

## **CHAPTER 3:    METHODODOLOGY, PROCEDURES AND TECHNIQUES**

### **3.1    INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter the methodology for this study is outlined, detailing the procedures and techniques of research, data collection and analysis. A qualitative methodology was used as it seems to be able to elucidate what the victims experienced, how they interpreted their experiences and how they structured the world that they will have to live in in the future (Bailey, 1994:62). Lastly, a profile of the research participants was given.

### **3.2    METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

Bailey (1994:34) explains that methodology entails the philosophy of the research process, which includes assumptions and values that serve as rationale for research as well as criteria used for interpreting the data. According to Brown, Esbensen and Geis (1996:11) a researcher's methodology is determined by factors such as how he formulates the hypotheses or research expectations and what level of evidence is necessary to make the decision whether or not to accept these hypotheses. Hagan (1997:14) who holds this view, points out that methodology refers to the techniques or methods that criminologists use to learn facts as they attempt to answer the "whys" of crime.

This is a **qualitative study** of a sample which consisted of three components, namely:

- Ten TRC Commissioners who presided over the three Committees through which the TRC functioned, namely, The Human Rights Violations Committee, The Amnesty Committee as well as The Reparations and Rehabilitation Committee.

- Ten Co-ordinators of the Commission's offices who processed the reparations and the amnesty applications which were submitted by the victims as well as the perpetrators of human rights violations (see paragraph 3.6.1.1).
- Thirty victims who suffered trauma as a result of the political conflict of the mid-1980s in South Africa and who had already approached the TRC for reparations.

As the study is **exploratory** a qualitative methodology was opted for. Its aim was to describe and understand the impact of the revelations of the TRC on the research participants and the remedies which could be provided to alleviate pain, suffering, as well as other needs that were identified. Bartollas (1997:50) concurs that some researchers found that qualitative methods, such as non-structured interviews, content analysis of written statements as well as participant observation techniques, are useful in shaping a more holistic perspective by focusing on social dynamics. According to Bailey (1994:244), "the primary nature of the relationship between the observer and the subjects allows an in-depth study of the whole individual".

Royse (1991:217) observed that researchers who used a qualitative research methodology seek to understand lifestyles and social phenomena first hand. In this way, they try to describe the dynamic interaction between subgroups or cultures (e.g. the world of drug addicts or the chronically mentally ill) from the point of view of the persons being studied. Hagan (1997:14) postulates that in quantitative research, concepts are assigned numerical value, whereas in qualitative research they are viewed as sensitising ideas or terms that enhance understanding. By the utilisation of a qualitative methodology, it became possible for researcher to elucidate the sense of meaning that the victim respondents gave to their victimisation, how this affected the way they viewed reality, as well as the effect that their experiences had on their significant others. Besides this, it became apparent what their immediate needs were, as well as their subsequent requirements.

Researcher commenced with an exploratory exercise with the TRC Commissioners to be sensitised to the dynamics of the trauma of the victims. The Commissioners suggested that researcher should also consult with the Co-ordinators of the TRC

offices. She thus merely conducted general discussions with the latter and in this way obtained valuable information pertaining to the applications for reparations which they processed on behalf of the victims. This clarified some of the expectations the victim respondents had about the TRC.

Lastly structured interviews were undertaken with only **30 female victims of all races** who made submissions to the Commission to obtain a balanced view on the impact of the TRC on them. This was followed by a documentary study of their files which were kept by the TRC. In addition, an in-depth study as well as an interpretation of the TRC Report in order to validate the information contained in the respondents' files was done (see paragraph 3.6.1.1). Bailey (1994:294) distinguishes between **primary documents**, or eyewitness accounts written by people who experienced the particular event or behaviour, and **secondary documents**, prepared by persons who were not present at the scene, but who received the necessary information to compile the documents by interviewing witnesses. As an illustration, this was done by the police working for the Investigating Unit of the TRC in order that decisions about the needs of the victims could be taken only after the facts had been officially documented. Researcher was thus in a position to compare the responses of the research participants with the above information for authenticity (see paragraph 1.4.10).

### **3.3 RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

Procedures refer to the different steps and phases in a research project. A research procedure was developed in accordance with the requirements set by different authors such as Lin (1976:145); Van der Westhuizen (1982:41); Mouton and Marais (1991:43); Bailey (1994:176); Hagan (1997:16). Lin (1976:135) identified four types of studies, viz, descriptive, hypothesis generating, hypothesis testing, and exploratory study which can be applied in research.

