

PERCEPTIONS OF UNEMPLOYED MALES  
MIGRATING TO UMTATA, EASTERN CAPE

by

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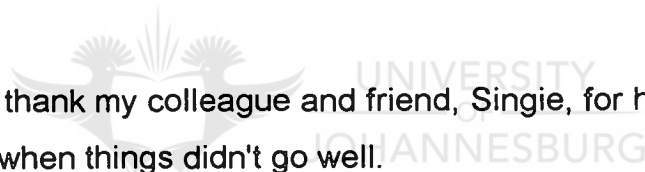
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## ABSTRACT

This study dealt with the perceptions of unemployed males migrating to Umtata in the Eastern Cape. These males migrated from various Transkei districts to Umtata, hoping to get jobs. Most of them had been retrenched from different work places in the Republic of South Africa, and have decided to come to Umtata which, according to them, is economically better off than their small towns.

Attempts to accommodate them were made by the Umtata Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church sisters, together with the Umtata Municipality. They unanimously agreed to accommodate the migrants at the Municipality's Jubilee Hall. Since then it has been the Welfare Organisation's concern to supply them with food. The Municipality's other contribution has been to offer them free training towards life skills, such as, bricklaying, welding, painting and carpentry.

The researcher has attempted to discover how unemployment and migration has affected the migrants' personalities and has tried to find a possible remedy for this.

In her findings, she has also discovered that they came to Umtata hoping for permanent employment, as Umtata is the largest town in the former Transkei. When this did not materialize, they were emotionally disturbed and their social esteem also changed as their marriages ended.

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# SECTION ONE

## ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Unemployment is prevalent in the Transkei area in the Eastern Cape. Many male adults migrate from various Transkei districts to Umtata, which was once the capital town in the former Republic of the Transkei. These men are unemployed. During the day they gather in different parts of the city, waiting for any prospective employer to give them work. The Umtata Municipality has given many of them accommodation at the old Umtata Jubilee Hall and some welfare organisations supply them with food for breakfast and supper.

These men are separated from their families and community members, and as a result, have stopped being involved in their communities' activities. The research will investigate why these men have left their home towns to find work in Umtata, and what the authorities' response is to their presence in Umtata.

### 1.2 THE RESEARCH INTEREST AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

During the day the jobless migrants leave Jubilee Hall for temporary jobs in the neighbouring townships. Some of the Umtata businessmen and residents transport them in their own trucks, or other transportation, to temporary jobs. They are remunerated small sums of money, ranging from twenty rands to forty rands, depending on the type of work they have done.

Sometimes these men spend several days waiting hopefully in the Elliot-York street to be chosen for temporary work. Sometimes they remain there until the end of the day without being employed. Their survival is possible through church and welfare organisations, or concerned individuals who have been spiritually moved by continuously witnessing these men waiting from dawn to dusk, in the hope of some work.

Many are family men and breadwinners whose responsibilities to care for their families are not fulfilled. Looking at their plight raises a question as to how their families back home manage to survive without their financial contributions or presence. It also raises the question of how they perceive the effect their unemployment has had on their families, and on their personal development.

### 1.3 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

These men's absence from their homes has many repercussions for their families, as well as for their communities. Their families are affected in various ways by their unemployment. For example, children's physical and mental development becomes stifled when they are starving, and without food and clothes. A continuation of this condition of unemployment can lead to their families being financially, spiritually and socially handicapped. The children's education can be disturbed, and for this reason the development of "*Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft*", (Tönnies in Sergiovanni, 1993) is retarded.

The inquiry will answer the following research questions:

1. What are the reasons the unemployed men give for them being in this situation?
2. Why do unemployed men from other regions migrate to Umtata?
3. What is the attitude of the Umtata Municipality towards the unemployed?
4. What control measures are being employed by the Municipality to control the influx of unemployed adult men to Umtata?

#### **1.4 THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

The purpose of this research is to seek answers to the research questions formulated, regarding unemployed male adults migrating to Umtata in search of work. This research is therefore meant to expand on research that has been done on unemployment in South Africa, and to inform the Government of the problems the unemployed might experience in their migration to new regions.

The study also seeks to find out how unemployment and migration is dealt with by the municipal or city officials.

#### **1.5 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The problem in this study is of importance as the researcher believes that it will contribute to the development of unemployed migrants' working skills. This will, in turn, facilitate the difficulties encountered as a result of their job incompetency. The researcher also believes that this study could provide valuable information to the Government concerning how unemployment affects adults and their communities.

