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of the interview. An interview guide is prepared to make sure that essentially the same information is obtained from a number of people by covering the same material (Patton, 1987). Both individual and group interviews will be used depending on the availability of time. For clarity, probing will be used. Dane

(1990:30) defines probing as a phrase or a question used by an interviewer to prompt the respondent to elaborate on a particular response. To make sure that all information is not lost, I will use a tape deck recorder as my data gathering instrument.

The second research strategy to be used will be the reviewing of school documents and examination results for grades nine to twelve. The aim is to record the academic progress made by students in the three previous years.

Le Compte and Preissle (1993:56) refer to selection as a more general process of focussing and choosing what to study. It also involves defining what kinds of people and how many of them can be studied, as well as when, where and under which circumstances the samples will be studied. The selection of participants in this research study will be done through random sampling for both staff and students.

The process of data analysis will take place as soon as the first interviews have been conducted. This will take place through open-coding which is a process of giving names, categorising and comparing the transcribed data (Strauss & Corbin, 1991:62).

## **1.5 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS**

### **Informal settlement**

Informal settlements emerged as a result of illegal squatting, by a group of people, on a piece of land or property which does not belong to them. Once such a community receives approval from the government or municipalities to be there, it is now referred to as an informal settlement (Durandt, 1995).

## **Secondary education**

Secondary education is education which is offered at the secondary school level. It normally starts from grade 8 to 12.

### **1.6 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Though the theoretical population will be all the schools in the Etwatwa informal settlement, the study will delimit itself to only three secondary schools. These schools are however considered to be representative of the student community residing in this informal settlement.

### **1.7 ORGANISATION OF THE RESEARCH ESSAY**

This essay is divided into four sections. Section one provided an overview of the study. Section two deals with the conceptual and theoretical framework. Section three provides a description of the methodology, and describes the data collection and analysis. Section four is the report of the research findings. This process engages interpretation of information, validation, forming the conclusion and then making recommendations.

### **1.8 CONCLUSION**

This section is an introduction to this research study. It provided the background to the study, aims and objectives, research questions and methodology. The next section will focus on literature study.

## SECTION TWO: REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

### 2 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this section is to review the selected literature that deals with education in informal settlements. Secondly, it will focus on the teacher's perceptions with regard to the influence of informal settlements on secondary education in Etwatwa informal settlement.

This section will also present theoretical outline of the state of education in informal settlements areas. It will also review the role of government and NGO's in education in and around informal settlements.

According to the new *Oxford English, Dictionary*, (1993) perception is that act of the mind whereby the mind becomes conscious of things such as hunger, thirst or cold. Perception comes through personal observation. In this study, teachers will be asked to give their personal views concerning the state of education in secondary schools in Etwatwa informal settlement and how they regard the influence of informal settlements on education.

It is vital to record or hear the views of educators and students of secondary schools, situated in and around Etwatwa informal settlement since they possess first hand information of the circumstances. Teachers and students are placed in a better position to analyse the situation in a more practical way. Hammersley (1977) confirms this notion when he states that the nature of teachers' perception is determined both by factors operating at a particular point in time and by factors which have shaped the teacher's perception in the past.

#### 2.1 THE STATE OF EDUCATION IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

According to Platzky and Walker (in Le Roux, 1995) education in informal settlements has never taken place under normal conditions. In some squatter

camps education was virtually non-existent (Le Roux, 1995). Schools were kilometers away in the formal townships from these squatter camps. Parents are obliged by circumstances to send their children to schools in formal townships. Lack of adequate transport to get to these schools became a handicap.

Some poor parents struggle daily to get money for their children's education. This situation created a great predicament to those children from informal settlement areas. Due to those problems, some children drop-out of the school. It is evident that educational opportunities have not been easily accessible to all the children from the informal settlement areas (Le Roux, 1995).

The reluctance of the government to provide services to these fast growing informal settlements has contributed greatly to the shortage of schools in informal settlements. It took the former government quite some time to regard informal settlements as new, permanent developments. Therefore, this remained a perennial problem for nearly two decades and it is seemingly still a problem today. It is only since 1989 that the department of education started a planning process for school facilities in the informal settlements (Jacklin in Hillary *et al*, 1991).

It was virtually impossible for the Department of Education and Training (DET) to cope with the demand of schools in informal settlements. This resulted in them having to contend with a backlog which was already difficult to circumvent within a short period of time. For instance, in Etwatwa informal settlement the first secondary school was only established in 1992, which was almost ten years after Etwatwa informal settlement was established.

Jacklin (1991) reports that an investigation conducted by the policy and practice unit in 1980 on the provision of schools to shack dwellers in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand and Vereeniging areas reveals that the department of Education and Training's perception of 1981 was that, from a national planning point of view, squatter camps were a very low priority. Secondly, these squatter camps were handled at a local level by regional directors as crisis situations. The response in

these offices was that there was no money in reserve for crisis management.

The report further states that shack dwellers were excluded from the process of normal provision of schools. Based on this report I am tempted to believe that provision for schools in informal settlements were never entertained by the authorities. During this period, squatter camps were spreading like wild fire throughout the country. The problem of schooling in informal settlements grew all the greater as a result of a gross shortage of classes.

A survey conducted by Schlemmer and Woodle in 1988, suggests that classroom shortages in 1989 was estimated at 159,84 classrooms of which 99,506 were at secondary schools level throughout the country. Etwatwa informal settlement was among the most neglected areas in the provision of schools. This acute shortage of classrooms in Etwatwa informal settlement, resulted in the introduction of a platooning system which is double session system at the schools.

Almost all informal settlements were characterized by lack of services and proper infrastructure. There is often no electricity available in the children's homes. Sometimes water has to be fetched from far away. In addition, there was no proper sanitation. Sport and recreational facilities are also lacking. This situation results in children having nothing constructive to do but to roam about and idle in town (Le Roux, 1995).

These conditions are perceived to be educationally detrimental to the children of school-going age especially secondary school children. According to Gowan and Demos (in Le Roux, 1995) this type of environment is described as an impoverished environment that is devoid of opportunities for adequate cognitive development. According to Le Roux (1995), the depriving nature of squatter camps or informal settlements impedes the children's optimal development.



## 2.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN DAVEYTON

The growth of informal settlements in Gauteng Province (formally known as Pretoria Witwatersrand Vereeniging area), started in the early 1980s. Daveyton is a township falling within this province in the magisterial area of Benoni. The greater Benoni city council, indicates that, Etwatwa informal settlement also came into being in the 1980s. The establishment of Etwatwa informal settlement resulted in educational problems for the area. The area was plunged into a serious educational crisis due to the lack of enough foundation phase and secondary schools.

This information is supported by the report compiled by the centre for policy studies of the University of Witwatersrand (1991). This report states that provision of formal education in the fast growing informal settlements in Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging region was in a crisis or near-crisis condition. It is therefore, fair to conclude that schooling at Etwatwa informal settlement has had serious problems since its emergence. Since its establishment from 1980 to 1995, a great number of learners, both primary and secondary school-going children, had to travel from Etwatwa informal settlement to Daveyton township for schooling. This brought serious financial hardship for predominantly poor parents, because the traveling costs were a major expenditures to them.