Because descriptive studies require a representative sample, this method was not suitable for this study due to its sensitive nature as well as ethical considerations

and it was therefore decided to make use of an **exploratory research methodology**. For illustrative purposes some respondents in this study experienced this research as further trauma as they had already testified before the TRC. In this regard, Hagan (1997:166) argues that such discussions of ethics generally focus upon the degree of harm that the respondent can be subjected to and ways in which this can be alleviated.

According to Bailey (1994:40), exploratory studies are undertaken primarily for four reasons:

- To satisfy the researcher's desire for a better understanding of a phenomenon.
- To test the feasibility of undertaking a more representative study.
- To develop methods to be used in a more comprehensive study.
- To better formulate a problem for more precise investigation, or for developing hypotheses.

Lin (1976:137) substantiates this by saying that exploratory studies supply the researcher with his first exposure to the existing information in his area of interest, and provides the basis for later, more rigorous studies. As researcher aimed to gain insight and comprehension into the dynamics of the impact of the revelations of the TRC on the victims and the need for rendering support to them, this research can be viewed as an **exploratory study**. She therefore employed the procedures stipulated for this type of study, namely consultation as well as general discussions with experts, in-depth interviews, documentary studies, case exploration and observation.

### **3.3.1 Literature study**

Royse (1991:221) postulates that the ideal is to become familiar with literature relevant to your topic. However according to him there is no requirement that in qualitative research the literature review should come before data collection. The

purpose of a literature review is to enable the investigator to look for unanswered questions that the present study might address, as well as to compare findings. According to Lin (1976:34) a literature review involves becoming acquainted with literature dealing broadly with the selected topic, and directly with the related research in the field of study. The importance of literature and documentary studies is based on the fact that a researcher is made aware of the studies of others, as well as theories relevant to the phenomena that are being studied. Leedy (1989:67) postulates that a literature study refers to searching for relevant information, reading through it, abstracting and summarising available data.

### **3.3.1.1 Scientific books**

The books which formed researcher's basic knowledge of the subject include Frankl (1970; 1976), Lindenmann (1981), Baron and Byrne (1987), Stroebe and Stroebe (1987), Liebenberg (in Rhodie & Liebenberg (1994), Hass (1995), Bornman, Van Eeden and Wentzel (1998), Hamber (1998), Joseph (1998), Minnaar, Pretorius and Wentzel (1998), Murray (1998), Meiring (1999) and Jeffrey (1999).

Frankl (1970) gave an extensive analysis of how persons who are confronted with traumatising life experiences adapt to be able to survive. He focused on the process of searching for meaning in the suffering itself by the victim so that the burden can be minimised. This gave an indication to researcher that a possibility could exist that some of the respondents in this study might have survived the adverse effects of political conflict by searching for meaning in their suffering.

Lindenmann (1981) gave the most detailed account of the process of pathological grief, which broadened researcher's insight into the problem. It therefore became possible for her to envisage the many dimensions of the loss of a family member, which could manifest in abnormal grief.

Baron and Byrne (1987) rendered a detailed account of the task of understanding the causes of social behaviour by identifying factors that could impact on people's feelings, behaviour as well as thoughts. The authors further illustrated how it could

be possible to change the behaviour of the young especially the pre-adolescents by an inculcation of a new value system. This insight was crucial for the recommendations for this study (see Chapter 5).

Stroebe and Stroebe (1987) shed extensive light on the somatic as well as the psychological consequences of the loss of a loved one. The authors emphasised that although bereavement is experienced uniquely by different people, it involves a slow process, which can be characterised by an unending unconscious search for the deceased. As a result of this, individuals could experience symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder.

Liebenberg (in Rhodie & Liebenberg, 1994:27) provided insight into the complexity of nation building by pointing out the following, namely that:

- South Africans should not have misconceptions about reconciliation between conflicting cultures.
- They should rather accept the challenge of continuing tension as being consistent with a pluralist world and of tension-generating as well as enriching diversity of a post-modern culture.
- Citizens should be aware of the ideal of a democratic society which tolerates different cultures, views and conflict as part of an ongoing process.

This author made this researcher aware of the need for the formulation of realistic as well as practical recommendations (see Chapter 5).

Hass (1995) offered a comprehensive perspective of how a person, who has lived with terror for years, can be able to avoid paralysis and move forward with life. This book gave an exposition about how people cope with growing doubts and uncertainty concerning their past actions as well as inactions. This gave researcher insight into the elasticity and the limits of endurance, the human need and capacity to reassert a vigorous life.

Bornman, Van Eeden and Wentzel (1998) explored the gender perspective on violence during the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. These authors highlighted that women were often partly discriminated against because they were perceived to be less significant victims of human rights violations. The findings of the above researchers sensitised researcher on how the respondents in this study would react to questions related to the findings of the above-mentioned authors.