The findings of this study could lead to the Eastern Cape Government responding proactively to the need to help the unemployed and unskilled jobseekers in Umtata. It is therefore felt that this study should help put the issue of unemployment in its proper perspective. Such a perspective should provide the Public Service Commission (PSC) with new perspectives concerning the need for an objective, and systematic approach, to addressing the issue of unemployment.

#### **1.6 THE MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH**

By conducting research on unemployment, I wish to focus on the growing unemployment problem in the Eastern Cape, specifically in Umtata in the Transkei where I live and are able to watch the unemployed men as they spend months in the street jobless. A long-term goal is that the findings will recommend the need for, and establishment of, a community learning centre, where the unemployed could be



trained to acquire different skills that would make them employable. With the Provincial Government's assistance, such an initiative could be a possible solution to the growing unemployment problem in the Eastern Cape.

## 1.7 THE METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

This study will employ qualitative methods of data collection. In-depth interviews with a sample of unemployed males, who reside at Jubilee Hall, will be conducted. In addition, municipality representatives will be interviewed. An interview guide will be drawn up to increase the comprehensiveness of the data, and to make the data collection systematic for each respondent (Patton,1994:283). Interviews will be both conversational and situational, in order to facilitate a relaxed atmosphere during data collection.

A tape recorder will be used as tool. The interviews will be audio taped to increase the accuracy of data collection, and to allow the interviewer to be more attentive to the interviewee (Patton,1994:348). Another reason for using the tape recorder is that:

the interactive nature of in-depth interviewing can be seriously affected by the attempt to take verbatim notes during the interviewer.

(Patton,1994:348)

I will also engage in note taking to help with the formulation of new questions as the interviews progress. When raw data has been collected, the interview notes will be transcribed. Analysis of data will be done by means of coding the transcribed notes. The field notes will be read, and comments will be made in the margins. The purpose is to organise the data into topics. The topics will be given different names and labelled, after having been coded (Miles & Huberman 1994:55-58).

Strauss and Corbin (1990:61-62) suggest that "collected data be broken down into discrete similarities and differences, conceptualized and categorized". They refer to this process as open coding, and are of the opinion that without this basic analytic

step, the rest of the analysis, and the communication which follows, cannot take place.

## **1.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study is delimited to males who are unemployed and who migrate to Umtata. The researcher will not be able to conduct interviews with all the unemployed men living at the Umtata Jubilee Hall, or all the Umtata Municipality representatives. Thus a sample consisting of ten migrants from different districts, and five municipality representatives, will be selected for data collection. All the interviewees will be randomly selected from the research population.

## **1.9 ORGANISATION OF THE REST OF THE ESSAY**

In the following three sections the researcher will discuss the importance of the individual in communities in different societies. Furthermore, the effects of labour changes in South Africa, such as retrenchment and redeployment, will be highlighted as possible causes of countrywide unemployment. The researcher will then conduct interviews in order to collect data, which will later be analysed. The participants, as well as the factors which motivated them to migrate to Umtata, will be discussed. Finally, the municipality's attitude towards the unemployed will be discussed, together with the measures employed by the municipality to control the influx of unemployed males from other districts. Analysis, interpretation of findings, and recommendations for further research, will also be discussed.

## **1.10 CONCEPT ANALYSIS**

The following are concepts contained in this research and have been clarified as follows:

**Unemployed:**

A reference to the non-working men who either lost their jobs due to retrenchment or sickness, or are first time job-seekers.

**Open employment:**

Refers to countrywide joblessness which many men are experiencing.

**Non-employment:**

A case in which men face an unemployment crisis due to their lack of job skills or where the employer cannot employ due to a possible lack of funds.

**Migration:**

A condition where adult men leave their home towns to seek employment in far-off cities.

**Community:**

A community consists of families which are bonded by family ties and share the same norms, standards, behaviour and expectations, sometimes sharing the same clan name.

**Society:**

Is made up of wider communities and characterised by sharing the same standards and values, undergoing the same interests, cultures and rituals.

## 1.11 SUMMARY

The study will focus on the plight of the Transkeian men who find themselves isolated from their families and communities due to unemployment. The purpose is to highlight the seriousness of unemployment, and the role played by the Umtata Municipality towards the unemployed men's plight.



## SECTION TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section will provide a theoretical framework for the study. In trying to find out why men from neighbouring towns migrate to Umtata, I will refer to what happens in other South African cities to which migrants from the African continent continuously flock in search of work. Even if they do not secure employment they do not return to their original towns, but find other means of survival.

These men are not part of their communities, as they have moved away to seek employment elsewhere. In that way their own communities are being disintegrated. Tönnies (1963) in his discussion on advancing *Gemeinschaft*, maintains that the individual should work together with his fellowmen. This results in the mutual binding to a common goal, a shared set of values, and a shared concept of being. The fact that they have been separated from their communities, is not in line with Sergiovanni's (1983) theory that social relationships improve one's social being, and may not be avoided.