Report no 1 for the Centre for Policy Studies (1991) states that  $\pm 69\%$  of people interviewed indicated that formal schools were too far from their areas. The planning for building schools in Etwatwa informal settlement did not take place simultaneously with the emergence of this informal settlement. The main reason for this is that like other informal settlements in South Africa, they developed spontaneously. To compound this problem the national Department of Education and Training perceived planning for informal settlement as not of a national issue but rather a regional issue (Jacklin 1991).

The perception of the DET that the provision of schools in squatter camps, was not

the responsibility of the department, caused the already existing crisis to deepen further since very few schools were built during this period. Furthermore, the rapid growing of squatter camps in the urban areas attracted a great number of immigrants from economically disadvantaged rural areas. Jacklin, (1991) reports that the Urban Foundation's research estimated in 1990 that there were already over 2,5 million people living in informal settlements in Gauteng province. Even though we do not have the latest statistics, it is logical to assume that this number has doubled by now. The more the number increases, the more the need for the provision of education increases.

### **2.3 THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN EDUCATION IN THE INFORMAL SETTLEMENT**

The key to improve the quality of education in informal settlement lies in the co-efforts of all stakeholders with the government being perceived as the main stakeholder.

The government plans the infrastructure and provide all services which are essential to all inhabitants of a particular area. Unless the government's planning for the provision of essential services, such as schools, are in keeping with the fast growth of squatter camps, education will remain a perennial dilemma for decades to come. This opinion is supported by the research reports on educational development.

Deducing from many research findings it is explicit that the new democratic government is faced with a mammoth task of providing schools in informal settlements. Education should be placed on top in their priority list, in order to eradicate the backlog of education facilities. Le Roux (1995), suggests that the government in conjunction with different stakeholders such as the community and private sector, should introduce compensatory education for environmentally deprived children. According to Booyse (in Le Roux, 1995), compensatory education refers to educational program practices, projects and techniques to

overcome the deficiencies of children from culturally or environmentally deprived homes, so as to enable them to fulfil the fundamental purposes of education. The government's role is very important in this regard.

The importance of the role of the government in education is explicitly emphasized by the working committee in their final set of principles for the provision of education, in RSA (1981). Principle number six states that the provision of formal education shall be a responsibility of the state. The government as the custodian of the state's money is supposed to play a vital or leading role in providing adequate schools especially in impoverished informal settlements. Research indicates that without government assistance, the quality of living in informal settlements will never improve. Houses should be built and infrastructure, and other services should be provided.

Conducive physical settings is vital for smooth running of educational programmes. Emaclver (in Le Roux, 1995) states that education does not occur in a physical vacuum or in nothingness. He further states that physical locality or space must be available or present before education can occur. Good schools are examples of such places. The more the government provides educational facilities, the more the majority of our youth will have the opportunities to learn and become economically and socially independent. The government's prerogative should be to provide access to piped water and electricity in the dwellings of South African households and in schools situated in and around informal settlement to match those in formal townships.

Based on the historical background given by many researchers concerning provision of schools in informal settlements there is more need for provision of schools in informal settlements than in formal townships where the erection of schools had been a planned endeavour. The general argument here is that, shack dwellers were excluded from the process of the provision of schools, as were the established norms and standards of education in this country.

Certain historical and demographic factors would suggest that in order to achieve greater equity in the short term, greater expenditure should be allocated to shack areas than to established areas (Jacklin, 1991). It is suggested that the government should focus on building more schools in informal settlements than any already established areas in our country. The main funding of schools comes from the government. The government pays teachers' salaries and provides textbooks and stationery as well as teaching aids equipment. The community of informal settlements are described as composed of people with very low wage-earning capacities. Their financial resources support the notion that they have no capacity to meet the demands for education of their children (Hillary, 1991).

#### **2.4 THE ROLE OF NGO'S IN EDUCATION IN THE INFORMAL SETTLEMENT**

Due to the impoverishment of informal settlements, outside assistance of NGO's and partnerships are often utilized. An NGO is a non-governmental organization. The NGO's have different functions such as civic action, community work including social services provision, cultural activity, political work, education, research and resource provision (Fitzgerald, 1993). One of the main purposes of some NGOs is to render philanthropic work amongst the poor, the sick and the needy. However, NGOs were categorized into two types: the welfare service providers and empowerment NGOs, which provide services through either health, non formal education and research support. The service welfare oriented NGOs were the first to emerge and were guided by the work of missionaries. The empowerment type have been more of a phenomenon since 1950s (Walter, 1993). In South Africa the purposes and functions of NGOs were primarily to empower the poor and the oppressed. The general aim of NGOs was to help the state to provide services to the community. However, NGOs as non government structures, functioned autonomously from the dominance and dictatorship of the government (Fitzgerald, 1993).

Based on these theoretical arguments, we can conclude that NGOs can play a major role in promoting education in informal settlements. NGOs can be involved

in service training for teachers, adult literacy programs and even building of schools or additional classrooms.

## **2.5 COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION**

The community can play a vital role in compensatory education, which refers to additional educational programs, practicals and techniques, to overcome the deficiencies that children from culturally deprived homes experience (Booyesen, in Le Roux, 1995). During an educational crisis in the informal settlement, communities organize themselves and start to establish community schools. The communities normally buy materials and built schools themselves. After building some schools, they turn to the government for funding. The government's response is usually positive in this regard. In this way a normal standardized school is established (Jacklin, 1991).

According to Zimmerman and Inghan, (in Modgil & Lynch, 1997) the involvement of local communities can be considered critical factors in each area of educational development. One can deduce from this statement that communities in the informal settlements are expected to play a vital role in education. Fleisch and Clercq (1993) report on Winterveld, a settlement in which a number of private schools were initiated by the community. The difference is that these schools were established by ethnic groups such as Shangaans and Zulus, when the Bophuthatswana government stopped the teaching of other African languages in all the schools falling within Bophutatswana boundaries.

## **2.6 THE INFLUENCE OF THE ENVIRONMENT ON EDUCATION IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS**

The environment in which a child grows up plays an important role in the direction and outcome of the child's development. In a squatter camp situation, which can be described as a depriving environment, we can conclude that the child's optimal educational development will be stifled (Le Roux, 1995).

According to Le Roux (1995:86) the home, as a facet of the environment, plays a major role in preparing the child for adult life. Le Roux continues to say that the family, is the first and basic educating agent in the child's life. In informal settlements, houses and shacks are built by poor materials such as timber and old corrugated iron. In most Etwatwa homes and schools, there is no electricity nor sewage removal. The local politics such as clashes and strikes contributed adversely towards the education in the informal settlements.

Due to the informal way in which the informal settlements developed, living space is cramped and the houses are small. There is very little privacy and no opportunity for family interaction. Research reveals that there are up to fifteen people living in one small shack consisting of two bedrooms and a small kitchen. The kitchen mostly also serves as a dining room, a sitting room and an extra bedroom for the children (Durandt, 1995). Hillary and Schlemmer (1991) cited overcrowded shacks, the absence of electric lights, the noise and constant insecurity, as important factors contributing to the low quality of education in informal settlements.