The inquiry tries to determine whether the causal factors of unemployment in South Africa and other countries, hold true for the situation in the Eastern Cape, particularly in the Transkei region. It also looks into the effect of and issues around, the unemployment situation in the Cape.

Over the past four or five years Transkei migrants started returning from the South African mines and factories because of immediate closures or worker rationalization within those companies, mines and factories. Long queues of people coming to claim their unemployment benefits at the Unemployment Insurance (UI) offices, are evidence of the unemployment of many people (Loots : 1984). From this statement, one is inclined to think that the unemployed people of the Transkei are those who returned from the South African work places after becoming unemployed. However,

some of these men have never worked before and are first time job seekers in the province. Their plight may be due to the lack of emphasis on non-formal education in the past, and the lack of employment opportunities in their areas.

## 2.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY

Community refers to those members who are united primarily by ties of spatial proximity, such as neighbourhoods, villages, towns and cities; who belong to the same environment; who work together, develop strong and generally shared norms, standards and values, and, acquire a strong sense of identity (Lenski, 1978:55).

Families hold a very important position in a community. Family members form a community which is characterised by a common traditional life are meant to be together, but this is not always possible due to unemployment. They are also characterised by unity and togetherness. In the case of the Umtata migrants, their ties with their families are often broken when they distance themselves from their families and community members. Their absence is felt during family and communal occasions, where each member's full participation is often needed.

Unemployed migrants from different Transkeian towns have been so disadvantaged, that they have had to leave their families and friends in search of work in Umtata, the capital city of what was previously the Republic of Transkei. The result is that ties with their families and kin groups are seriously weakened. Due to their unemployment they lose much of their self esteem. This manifests itself as a fairly serious social instability. Furthermore, the experience is a disempowering one (Freire:1994), which could lead to a sudden change in an individual's social behaviour. Due to the scarcity of work and accommodation, many of the unemployed migrants may be forced to abandon their families, sometimes for good. They may be forced to seek new acquaintances or resort to anti-social behaviour such as drunkenness and hostility. This kind of behaviour has adverse effects on the individual, his family and the community's developmental processes.

According to Vella (1994:44) a society should work together towards ongoing development or relief programmes. Their skills need to be developed for certain jobs, and they learn through the practice of collaboration and mutual help. In this manner, their learning needs are discovered, and their programmes are later channelled towards their specific needs. The same process could benefit the men in this study. When they are chosen for casual jobs, they work together and complete their duties immediately. The unemployed men are united by their circumstances, and as a result form a community of men brought together by their need to find employment in Umtata.

### **2.3 THE EFFECTS OF LABOUR CHANGES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The unemployment situation in the Eastern Cape may be traced back to the labour law changes in the South African occupational structure. Simkins (1997) is of the opinion that the economic growth in South Africa has been characterized by an increase in large scale industrial, administrative and financial enterprises. He feels this has necessitated important changes in the division of labour during which many workers were retrenched. Many migrant workers, including Transkei ones, were affected.

Mears (1998), investigated ways and means of improving employment by addressing the question of economic development in South Africa. He says that,

although it is often stated that human capital is the most important resource in South Africa, unemployment, especially among unskilled workers, causes this resource to remain under-utilised.

(Mears, 1998 : 66).

It therefore becomes evident that without economic assistance, there could be no mental stability for every responsible individual. Unemployed parents' development is hindered, and children cannot proceed to higher educational levels due to lack of

capital. The consequences always affect the whole community, as the depressed and unemployed men resort to indecent actions, to cope with the unusual situation.

According to the Central Statistical Service (CSS) (1996) in Pretoria, South Africa's unemployment rate rose by 6% from 16,9% in 1995. In 1997 the figure was up by 1% from 1996. According to CSS head, Mark Orkin, there were about 2,2 million jobless South Africans. He explained that 29,2% of those who are unemployed are blacks. He included job seekers who had stopped looking for work, due to a lack of work in their area; insufficient funds; or because they had lost all hope of finding work. The men in the study are part of the above statistics which Orkin cited.

Remaining on the issue of unemployment, Bray sees a link between education and unemployment:

Both have economic and social significance as education should equip the learners with skills that will be used by the economy.

(Bray et al., 1986, pg. 186).