Hillary and Schlemmer's report (1991) is supported by Jacklin's report on the provision of schools to shack dwellers, which reveals that students in informal settlements were subjected to discomfort, noise and in some areas the constant insecurity (Jacklin, 1991).

Another contributing factor is that the fathers are mostly absent and as a result there is no authoritative figure present to discipline the children. The environment is a prerequisite for change and no transformation can occur without the complementary role of the environment.

According to Le Roux (1995) the educational setting is equivalent to the environment. He further states that education may thus be conceived as an act of mediating between the child and the environment. Children need conducive environment for them to prosper in their learning. According to Pretorius (in Le

Roux, 1995), children from squatter areas, being environmentally deprived, often display undesirable behaviour patterns and attitudes such as troublesomeness in class. They also experience educational distress and they feel inferior. They also show resentment and embitterment when they fail. In conclusion, the social life in shanty towns is not conducive to adequate child development.

## 2.7 INTRODUCING A NEW MODEL OF SCHOOLING

To meet the demands of a complex community such as the Etwatwa community, a new model of schooling needs to be introduced. All stakeholders should be involved in the establishment of a core plus curriculum of the schools.

Townsend (1994:113) argues that the concept of a core-plus school in the wider sense, may well be one outcome of higher levels of community involvement in school decision-making and management. The success or effectiveness of the school is based on the notion that all goals, both mandatory and local need to be achieved by all stakeholders.

According to him, the core-plus definition of school effectiveness enables the schools to meet the requirements of the state in terms of minimal standards in literacy and numeracy.

In this context the "core" will be the school and its mandated obligations and the "plus" will be the identified needs of the community of the Etwatwa informal settlement and its environment. I am of the opinion that the school cannot be separated from the community because the two are linked and affect each other. The government would need to be involved by making sure that enough secondary schools are built and educational equipment are provided. The community should see itself as a partner of the process and also become involved if the quality of education is to be improved. In this type of school, the government together with the community should work together in designing a wide-ranging curriculum that incorporates those areas required of all the schools (Townsend, 1994). Secondly,

the parents get involved in decision-making for the education of their children.

This school model assists in linking the school, the home or community and the state in a partnership. Minzey and Townsend (1984) point out that there are two concerns for any school improvement activities that accept the "core-plus" framework. The first is the development of the school culture to embrace the "core-plus" concept. The second one is the process of redesigning school facilities, organization and resources, to enable the "core-plus" concept to be implemented. The social environment of the area and the socio-economic conditions of the children's homes, could affect the quality of education for our children in schools. For instance, violence, crime, political conflicts, poverty, home violence and lack of parental control over the children will affect their education.

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

This section discussed the literature pertaining to my research study. Assessment of the conditions of education in informal settlement schools is important. The findings will help the authorities of the Department of Education and all the stakeholders, in finding ways and means of improving the quality of education in secondary schools, and their outcomes.

Comparisons between education received in schools which are situated in informal settlements and those schools which are found in formal settlements can be made to determine as to whether the children receive equal education. It is therefore important for investigation to be conducted. The next section will describe the data collection process and the presentation of data.



## **SECTION THREE: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

### **3 INTRODUCTION**

In this section I will focus on how permission was gained to enter into the setting and how data was collected, processed and analysed. This section will focus on the following aspects: data collection procedures, data analysis and processing and consolidation of data.

#### **3.1 THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS**

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) a conceptual framework explains graphically or in a narrative form, the main things to be studied and discusses key factors the study is concerned with. The study has a qualitative research design. According to Sherman and Webb (1988:7) qualitative implies a direct concern with experience as it is 'lived' or 'felt' or 'undergone'. In the context of this research study, I have attempted to collect raw data directly from the schools and from those who work within the schools. The teachers and students of secondary schools situated in Etwatwa informal settlement were the population for my research study. For manageability I delimited the study to three schools in this settlement.

My aim in this research study, was to investigate the teachers' perceptions about the influence that living in a informal settlement has on education. The main method, which I employed in this research study, was the interviewing of secondary school teachers and students. This method forms the basis of my research design. Rubin and Rubin (1995:42) state that research design is about planning what you are going to ask, whom you are going to ask and why you are asking. The design helped the researcher to collect credible data in a systematic and thoughtful way.

It is for reasons stated in the previous paragraph that I have selected secondary

schools from Etwatwa informal settlement, with the purpose of recording the effects informal living has on secondary school education in Etwatwa Informal settlement. I have chosen to use interviewing as my main research method because qualitative interviewing is flexible, interactive and continuous (Rubin & Rubin, 1995:43). Rubin and Rubin (1995:45) further state that by flexible design we mean adjusting the design as you go along to accommodate questioning the subjects. During my interviews, the participants were encouraged to ask questions where they want some clarity or did not understand a question.

According to Creswell (1994) data collection involves setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through observation, interviews, documents and visual materials. In this research study, I have employed interviewing and to a lesser extent observation as my research methods.

Data for this research study were collected by means of interviews, observations and artifacts. According to Patton (1987), the fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms. In this research study, teachers and learners were asked to give their own perceptions pertaining to my research questions. Three secondary schools situated in Etwatwa informal settlement formed the theoretical population of the study. In each of these secondary schools, three educators and two learners were selected for the sample.

The three secondary schools, which I visited, were B.B. Myathaza Secondary School, Dr. Harry Gwala Secondary School and Phandimfundo Secondary School. Permission to gain access to these schools was asked telephonically. This process was easy for me since I knew all the principals of the secondary schools. During my first telephone conversation with the principals, I introduced myself as an M.Ed student doing research in the field of community education at Rand Afrikaans University (RAU). I also shared with each principal that two other secondary schools were also part of the study. The principals were also informed that their schools were selected using certain criteria such as the location of the school and

the demographic character and their staff and school. The principals were asked to distribute my research topic to the teachers who were selected by the staff as interviewees, to prepare them for the interview. I discussed the aims and importance of the study with the principals during my first telephone conversation. Seeking permission to gain entry into the research site was considered.

All the principals granted me permission to visit their schools to interview their teaching staff and students. I followed up the telephonic conversations with the visits to the three schools to make the final arrangements for my visits. We agreed on specific days and times on which I could visit the schools. I was to visit one school per day so as to have enough time for my interviews.

### **3.2 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

#### **The participants of the study**

In qualitative research, the researcher needs to purposefully select participants who have knowledge relevant to the research topic and who will be able to give answers to the research questions (Cresswell, 1994). In this inquiry, the participants were teachers and students from three secondary schools. The participation in this inquiry was voluntary. Experienced teachers who have taught in both informal and formal settlements were selected for the sample. The sample of students was drawn from grade 11 and grade 12 only, through random sampling.

#### **The setting**

Marshall and Rossman, (1995) describe observation as a systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours and artifacts in the social setting chosen for the study. In the context of my research study observation entailed evaluating the physical setting where the research was conducted, the surroundings within and outside of the schoolyard and of Etwatwa informal settlement. During my visits

to schools where I conducted my interviews I also observed the activities of both teachers and students.

I observed them when they were coming to school in the morning, after break and during teaching hours on the school campus. In this case I applied covert observation which Paton (1987) describes as observation which takes place without the people being aware that they are being observed. I assumed the position of an onlooker during my observation.

The first secondary school which I visited, was B.B. Myathaza Secondary School, named after a well-known musician called Mr. B.B. Myathaza. This secondary school was established in 1988. The school was started in the formal settlement of Daveyton, sharing classrooms with Katlego Primary School. The exercise of classroom sharing lasted for approximately six years before B.B. Myathaza was moved to its own buildings during the middle of 1993. The school was relocated to Etwatwa informal settlement as the first secondary school to be built in that area. In the thirteenth year of its existence the settlement had no secondary school, children had to travel to Daveyton for their secondary education.

B.B. Myathaza Secondary School is situated on the south western side of Etwatwa informal settlement. It has a student enrolment of 1 546, of which 823 are girls and 723 are boys. The staff size including the principal, is 49. It is a state school, as the Department of Education and Training erected the buildings. The buildings are well structured but in a vandalized condition. The school has 32 classrooms, two laboratories and two home economic centres.

B.B. Myathaza Secondary School has one big staff room and seven offices (including the principal's office and the administration clerk's office). During my observation of the physical condition of the school, I discovered that some classrooms had some broken windowpanes. The ceiling and light fittings needed replacement in certain classrooms. B.B. Myathaza caters for grades 8 to 12. The school is surrounded by free-standing shacks built out of different types of

materials, such as old corrugated iron, asbestos and concrete slabs.

There is a railway line which runs very close to the school on the eastern side of the school. The school has a strong concrete palisade fence erected around it. I observed that some students wore their school uniform and others not. I also observed the students coming back to school after break or before school starts. Almost half of the student population were late for classes. Some came running and others seemed not to worry much about their late coming. I randomly asked some of the late-comers why they were late. Most of them said that they stay very far from school and they walk to and from school every day. Others cited shortage of transport as a reason.

The second school, which I visited, was Dr. Harry Gwala Secondary School. Dr. Harry Gwala Secondary School was built in 1994. It was built by the private sector as a donation to the community of Etwatwa. This school is situated almost in the centre of Etwawa informal settlement, in Emaphupheni. This is a Zulu name meaning the place of dreams or a place where dreams are realized.

Dr. Harry Gwala Secondary School is situated very close to the only main road leading from Daveyton formal settlement to Etwatwa informal settlement. A large number of taxis use Eisselen Street. Very close to the school along the school fence, vendors trade all sorts of items such as fruit and vegetables and sweets. Some vendors also sell live chickens.

Across Eisselen Street is a very big shopping centre called Las Vegas. This shopping centre is very busy. The centre also has a liquor store. During the time when I visited the area for observation, I noticed quite a number of youngsters aged between eight and seventeen years coming in and out of this shopping centre carrying boxes of liquor. The reason for my observation of this shopping centre and the main road was to have a clear picture of what is going on there and link it with the data collected from the interviewees from Dr. Harry Gwala Secondary School.

Dr. Harry Gwala Secondary School is flanked by three more streets. The two streets on the western side and the eastern side of the school also have heavy traffic during the day. Nearly every two minutes I could hear the noise of passing cars or taxis.

Dr. Harry Gwala has a total student population of 1 222 this year. There are 667 girls and 555 boys. The staff establishment, including the principal, is 35. There are 18 classrooms, one laboratory one home economics centre and a computer centre. The classrooms are very small. There are only three offices, one for the principal, one for the deputy principal and the other one is for administration personnel. There is also one small staff-room attached to the administration block.

The school buildings at Dr. Harry Gwala Secondary School are still new and seem to be well looked after. The school grounds are well maintained. I also visited a few classrooms and found them to be clean, with very few broken windowpanes. The school is surrounded by a wire fence. There is also electricity at the school. Dr. Harry Gwala Secondary School is situated in an area surrounded by free-standing shacks. The shacks are constructed with different types of old materials such as corrugated iron, concrete slabs and asbestos. Most shacks are too small and can only accommodate four people in a family. Noise from music played in some shacks could be heard on the school grounds. Dr. Harry Gwala has no sporting facilities nor a school library.

Phandimfundo Secondary School was the last school I visited. This school was established in 1998 in response to the fast growing community of Etwatwa informal settlement. When Phandimfundo started, it had no buildings of its own and was accommodated at three primary schools in the formal settlement of Daveyton. Since the beginning of 1998, the school had been operating on its own premises with its own buildings. Phandimfundo is situated on the northern eastern side of Etwatwa informal settlement. It is situated along a very busy road used by local minibus taxis.

The enrolment of the learners of the school for 1998 is 875 (485 girls and 390 boys), with a staff complement of 16, the principal included. Since the school buildings are still new because they were recently built, the buildings seem to be conducive for learning. On inspection of the physical setting, I spotted very few broken windowpanes. The school campus is still being cultivated.

Phandimfundo has no sporting facilities. The number of classrooms at the school are 34, three laboratories, one home economics, and one technical centre. There are four offices and one staff-room. The teacher-pupil ratio of the school is 1:54. Phandimfundo is situated in an area where it is surrounded by free standing shacks. Some of the people living near the school seem not to care that there is an educational institution on the door step. This was observed when I visited the school on two occasions. Each time I visited the school, very loud music was played by residents of the nearby shacks. The music was played throughout the day and was unbearable since it could be heard from within the classrooms.

Just like at the other schools, I observed that the students and teachers came late back to school from break. I randomly interviewed some of the students and asked them why they were late. Most of them cited the lateness of transport as a reason and stated that they stay very far from the school.

B.B. Myathaza and Phandimfundo Secondary Schools operated in Daveyton formal settlement before they were moved to Etwatwa, therefore, most of the staff members of both these schools have experience of teaching in both informal and formal settlements. These teachers are in a position to compare the two communities and their experiences in education.

### **3.3 INTERVIEWING**

The interviewing process took place in the second week of September 1998, towards the end of the third quarter of the year. The date and the starting time of the interview was mutually agreed upon by all parties involved. In this research

study I have chosen to use depth interviewing as my research design method (Rubin & Rubin, 1995:76), to ensure that the results are deep, detailed, vivid and clear. According to Patton, (1987) depth interviewing involves asking open-ended questions, listening to and recording the answers and then following them up with additional relevant questions.

In this study I employed semi-structured interview format. Schumacher and McMillan (1993:25) state that semi-structured interviews provide interviewees with choices from which the respondents answer. In the semi-structured interview, questions are phrased in such a way that they allow for individual responses. This is a flexible format, which allows the interviewer to "respond to situations at hand and to the emerging world view of the respondent, and the new ideas of the topic" (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993).

The researcher also used probing in certain instances. Dane (1990:30) defines probing as a phrase or a question used by the interviewer to prompt the respondent to elaborate on a particular response. Probing is very important because it assisted me getting more information and clarity from the respondents.

Two students in each school were interviewed together as a pair to enhance their confidence and relaxability. This means that in addition to the individual interviews conducted with the teachers, group interviews consisting of two each were also employed. Each school allocated me a secluded office to avoid distractions and disturbances while the interview was in progress. The interview offices were well organized, clean and furnished with three chairs and a table. There was an electric outlet in each office where I could get power for my tape-recorder.