Bray (1986) continues by saying that unemployment has severe social consequences as the unemployed often feel bored, have small or non-existent incomes, and know that they are not contributing to society. He believes that it is normal that when unemployment is very high, problems of crime and political instability may be experienced. He proposes that manpower planning officials in all areas of the country should make an accurate assessment of future economic needs, and should ensure the effective use of scarce resources. He maintains that new inventions put large numbers of people with a particular skill out of work. In addition, when a country has been affected by unpredicted economic changes, unemployment prevails. This statement holds true for many semi-skilled mine and factory workers who became unemployed when South African mines and factories closed down.



## 2.4 THE EFFECTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT ON SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Disparity in open unemployment between the villages and towns is increased by rural-urban migration. The migrants are often attracted by the thought that work opportunities are usually more in urban areas than in the villages. To their disappointment, not everybody who migrates into the cities in search of work, actually finds it. Migrants therefore often increase the pool of open unemployment, that is, large numbers of unemployed people who do not have any hope for employment. They then become aware that they will have to face even harder living conditions in the cities than they would have faced in the rural community. They consider it worth facing unemployment in the hope of some lucky chance arising, and of them finding employment.

Sinfield (1981) explains that when men are unemployed, it terrifies them. Thereafter they begin to seek jobs, a phase in which they are optimistic. When all the efforts fail, they panic hopelessly and consequently suffer distress. As time goes on they get used to their dehumanised condition. It is assumed that some of these men have been victims of job discrimination, where they may have earned lower wages or were unable to secure employment due to ethnic, racial or political affiliation.

According to Darity and Goldsmith (1996) the unemployed are very unhappy people. These authors' growing concern for employment is accelerated by the impression that the social costs of unemployment exceed the cost of the economy. The authors also suggest that unemployment causes an additional burden on the individual as many of them are breadwinners and family men. They claim employment is not only a source of income, but also provides in social relationships, an identity in society, and individual self esteem.

Jenson and Smith (1990) have a different version. They discuss the link between the loss of employment and reduced well-being. They state (1990:76) that:

decreased well-being may express itself through adverse individual outcomes such as increased mortality, suicide risk and crime rates or decreased marital stability.

Clark and Oswald (1994) found that the individual suffers mental distress more than he suffers physical ailments. Therefore, although his health may not suffer as he is being fed, his manhood and self-esteem may suffer. This gives rise to problems such as depression and anger.

The above authors also comment about job displacement, which tends to peak during economic downturns. They say displaced workers experience more non-employment than do non-displaced workers. They assume that problems of displaced workers add to structural unemployment; disrupts lives; fails hard earned expectations; and wastes human resources. This occurs where the employer retrenches in favour of new employees.

## 2.5 CONCLUSION



From this discussion on unemployment, it can clearly be regarded as a "difficult-to-cope-with" condition. Its psychological effect have been viewed as having a bad impact on most families' and communities' lives. Since community comprises of families, the unemployed migrants' separation from their families and communities can be unbearable. They move to new cities away from their homes in search of work. When they cannot find work, they can be spiritually and psychologically disturbed. They may feel that they are no longer an asset to their families and communities, as they are away for a long time. In this way their communities are affected as their members are no longer bound together in mutual ties, and cannot share life experiences. Their society in turn suffers the consequences and does not develop as is expected of a society made up of communities whose members share the same norms and standards, for the acquisition of a strong and common identity.

## SECTION THREE

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section the data collection method used and analysis of data will be discussed. The Umtata municipality's attitude and control measures towards the migrants' influx from other districts to Umtata will also be discussed.

Data was collected from eleven purposefully selected migrants residing at the Umtata Jubilee Hall. The sample also included five municipality representatives, one of whom is the scheme's co-ordinator, Sister Mary Paule, Mr Mthiya, the superintendent and Mr Edward, his deputy. A Health and Social Welfare representative, Mr Qingana, was also interviewed as a key informant to the study. In-depth interviews were conducted after permission from Sister Mary Paule was obtained to gain entry to the setting. The interview guide was prepared and used in order to ensure the comprehensiveness of the data, and to make the data collection systematic for every respondent. The interviews were both conversational and situational, and allowed for a relaxed atmosphere.

The subjects who were selected for interviews were representative of different ages, home towns, and marital status. Some had been employed before, and others had never been permanently employed.

#### 3.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

In order to enquire into the details concerning the residents residing in Jubilee Hall, I consulted the co-ordinator, Sister Mary Paule for permission to conduct in-depth interviews with her staff members and the men. A tape recorder was used to record the interviews, in an addition to the researcher's taking of notes. Ten migrant men were interviewed. After the data was collected, the researcher started coding and

categorizing information. Thereafter, the findings were consolidated and the researcher presented and discussed the findings.