The research instrument, which I used for this research study was the audio-tape-recorder. The purpose of using an audio tape recorder was to keep all the information gathered during our interview conversation. Secondly, it is practically impossible for the interviewer to write down everything that is said during the interview. Patton (1987) tells us that a tape recorder is part of the indispensable



equipment for researchers using qualitative methods. The researcher played the tapes after interviewing the teachers and learners of each school. The tapes were played at home and the information was transcribed into my note book as raw data.

The two chairs used by the interviewees were placed on opposite sides of the table. This arrangement made it possible for us to face one another in a relaxed and friendly way. The tape recorder was placed in the centre of the table. All the principals of the three secondary schools assigned one Head of department (HOD) who served as a co-ordinator of the interview programme.

Each time the participant entered the interview room I always greeted them by shaking hands with them. I then asked them to sit down. Before the actual interview process got started, I introduced myself and then asked them to introduce themselves. I then explained the purpose of my interview to them.

I also asked the participants to feel free to express themselves in the language of their choice. The participants were also assured that the information of the interview would be confidential. The researcher also informed the participants how long the interview was expected to last and asked them if they were willing to devote that time to me (Cresswell, 1998).

The language which was used during the interview of both teachers and students, was English since all interviewees opted to use English as their language of communication. The choice of English by all participants made my work as an interviewer much easier since there was no need for translation later. Interview questions which the students were asked differed from those of the teachers. However, there were a few questions that overlapped.

In this sub-section of the report, I will give examples of the questions that the teachers were asked and how they responded to the questions. I started the interviews by asking the teachers to describe their experiences at the school. In

addition, I also asked them to compare it with the experiences they had had in the formal settlement schools.

A teacher at School A said:

Most students come from poor family backgrounds and live in shacks. The home environment is totally not conducive for learning.

This opinion was shared by another teacher at School B, who happens to have taught in two formal settlement schools, when he said:

Some children live five or more in a shack, with their parents, because of being poor. Some of these parents sell liquor in these shacks and play loud music for their patrons. Such a situation do affect the education of the children.

Another teacher at School C also shared the same opinion, when he said:

Teachers are sometimes forced to donate some money to poor children to buy some lunch. Poverty at their homes affect their education because nearly all these children perform very badly in class.

From the six students who were interviewed, five shared the same opinion. Students in School B jointly said that they are both not able to study at home because they live in a shack and share a bedroom with six and seven siblings respectively. One of them said that she normally starts studying after the family has gone to sleep.

One teacher at School A said:

There is a high crime rate at Etwatwa to such an extent that it affects

the normal school, because most children are involved.

His opinion was supported by another teacher at School C, who said:

There is a high rate of murders and rapes and drug dealings in this area. Many people possess illegal firearms and there are gun shots throughout the night. Children are scared to stay alone and study at night. Education will never improve in this area until the problem of the high crime rate is solved.

However, one teacher at School B did not share the same opinion, he believed that the police are handling the situation well. He hopes that the quality of education will soon get better.

I also asked the teachers to describe their experience of teaching at schools situated at informal settlements and how the quality of education is in these schools as compared to the quality of education in schools situated in formal settlement areas.

Teacher A said that it is stressful to teach at schools situated in informal settlements. He said that children there, are not disciplined and are mostly demotivated.

This opinion was supported by four other teachers who also mentioned individually that students living in informal settlements are unruly and do not value education. This brings down the quality of education in our schools.

Another teacher said that teachers should not blame the situation and then sit and relax, but should strive to encourage the students to work hard and educate both, parents and students to value education as very important, in their lives. However, she did agree that the environment in Etwatwa is affecting the learning of children adversely.

All three schools are situated in areas which are surrounded by shacks, built with different materials which make them look very old. Most of the streets in the area are untarred and seem neglected for a long time. From two shacks, loud music was heard and it seemed to interfere with the learning process of the school. Along most of the streets many people were moving up and down and a number of teenagers (boys and girls) were standing in groups. Some of these teenagers were standing against the fence of the schools looking observantly at what was happening within the schoolyard. Sometimes the boys whistled and waved their hands, probably calling for the attention of their friends inside the schoolyard.

After break approximately half of the school children came late. Some were delivered to the school gates by local taxis. Even though they were late some children did not care to hurry to school. Some teachers stood at the gates trying to scare the children into hurrying to their classes.

### **3.4 ACADEMIC PROGRESS OF SENIOR STUDENTS AT THE SCHOOLS**

For this research study I requested the principals to allow me to review their academic results for the past three years. Secondly, I also asked for the attendance registers for 1998. The principals of all the three secondary schools willingly released schedules for all the grades for the past three years and attendance registers for this year for all the grades. There was a need for me to review these documents so as to confirm the validity of my data. The review of academic results per grade per year starting from 1995 reflected the following situation: Each school's results were reviewed and is recorded separately. For the purpose of anonymity the schools were named school A, B and C.

The following three tables reflect the academic progress of secondary studies at the three respective schools.

**TABLE 1: SCHOOL A**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>GRADES AND PASS PERCENTAGES</b>				
	<b>Grade 8</b>	<b>Grade 9</b>	<b>Grade 10</b>	<b>Grade 11</b>	<b>Grade 12</b>
<b>1995</b>					
<b>Pass percentages</b>	-	42 %	38 %	32 %	-
<b>1996</b>					
<b>Pass percentages</b>		45 %	41 %	40 %	0 %
<b>1997</b>					
<b>Pass percentages</b>		52 %	48 %	43 %	5 %

**TABLE 2: SCHOOL B**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>GRADES AND PASS PERCENTAGES</b>				
	<b>Grade 8</b>	<b>Grade 9</b>	<b>Grade 10</b>	<b>Grade 11</b>	<b>Grade 12</b>
<b>1995</b>					
<b>Pass percentages</b>	69,3 %	64,1 %	74,5 %	73 %	14 %
<b>1996</b>					
<b>Pass percentages</b>	68,4 %	65,7 %	72,6 %	72,2 %	16 %
<b>1997</b>					
<b>Pass percentages</b>	17,8 %	27,7 %	47,4 %	25,2 %	18,5 %

**TABLE 3: SCHOOL C**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>GRADES AND PASS PERCENTAGES</b>				
	<b>Grade 8</b>	<b>Grade 9</b>	<b>Grade 10</b>	<b>Grade 11</b>	<b>Grade 12</b>
<b>1995</b>					
<b>Pass percentages</b>	62 %	67 %	60 %	-	-
<b>1996</b>					
<b>Pass percentages</b>	71 %	68 %	67 %	50 %	-
<b>1997</b>					
<b>Pass percentages</b>	80 %	79 %	89 %	82 %	50 %

The reviewing of daily attendance class register for all the grades in all the three schools reveals that the daily attendance of students in all the three secondary schools, was unsatisfactory. Although the situation in all three schools was not exactly the same, there was not much difference.

A careful scrutiny of the attendance registers reflected the following situation, from Monday to Friday in all the three schools.

**TABLE 4: SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

<b>WEEK DAY</b>	<b>ESTIMATED STUDENT ATTENDANCE IN PERCENTAGES</b>
<b>MONDAY</b>	55 % TO 65 %
<b>TUESDAY</b>	70 % TO 80 %
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	80 % TO 95 %
<b>THURSDAY</b>	70 % TO 85 %
<b>FRIDAY</b>	40 % TO 55 %

The attendance statistics given above were based on the whole student population of each of the three secondary schools where my interviews took place.

### **3.5 ANALYSIS OF OBSERVATION AND INTERVIEW DATA**

#### **3.5.1 Data analysis process**

Patton, (1987:144) refers to data analysis as "the process of bringing order, organizing what is the into patterns and categories." Data analysis helps the researcher to test new knowledge and hypothesis. Miles and Huberman (1994:49) confirm this statement when they state that "through continuous analysis, a

researcher is helped to collect data for filling gaps or to test new hypothesis that emerge during analysis." In this research study therefore, the process of data analysis involved transcribing the interviewees responses at each school. The transcription took place after all the interviews were conducted. Secondly, the process of data analysis also involved coding, categorizing, clustering and finally consolidating the data. According to Rubin (1995:238) coding is the process of grouping interviewees' responses into categories that bring together the similar ideas, concepts or themes that the interviewees discovered. Miles and Huberman (1994:56) refer to coding as a process of analysing data. According to them "codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information."

Usually codes are attached to "chunks" of different size-words, phrases sentences or whole paragraphs, connected or unconnected to a specific setting (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, open coding was applied. According to Strauss and Cobin (1990:61) open coding refers to the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data.

Open coding may be approached in several different ways. Firstly, it may be done by analyzing the first interview and observation with a line-by-line analysis. Secondly, coding by sentence or paragraph and thirdly, by taking an entire document, observation or interview. In the case of this research study, I have employed the second approach, which is coding by sentence or paragraph. Strauss and Cobin (1990:73), state that this approach is the type of open-coding where the researcher might ask a question such as: What is the major idea brought out in this sentence or paragraph?

The coding in this research essay was straight forward, since the responses from the participants were very similar. I transcribed all the data collected from the teachers as they responded to my questions. After I finished interviewing all teachers in all three schools, I analysed all the responses and coded them. The codes mostly referred to perceptions or ideas. The following is a sample of codes

that were used:

- I.E.N. : Informal settlements have negative influence on education.
- I.E.P. : Informal settlements have positive influence on education.
- N.I.E. : No influence of informal settlement on education.
- T.S. : Teaching in informal settlement schools is stressful.
- T.N.S. : Teaching in informal settlement is not stressful.
- C.N.V. : The community in informal settlement does not value education.

Strauss and Cobin (1960:61) describes the process of categorizing as the classification of concepts to form categories. In categorizing, concepts are compared one against another as they appear to pertain to similar phenomenon. In this research study, categories were formed in accordance with the raw data or units collected during the interviews with the nine teachers from the three secondary schools. This was then reviewed against the interview units collected from each group of students whom I interviewed, and integrated with the raw data collected through my observation of the setting.



Examples of how categorization of units were done, appears below:

UNITS		CATEGORIES
<b>EXAMPLE 1</b>		
1.	Teachers perceive that the environment in Etwatwa informal settlement has a negative effect on secondary education in that area.	Environment in Etwatwa informal settlement is not conducive for learning.
2.	The shabby structures of the shacks and loud music always heard from those shacks, disturb learning programmes of the school.	
3.	Some secondary schools still don't have building of their own. They platoon with primary schools or are housed in shabby temporary structures.	
<b>EXAMPLE 2</b>		
1.	Teachers feel that poor domestic conditions affect the education of the students.	Poverty and illiteracy of the parents affect their children's education.
2.	Most parents are illiterate and poor.	
3.	Illiterate and unemployed parents need to be trained for job skills to be assertive and employable.	

### 3.5.2 Clustering

Miles and Huberman (1994:248) tell us that clustering is a tactic that can be applied at many levels and can comprehend the phenomenon by putting together that which seem to fall together. In the process of clustering, data which seem to fall together, are selected, grouped, organized, condensed, paired and then synthesized. Clustering can also be applied at different levels such as events or acts, of individual actors, of processes, settings or sites as a whole.

### 3.6 THE CONSOLIDATION OF RAW DATA

This subsection deals with the process of consolidating evidence that was drawn from the interviews. The research findings are clearly illustrated by means of dendogrammes to indicate the final consolidation of the categories and clusters which were previously established.

These paragraphs will deal with data collected from individual interviewees. Four of the nine teachers were females and five were males. Three students were females and three were males. During the interviews, the researcher used a tape recorder to record all the interviews. This was done per agreement with all the interviewees. The raw data collected during the interviews were later transcribed from the audio tapes into a memo book for analysis purposes. The interviewees were asked prepared questions by the researcher. All the questions were relevant to the research questions of this study.

During the interview process, I assumed the position of a facilitator. I did not take down field notes while the interviews were in progress but I relied on the use of the recordings for later use.

The teachers whom I interviewed at the three secondary schools, all revealed that children living in squatter camps have less respect to adults and teachers than those living in formal settlements. Examples given by these teachers are:

- Most children at schools situated in informal settlements are arrogant towards teachers during lessons.
- They shout at the teachers and neglect their school work.

One teacher said that he gave a class test one day. After receiving the question papers, the students simply walked out, leaving the question papers on their desks.

- The teachers also indicated that there are some students who sell drugs in the school yard.
- Absenteeism is very high in these schools.

They also stated that the rate of theft and burglaries is high in informal settlements. The teachers further indicated that most students in their schools have low self-esteem and seem demotivated. For instance many students perform very badly in their school work. These children are always very quiet and withdrawn. Teachers always take them to the office for counselling but they don't improve even after counselling. They always seem confused and disinterested in their school work. They cited the home background as one of the main reasons.

Information gathered from the group of students who were interviewed, at the three secondary schools supported the teachers views. The students mentioned that the schools at Etwatwa informal settlements are unsafe as a result of the high crime rate. Their shacks are too small to accommodate the whole family. There is no spare room for studies. They cited this as one of the reasons why they perform very badly at school.

All information which appeared important was noted down and open-coding was conducted on the raw data. Examples of how data from the individual interviews were consolidated by means of dendogrammes are given below. Due to the specified strict length of this research essay only two examples are given.

Consolidation of individual interviews by means of dendogrammes.

#### **Data from unit 1**

First teacher	The state of many shacks in Etwatwa informal settlement creates an environment not conducive for learning. I am concerned.
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Second teacher Poor domestic background and less family social interactions are major causes of poor education in Etwatwa informal settlement. I believe that children can not study at home.

Third teacher Loud music always played nearby the school disturbs school lessons everyday. I feel something must be done to stop it.

### Figure 3.1

#### Data from unit 2

First teacher Most parents are illiterate and poor. I believe that they need basic adult education.

Second teacher Unemployed parents should be trained for skills and self-employment programmes. I feel that parents need empowerment.

Third teacher Some students have no parental care since they live alone in shacks. I think that children should live with their parents for control.