### **3.3 DATA COLLECTION METHODS: INTERVIEWS**

At first the men were not very comfortable with conversing about their social and financial circumstances. They claimed to be fed-up with visitors like me who continue to ask them about their lives, and who do not offer them anything such as money or employment to alleviate their problems.

The interviews were conducted at Jubilee Hall in a room which is situated next to their dwelling place. I was able to interview about three participants per day. These interviews were scheduled for when they returned to the hall at about 18h00, after having been on the streets for the day. I managed to ask the participants the same questions according to the interview guide which I had drawn up to serve as a guideline for the interview process. It was also to make sure that all relevant topics were covered (Patton:1990). The superintendent for the programme served as my key informant, as he is the only person who is always available at the centre. He would assist me by answering questions that I needed clarity on.

### **3.4 DATA ANALYSIS**

After organising the data to make sure that all the field notes were accounted for, I started coding. In the left margins I coded paragraph by paragraph, using coloured pens to identify the main sections to the research. The main areas that I identified were determined by the research questions. The main areas that I identified were demographic data which I marked with a green pen, expectations of the participants which I marked with a red pen, different lifestyles which was marked with a blue pen, and other factors which I marked with an orange pen.

After the broad areas were identified, I started open coding of each section, which is the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing the data (Strauss & Corbin 1990:132). I also applied axial coding

which is the putting together of the same data, and the making of connections between categories.

### 3.5 PARTICIPANTS

The participants were selected in such a way that they were representative of the young, the middle aged, and the older men, being housed at Jubilee Hall. This was in order to discover whether there was a difference in the types of information about their lifestyle and experience based on age. Table 1 represents the demographic data of the subjects of the inquiry. It provides their ages, marital status, and educational background. In addition it records how long they have been staying at Jubilee Hall, and the type of work they did prior to becoming unemployed.



Table 1 : Demographic factors

SUBJECTS	HOME TOWN	AGE	PERIOD OF STAY AT JUBILEE HALL	PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT AND REASON FOR LEAVING	SKILL	MARITAL STATUS	EDUCATION
Mziyanda Molonyeni	Nqamakwe:Hlobo	33	20 months	Worked as a shop assistant, resigned due to illness.	None	Single, no children	Std 10
Mziyanda Mlonyeni	Ngamakwe:Hlobo	33	20 months	Worked as a shop assistant, resigned due to illness	None	Single, no children	Std 10
Andile Ngqu	Qumbu:Mdabukweni	30	16 months	Western Holdings, got sick and left.	None	Single	Std 7
Sandile Kenanto	Mqanduli	29	20 months	Cape Town	Plastering	Single	Std 5
Ndoysile Sigotywa	Port St Johns	29	20 months	Vaal Reefs, 1978 strike	Plastering	Single	Std 5
Mhlonipeli Rolobile	Umtata:Mabheleni	31	14 months	Welkom, 1987 strike	None	Single	Std 5
Xolisa Bota	Flagstaff:Mfundisweni	51	17 months	Contractors:Murray & Roberts	None	Wife deceased, 4 children	Std 4
Sipumle Joyi	Engcobo:Shawbury	29	15 months	TRTC*, and worked as a security guard at Payne location, Umtata	None	Single, has a mother and 7 siblings	Std 10
Mphuzele Vokha	Engcobo	58	15 months	Coal mines, Danaus:OFS left due to strike	None	Married with 3 children	Std 6
Elliot Mjoka	Engcobo	43	18 months	Kempton Park, retrenched	Can paint and plaster	Married with 3 children	
Zimasile Nompozolo	Butterworth: Tanga	33	5 months	Virginia, retrenched	Bricklaying	Married with 1 child but is estranged from the wife at present	Std 7

\*TRTC Transkei Road Transport Company

### 3.6 MOTIVATION TO MIGRATE TO UMTATA

During the interviews the researcher decided to discover why the participants had decided to migrate to Umtata from their various towns. They replied that they had hoped to find jobs, since Umtata was the Capital and was still the biggest town in the former Transkei.

The researcher gathered from the information given, that they had been influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors to come to Umtata. This means that their high hopes to find work, or improve their job skills to be competent workers, motivated them to migrate to Umtata. They had also been influenced by their families and friends to search for work instead of watching them remain disadvantaged by poverty.

Table 2: Motivation factors



EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION	INTRINSIC MOTIVATION	PERSONAL MOTIVATION
Husband is jobless	To improve job skills	Meet people
Family starving: Breadwinners	Competent worker	Should be conversant
Should be allowed to leave	Can read and write	Less depressed, no communication problem
Encouragement plan by spouses		End the misery

All the participants expected the government, the local people, and all interested people to help them get employed. They wanted them to rescue them from starvation and dehumanization. They also expected their families back home to be co-operative and wait patiently until they are employed.