### Figure 3.2

#### Data from unit 3

First teacher The rate of crime which overlaps even to the schools, in this area, affect the education of our children. I wish the police could do something to reduce the crime.

Second teacher Gangsters in this area cause havoc to the day to day smooth running of the schools. The gangsters come to school and attack our children, who also belong to certain groups of gangsters. I think that the community should join together and

fight this gangsterism.

Third teacher      Conflict among the community based structures, drug dealing, child-abuse and rape are a great threat to our education too. The local authorities should give special attention to these problems.

### Figure 3.3

From the analysis process, the findings revealed by the first category that emerged, was that of the environmental conditions in Etwatwa informal settlement having a negative effect on education in the area.

The second category that emerged was that the social conditions at the homes of the children are related to the parents lack of education. The third category that emerged was that crime, drug dealing and conflict in the community and in schools affects the quality of education. The three categories are interrelated and supported one another.

These data were supported by the data collected from the observations. The findings from the review of documents show that education is affected negatively, as the percentage passes is very low, especially in grade twelve. The question which we need to ask ourselves is: What is it that affect education so negatively in this area? The research findings of the interview may possibly be an answer to this question.

### 3.7 CONCLUSION

This section presented a discussion on the process of data collection, the coding process, categorizing and clustering of similar ideas. Two methods were used to collect data. These methods are interviewing and observation. Research findings collected from the interview process and observation process seem to support one another. The research findings of the data collection process will be discussed further in detail in section four.

## **SECTION FOUR: DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

### **4 INTRODUCTION**

In section one, a research question related to the perceptions of teachers on how informal settlements affect the quality of secondary school education, was formulated and stated. In section two, a literature review was undertaken in order to gather more information regarding this research study. Section three dealt with the collection and analysis of data. In section four the research findings and implications of the study will be discussed and summarized and recommendations based on the finding of this research study are made.

#### **4.1 DISCUSSION OF DATA**

##### **4.1.1 Interpretation of the findings**

###### **Teachers' perceptions**



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The subjects of the study, who are all teachers at the three secondary schools, were in agreement that the environment in Etwatwa informal settlement, do affect secondary school education in a negative way. All teachers who once taught in schools situated in the formal settlement, expressed the same perception that the quality of education in formal settlement areas, is comparatively better than in schools situated in informal settlement areas. They attributed the reason for this difference to the fact that parents in formal settlements are more keen to get involved in school programmes than those in informal settlements. The teachers would like to see the parents in informal settlements get more involved in the education of their children. They would like to see them attending parents' meetings in great numbers and that the parents visit the school individually more often.

The teachers also perceive that the general poor conditions of most students' homes is one of the most contributory factors of the students demotivation and setbacks. Most children who live in congested shack dwellings often perform very badly as compared to those who come from homes with better living conditions. They feel that unless this situation is corrected, there will be no improvement in education even in the foreseeable future.

The teachers also feel that the government should take immediate drastic measures to curb the rate of crime which is so high in Etwatwa Informal Settlement. Students are intimidated to stay long at night due to gun shots which are fired by hooligans throughout the night. They also indicated that the low socio-economic position of parents, due to unemployment and lack of skills are the cause of many dropouts of children from school. They also believe that the parents need to be given non-formal education where they will be given skill training and basic education to empower them so as to become employable and create jobs for themselves. This will help the parents to generate some funds for the education of their children and will be able to give them moral support.

The teachers have also indicated that lack of adequate security in their schools, cause the schools to lose a lot of valuable teaching aids through burglaries and theft. This suggests that the department of education should devise ways and means of improving security in all the secondary schools. Security firms should be contracted to guard the schools, especially at night.

### **Students' perceptions**

All the students whom I interviewed from all the three secondary schools have indicated that there is a need for the government to provide some form of transport for those children who stay very far away from schools, so as to alleviate the problem of late coming to school. These children should be bused to and from school every school day. The students also feel that those children who stay alone in shacks, without their parents should not be allowed to do so but should be

reunited with their parents or guardians for parental care and control over them. They feel that these children are more undisciplined and immoral because they live in a *laissez-faire* type of situation.

The students also would like to urge the local authorities in conjunction with the police not to allow the shack dwellers, living near the schools to sell liquor in their shebeens and they could be restricted from playing loud music which disturbs their learning at school. They also would like to see the authorities doing something about the rate of crime in this area and within the schools themselves so that the situation can become conducive for learning. At the moment they cannot even remain alone after school to study because of crime.

The students also indicated that some children have no electricity at their homes, therefore they use candles. They feel that the government should supply electricity at their shacks as soon as possible. The streets also need flood lights in order to reduce the rate of crime which is so high due to darkness at night.

It was also discovered from the interviews of the students that some students share the same bedroom with four or more siblings and have no sitting room or dining room where they can study. The unavailability of study rooms at their homes is of great concern to the students and teachers in secondary schools in Etwatwa informal settlement.

The majority of teachers and students indicated that most students in Etwatwa informal settlement secondary schools are undisciplined and violent. This is attributed to the general condition of the area where they live as well as their home background. Teachers and students are of the opinion that these children do not value education as one of the most important things in their lives. According to them most of the parents too, seem not to regard education as something valuable for their children. They feel that parents need to be made aware that education is valuable and important for their children.



Teachers are also concerned about the high rate of teenage pregnancies which occur at Etwatwa informal settlement. They cite social disorder which is prevalent in the area and in most homes, as a major cause. They feel that the norms and values of a good social life need to be reintroduced in the community. The majority of teachers also expressed their concern about lack of privacy for the parents in the shack dwellings. They say this is one of the major causes of the teenagers to engage themselves in sexual activities at an early age. Teachers and students who were interviewed were all concerned about some children who are drug dealers or shebeen kings and queens. Unless the authorities do something to curb this situation, these students will not prosper in education. They spend more time after school and weekends, selling liquor and drugs for money. These children are mostly those who stay alone in their shacks without elderly people.

The concern of the teachers about the shortage of classrooms or extra secondary schools suggests that more money will have to be made available for Etwatwa informal settlement so as to build more schools, in the area. They mentioned that the demographic profile of the Etwatwa informal settlement is different from the already well-established area of Daveyton. The Etwatwa community is and will still be growing, whereas the Daveyton community may stabilize, suggesting no need for more schools.

Teachers and students were also concerned that vandalism is destroying the already existing school buildings. They suggested that the schools be guarded be guarded twenty four hours a day. The schools are losing doors and windows to thieves around the area. Unless something is done to stop it the department will lose a lot of money due to vandalism. The teachers are still keen to continue teaching in Etwatwa to serve the community there, as long as they get support from all the stakeholders.

This research study investigated the teachers' perceptions with regard to the effects of the informal settlement on the quality of education in secondary schools in Etwatwa informal settlement. The research findings are strengthened by the

responses of all the informants having coherence. The teachers' perception that the general environment in Etwatwa informal settlement, the children's poor domestic conditions and the badly vandalized classrooms in schools have a negative effect on education, form a common belief, of environmental and conditional effects on education. This forms one pattern. The second pattern can also be identified from the mutual agreement by the informants that high crime rate, violence and hooliganism in schools and burglaries and theft do have a negative effect on education directly or indirectly. The two patterns reflect that all the informants perceive the informal settlement as having a negative effect on the quality of education in secondary schools.