I asked them what their expectations were about their migration. The data was divided into social, personal and academic expectations which were coded as Exp (S), Exp (P) and Exp (A).

**Table 3: Migration expectations**

EXP. (S)	EXP. (P)	EXP. (A)
Get rid of loneliness by making friends.	Adapt to new society - Umtata.	Improve job skills.
Interact with people - find employment.	To communicate, to make people aware of their problem.	Receive training for competency.
Would like to be re-united with their families.	Hoped to get work, improve home.	Enrol in community programmes.

The data was categorized in order to get an idea as to whether or not their unemployment and accommodation problems had changed their lives in the groups:

1. What their lives were like in their home towns;
2. What their lives were like when they arrived in Umtata;
3. What their lives are like now.

The changes were classified as social, personal and professional which were coded as Ch.(S), Ch(P) and Ch. (Pro.). I identified the following categories to describe the migrants' lives before they came to Umtata:



**Category:** Many of them led happy and normal lives as they were working then. Those who had never worked enjoyed schooling and had never thought they would never find employment.

**Properties:** They were once employed, happy at school, had parents, children, and siblings. They had friends at home and at work and lived among community members.

Many of them had been leading active and normal lives compared to the misery and inactivity of their present lifestyle. They were members of communities and enjoyed family support. Academically, some of them completed high school and could speak English well, while others accomplished a Junior Secondary School education. Most of them have been exposed to the South African metropolitan life and were multilingual, a condition that one would assume would count in their favour when seeking employment.

In response to the question concerning whether their lives have changed since they migrated to Umtata, they confirmed that there was a decline in their normal life. Some said that they are becoming mentally and spiritually disturbed due to continuous frustration, depression and idleness. They also expressed their grief because they were unable and unwilling to visit their families due to their poverty and lowered self esteem. They felt that being unskilled in most jobs was the cause for their inefficiency.

### **3.7 THE MUNICIPALITY'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE UNEMPLOYED**

The Municipality offered accommodation at Jubilee Hall to accommodate job-seekers. This arrangement was made possible by the Social Welfare Commission of the Diocese of Umtata in 1995. However, as time went on, the municipality decided to repair the building and requested that the migrants vacate the hall. This has never materialized. Living conditions are deteriorating, and the already distressed men have been asked to look for an alternative shelter, as the hall was

badly damaged by the tornado on the 15th December 1998. The hall has not been repaired yet.

The municipality has introduced control measures to control the influx of unemployed males from other districts, by providing community programmes in almost all the Transkeian towns. This will enable unemployed people to engage in work programmes for the acquisition of working skills. The Umtata migrants are also provided free training on building skills. They must be in possession of an identity document. Those who do not have the relevant documentation, forfeit the offer. Sometimes the municipality involves them in the collection of refuse from the townships, and pays them for this job.

### **3.8 CONSOLIDATION OF DATA FROM THE CO-ORDINATOR, TWO STAFF MEMBERS AND A HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE REPRESENTATIVE**

The co-ordinator and staff were interviewed through in-depth interviews in order to supply the researcher with the necessary data. The researcher's interest was about the presence of many unemployed men on the streets, and where they resided in the evening.

The first person to be contacted was Mr Qingana, a health and Welfare Department official. He explained that all he knew was that initially the unemployed came to Umtata for employment purposes at the TEBA and Mdesalini co-operatives of the South African gold mines and sugar plantations. They would come and check whether their names appeared on the employment list. When the process became slow they resorted to temporary jobs, until their living and health conditions deteriorated. He explained that it was depressing as they had no money. He concluded by saying some of them were residing at the dilapidated Jubilee Hall, organised for them by the social welfare commission of the Diocese of Umtata.

The second interviewee was Sister Mary Paule, the co-ordinator of Jubilee Hall scheme. She explained that in 1987 the Social Welfare Commission was distressed at the plight of the Umtata migrant men who had nowhere to sleep, and often took

refuge in their church yard. When they found one of the migrants dead in a dog kennel, they decided to arrange with the municipality for their accommodation at Jubilee Hall. The hall could not accommodate all of them, even if they slept side by side due to their large numbers.

Sister Mary Paule felt that their condition was sorrowful. She also thought they might not fit in well in their societies due to their poor living conditions. She claimed that the hall was dilapidated, damp and infested by mosquitoes. It was also small and congested. Their health was deteriorating, and they were dying from tuberculosis and fits. She went on to say she had pleaded with the Eastern Cape government and all concerned bodies for help, especially for accommodation and health facilities. She was glad that the researcher had shown concern, as many people in the area were ignorant about the existence of such a scheme.