#### **4.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The findings of this research study, lead to implications which need to be considered very seriously. Learning conditions at secondary schools in Etwatwa informal settlement are in need of improvement. The culture of teaching and learning needs to be established. This implies that there should be co-operations and constant communication between the schools and the homes of the children. Schools have to be aware of the disadvantages that informal settlement children have, such as crowded home conditions.

Evidence from the research findings also suggests that there is a need for parental involvement in secondary schools. This implies that the parents and teachers should work together as joint partners in the education of their children. It is recommended that parents attend school parents' meetings and pay regular visits to schools to find out about the progress of their children. Illiterate parents should be given basic education so that they can be able to read and write. Non-formal education is a necessity to be given to parents and should focus on job-skills, so that they can be employable and generate funds for their families. People could be trained for skills such as painting, carpentry, brick-laying, catering, dress-making and how to run small businesses. This will help to eradicate poverty in the area because parents will generate enough money to send their children to school.

The rate of crime which is alarmingly high was a concern that many respondents raised. This also implies that the government should establish enough police stations and satellite police stations so as to monitor the situation efficiently. Furthermore, the parents jointly with the teachers, will have to establish some mechanism to make sure that there is adequate security in the schools.

The research findings also indicate that well trained security guards should be employed in all the schools. This could be seen as an initiative to stop burglaries and vandalism in schools. Good security in schools will help to stop the loss of so many educational aids that the schools are losing through theft at the moment. All schools need very strong security systems. This suggests that parents and the department should be prepared to join hands in raising some funds for strong security fence and security doors and alarm systems. Adequate security will protect school equipment. The implications in this regard is that the government in conjunction with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should assist with finances, so as to make this a success.

It was suggested that the community also needs to be made aware of the value of education. This implies that schools should devise some strategies which will help to attract the parents to attend parents' meetings where they will be encouraged to get involved in the schools' matters. Some parents themselves need formal education, especially young couples. Hence, the establishment of adult centres is strongly recommended. This could possibly help to bring social balance in the community.

Evidence of the findings also indicates that lack of adequate transport for the students to and from the school is one of the major problems. The implication here is that the local authorities and the government should see to it that there is enough transport for school going children in the area. Enough transport will help the students to be punctual every morning. No child will stay home due to the lack of transport to school.

The community at Etwatwa informal settlement is a fast and ever-growing community in population or size. There is a need for further research in future in this area, to ascertain their educational needs as the community grows. The future research may focus on investigating the demographic structure and the population growth of the community after five years from now. The future research would then assess the needs of the community then.

There were some limitations in this study. These limitations were that the study was delimited to nine teachers who were selected to participate in the study, out of a theoretical population of one hundred and fifty teachers. Six students out of six thousand students were interviewed. This impacts on the generalisability of the findings.

Secondly, the investigation was limited to teachers and students only. The views of the broader community could not be gathered due to time constraints and the magnitude of this research study. Due to the time factor, the research took place for a duration of three weeks. The researcher believes that more data could have been collected, had enough time been available. The research findings cannot also be linked to other areas in the country since it was conducted in Etwatwa informal settlement, which has its own unique character.

#### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

Investigations in this research study, have revealed that secondary education in Etwatwa informal settlement is grossly affected by the socio-economic conditions of the informal settlement. In my investigation, I have used interviewing and observation as my methods of data collection. I set out to find out how the quality of education is affected by the schools being situated in an informal settlement. The findings showed that the quality of education in Etwatwa informal settlement is lower than in Daveyton and Wattville formal settlements. The research findings show that the main causes of low standard in education is that most parents are illiterate and very poor. Secondly, most families are big and are housed in a two-

roomed shack. There is no room where children can study at home. Thirdly, the environment at Etwatwa is not conducive for learning due to crime and social disorder.

The findings have also revealed that many people are either drug dealers or selling liquor in the area. Children are asked by parents to sell liquor at their homes. The teachers and students interviewed believe that all these issues do affect the education of the children. Some children stay alone in their shacks and the parents have moved to rural areas, leaving them behind. These children do as they like since they have no parental control.



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## APPENDIX 1

### A TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW WITH ONE TEACHER AT B.B. MYATHAZA SECONDARY SCHOOL

Q: What has been your experience teaching at this school, which is in an informal settlement?

A: Teaching in this school has been strenuous and frustrating because the general environment and living conditions are not conducive for learning.

Q: Do you think it could have been better or worse teaching in a school that is situated in a formal settlement?

R: Yes, it could have been better because the living conditions are better in the formal settlement and the culture of teaching and learning is better.

Q: Do some parents come to help at this school, either voluntarily or involuntarily?

R: No! Parents in this area are not interested in what is going on here at school.

Q: How is the involvement of the community in this school? Could you please give examples of their involvement.

R: We don't see any involvement of the community in this school.

Q: In your perception, do you think there is any difference in the quality of education between schools in this informal settlement and those in formal settlements of Daveyton? Please elaborate what differences there are.

R: Yes! I think that the quality of education differ. The quality of education in informal settlements are lower than in formal settlements. Schools in formal

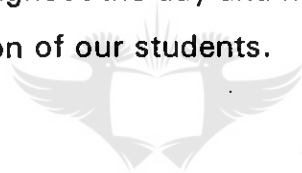
settlements have more educational aids than schools in informal settlements, due to burglaries.

Q: What is your opinion concerning the interference of political and civic organisations?

R: There is a lot of interference by political organisations and civic. What is worse is that they have conflict and this affect the smooth running of the school.

Q: Would you say that the environment in this informal settlement does affect the education of the children or not?

R: Yes! I think the quality of shacks surrounding the school, the loud music played throughout the day and high rate of crime have a negative effect on the education of our students.



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## APPENDIX 2

### A TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW WITH TWO LEARNERS FROM PHANDIMFUNDO SECONDARY SCHOOL

- Q: In your opinion what kind of problems have learners in schools situated in this area experience and do you think these problems do affect their education?
- R: Learners in this area experience a lot of social and educational problems, such as rapes, child abuse, poverty, high crime rate, discipline and lack of culture of teaching and learning. All these problems have a negative effect on our education.
- Q: Do you think that learners in schools which are situated in formal settlements experience less problems which could affect their education in one way or another?
- R: Yes! Children in formal settlement schools enjoy much more stable and calm atmosphere. They therefore experience less problems which could affect their education negatively. The crime rate is less as compared to the informal settlement.
- Q: What is your opinion concerning the environment surrounding your school as regard schooling?
- R: The surroundings are not conducive for learning. The shacks around the school look shabby and there is always loud music playing throughout the day. This is disturbing us.
- Q: Could you describe the domestic conditions of some of the learners you know and state what effect it has on their education?

R: Some children come from very poor families and can't even afford carrying lunch boxes to school. They have one meal per day. Some children stay alone in the shacks. These conditions contribute to the poor performance at school.

Q: In your opinion, do you think most children and teachers are punctual when coming to school or not? Give reasons for your answer.

R: Many children and even teachers come late to school every day. The late coming of learners can be attributed to lack of transport. Some teachers seem demotivated.