The third interview was with Mr Mthiya, the superintendent at Jubilee Hall since 1991. His opinion about the migrants was also that they are despondent. His duty was very strenuous as he was dealing with stressed out people. Their humanity was different. They were always fighting, shouting, crying, complaining, and were often sick. They drank liquor excessively and their health was deteriorating. His duty was to give them food and teach them how to keep themselves clean. He was also concerned about the unhealthy condition of the hall, as the cause for the migrants' unhealthiness.

Another interviewee was Mr Edward, Jubilee Hall deputy superintendent. He felt sorry for the migrants whose lives were at stake. He pitied them as he could see that they were drug addicts, who were always angry and fighting, and who showed frustration. The old, mosquito infested hall, increased his fears for the migrants who were already dying from fever, tuberculosis and fits. The staff had pleaded with the government concerned, but no response has ever been given.

The last interviewee, James, who came to relieve Mr Edward, also expressed fear for the migrants' health which was threatened by the old, damp, small hall situated

near the Umtata river bank. He and others, would like interested people to join hands with them in helping the needy migrants.

### 3.9 CONCLUSION

The data collected from the ten migrants revealed that they all came to Umtata looking for work, but that they have not had success in finding employment. They all said they were surviving on casual jobs, which were sometimes scarce to find. Some of them reported that their marriages had disintegrated, and others had broken their ties with their families. They explained that when they had gone home for a while they had not been warmly welcomed, as they had not brought any money with them.

The migrants were all interested in becoming skilled workers. However, some of them did not have identity documents, and were unable to register themselves at the Umtata Municipality to be eligible to receive free training. These men are being held hostage by their poverty and lack of documentation. They are unable to access a service that the society provides.

When I observed these migrants, I could see that many of them were very sick, which made them unfit for work. They were physically unfit and seemed to be weakened by excessive liquor drinking and hunger. After the interviews they were happy, and promised to get identity documents, their only gateway to success. The municipality interviewees revealed that they were so concerned about job-seekers that they had provided accommodation, and that they had always provided assistance through a municipality nurse whenever they were summoned to attend to a seriously sick migrant. Staff data showed that without the municipality's assistance, they would never have run the Jubilee hall scheme, and were thankful for that. They also raised a concern about the municipality's reluctance to renovate Jubilee Hall, as it was a very unhealthy looking place.

## SECTION FOUR

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

From the consolidation of data from individual interviews, I have been able to deduce interlinked categories and present a conceptual, holistic framework of the problem. The following are some of the main categories, as well as answers to research questions posed in section one.

All the interviewees reported that they were jobless, and that they had decided to come to Umtata. Umtata is the capital city of the previous Transkei, and is the largest of all Transkeian towns. All the unemployed migrants, except for one, Zimasile Nompozole, explained that they were unskilled labourers. Some had been retrenched from the South African mines, while others had left work due to continuing strikes in the hostels.

Many of the migrants claimed that they no longer visited their families because they were ashamed, and could see that they were unwelcome at home. They regarded themselves as misfits both at home and in their communities. Some claimed that their marriages had ended, and that their wives had left them to seek employment in order to support their children. Many of them had fears that their children might lose faith in them, as their education was at stake. Finally, their relatives were mocking them as they had no money to contribute to the family's well-being. They had no clothes for themselves, and could not support their families. They were therefore humiliated by their poverty, and decided to remain in Umtata until they found employment.

One migrant, Mziyanda Mlonyeni (33), said he was prepared to live and die in Umtata as all his relatives were dead. He is the only child in his family and had

expected his uncle to take care of him when he was very sick. He was therefore lonely and desperate.

Concerning the Umtata Municipality's attitude towards the unemployed migrants, the three staff members at Jubilee Hall reported that although the Municipality had shown great concern at first, by allowing the staff to renovate and use the hall, they were now being threatened to find alternative accommodation for the migrants as the municipality wants to restructure the hall. In order to control the influx of other migrants, the municipality is training the jobless towards acquiring skills, such as building, cementing, painting and carpentry, free of charge. However, only those who have suitable identity documents are eligible to be trained.

#### 4.2 DISCUSSION OF DATA

In this section findings related to why the male migrants are in Umtata, and how they feel about their position, will be discussed.

From the categorized data, the interviewer, discovered that all the migrants were unemployed, and were desperately seeking jobs. They had all flocked to Umtata from various Transkeian towns, hoping to be employed. They believed work facilities were better in Umtata, which is the largest town in the Transkei. Some of them had been retrenched from various mines, factories, and other workplaces, in the Republic of South Africa. Others had never been employed before. Many had been engaged in temporary jobs. They had unanimously stated that they had been told by employers that due to the fact that they were unskilled and uneducated for prominent jobs, it was impossible for them to be employed.

Their ages ranged from 28 to 58 years, and most of them were married. They explained that they left their homes in order to rescue their families from starving, and that they were sorry not to have fulfilled that promise. They had explained how hard they had tried to seek out work in their small towns, and had hoped to be employed in Umtata. On arrival in Umtata they were disappointed to encounter the same problem. This seemed to be because they were unskilled and uneducated,

and therefore did not qualify for better employment. They are now facing hunger, and lack of accommodation, which is a threat to their health and happiness. They have been emotionally and spiritually disturbed by unemployment. They were forced to sleep out in the streets and eat from dustbins. They explained how physically unfit they were, as their health conditions had deteriorated due to inhaling methylated spirits, an overindulgence in beer drinking, and dagga smoking. They all expressed how their plight has affected their social values and standards, explaining how they were involved in shameful deeds they later regretted. Some foresee a bleak future, while others still hope for the best.

Their accommodation problem was solved when they were housed in Jubilee Hall,. However, they still felt uncomfortable as the hall was small, damp and infested with mosquitoes. They now feel their lives are at stake as many of them contract, and might die from, tuberculosis and fits. They feel compelled to tolerate the hardships of staying there as there is no other accommodation available.

#### 4.3 BREAKDOWN IN FAMILY LIFE AND COMMUNICATION

Most of them are no longer keen to visit their families because their visits are not appreciated, as they bring no money home. They now feel unwanted in their own families. They say it is bad for them to be isolated from both their families and community members. One of them explained that he will live and die in Umtata as he has given up getting a reasonable job. Though he said that he felt content with temporary jobs which enable him to survive, it was clear that he was miserable, and that he desired to be like other people. From what the unemployed men said, it was assumed that community members do experience problems in their lives, due to illiteracy and ignorance about community education programmes. As soon as people involve themselves in this kind of learning, they will be able to carry on with what they learned in the community school. This could reduce unemployment cases. The Community Education theory is relevant in this aspect as it encourages people to change from a domesticating to a liberating experience. This social pedagogy can be regarded as the only place where the individual and society are constructed, a social action which empowers learners.

#### **4.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS**

From the data analysis it was discovered that all the migrants came to Umtata in search of work, and that it was difficult for them to be permanently employed or employed at all. The outcome was that they were emotionally disturbed as their families back at home depended solely upon them. Their joblessness had changed their social esteem, and they were desperate and isolated. As some of them did not wish to return home again, it proved that their ties with families and communities might be broken forever. When some of them hinted that their marriages had ended, it implied how unemployment can destroy the values of communities as it also affects the behaviour of wives and children. Their communities would always miss their involvement and contribution in the building of their society.

#### **4.5 RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTIONS**

After investigating the migrants' presence in Umtata, I came to the conclusion that the municipality should create job opportunities for the unskilled job seekers, instead of allowing so many of them sit and wait for temporary employers to call upon them. The municipality could offer free training for job competency, even to those men who cannot produce identity documentation. This step may eliminate joblessness and untrustworthiness among families. Finally, I hope further research will be conducted on whether the job summits provided by the national government in different provinces, can eliminate joblessness in our societies.

#### **4.6 CONCLUSION**

From my investigation I have discovered that the male migrants who flocked to Umtata were unemployed and were desperately seeking jobs. They were illiterate and unskilled, and thus less eligible for employment. One solution to their problem is to register themselves for community programmes, and thereafter acquire some job skills.



They also stated they left their home towns to seek work in Umtata because Umtata is a big town and could offer more job opportunities than smaller towns. They were embarrassed to be unemployed, and although most of them had been retrenched, they could not get all their benefits from the Unemployment Insurance offices. During the enquiry, I have discovered that the municipality's role in their plight was to offer them accommodation at Jubilee Hall. They also offered courses such as bricklaying, welding, cementing and plumbing, free of charge. The municipality tried to control the influx to Umtata by offering free training to all those who could produce identity documents. Those who do not qualify for free training courses offered by the municipality, will have to remain job seekers forever. They will have to be satisfied with temporary jobs. Those who cannot be permanently employed may be reluctant to return to their families without money. By so doing they will have ignored a very important sense of community, that is being united by spatial proximity, sharing the same norms and standards, and involving and identifying themselves in whatever activities are taking place in their communities. They will not be able to strengthen ties with their fellowmen back home, and contribute to the building of a distinguished society whose prestige depends upon an exemplary community.

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