Hamber (1998) rendered an exposition of Commissions which were undertaken in other countries as an aftermath of the transition from an authoritarian rule to a democratic society. Researcher thus gained insight into how victims of abuses react to such Commissions. It was also enlightening to note how international bodies such as the United Nations as well as the League of Nations measured the successes of such initiatives.

Joseph (1998) supplied an illuminating discussion of how racial discrimination was implemented on political prisoners who were indicted. The author, was a white female activist during the South African Treason Trial, which lasted from December 1956 to March 1961. She contrasted the treatment meted out to her in detention to that of Lillian Ngoyi - a black colleague who was indicted for the same crime. She found that the latter was treated harsher than she was. This made it possible for researcher to validate the findings of Goldblatt and Meintjes (1998) on racial as well as sexual discrimination of female political prisoners in detention in South Africa (see paragraph 1.4).

Minnaar, Pretorius and Wentzel (1998) gave insight into the dynamics of the political conflict of the mid-1980s in South Africa. Researcher was thus able to obtain a broad approach of situations where it could be problematic to distinguish between the oppressors and the oppressed. One example of this was the political assassinations, particularly of middle-level community leaders who were regarded as *iimpimpi* (sell-outs) by township youths.

Murray (1998), a blind female herself, gave a detailed explanation of the permanent grief and frustrations experienced by visually impaired adults and in this way she disputed the fact that time changes everything. This broadened researcher's insight

into grief, which was compounded by a personal disability, such as blindness. Given that a number of the victims who made submissions to the Commission had lost their eyesight as a result of political violence, therefore this report sheds light on their trauma.

Meiring (1999) rendered a comprehensive as well as a systematic account of the experiences of the victims of human rights violations, which he balanced, with the submissions of the perpetrators. He completed the circle of the Commission by highlighting the impact of these dynamics on the Commissioners, translators, psychologists as well as social workers. These persons had to be medically as well as psychologically assisted because of the trauma they endured. This sensitised researcher to the importance of maintaining objectivity when conducting the interviews with the respondents.

Jeffrey (1999) criticised the TRC because it made its findings of accountability for the killings and other violations by relying primarily on the statements made by the victims as well as the perpetrators. She mentioned that most of the amnesty statements were either irrelevant or had yet to be verified, while the victim's evidence was not sufficiently substantiated. This author further pointed out that the statements by the victims were often based on hearsay because in 17 500 instances victims reported abuses which were perpetrated against persons other than themselves. The account rendered by this author made researcher aware of the legal dimension associated with the processing of testimonies.

Various other works from which researcher drew enriching information, such as those by Sutherland and Cressey (1970), Reeves (1985), Jacobs (1990), Glanz (1992, 1994a; 1994b) were also studied. Geen (1958), Frankl (1976), Parsons (1978), Adriaansens (1980), Price and Rossberg (1980), Haralambos (1982), Ritzer (1982), Van Vuuren, Rhodie, Wiehan and Wiechers (1988), Schreiner (1994), Nel and Bezuidenhout (1997), Forster and Durrheim (1998), Liebenberg (1998) as well as Minnaar and Liebenberg (1998) were also consulted.



Other sources that related to the methodology of the study included the books of Lin (1976), Mannheim (1977), Denzin (1990), Groenewald (1990), Royce (1990), Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Leedy (1993), Bailey (1994), Mouton and Marais (1994), Marshall and Rossman (1995) as well as Hagan (1997). Researcher used these research methodology books interchangeably for the planning and implementation of the study. This enabled her to gain information on valuable strategies and procedures that served as guidelines towards an ordered and cohesive research approach. Although these authors presented various points of departure, they all agreed on the fundamental basics of research.

### **3.3.1.2 Scientific articles**

It was also necessary to focus on research articles, which broadened researcher's insight gained from the available scientific books. The following proved relevant to the unique circumstances of the victims as well as the trauma endured by them (see paragraph 1.1), namely Liebenberg and Williams (1996); Wiechers (1998); and Hamber (1995). It is also important to mention that these authors stressed the significance of understanding and accommodating all the conflicting dimensions, which are related to the transition from autocracy to democracy in order that reconciliation could be possible. A common denominator of these scientific articles was the recommendation that complete honesty amongst the negotiating parties should be ensured and maintained.

Liebenberg and Williams (1996:12) point out that the end results of South Africa's political transition from an authoritarian rule to democracy was the establishment of the TRC. Although the culmination of this process cannot be gauged, these authors emphasise that its effects should not be underestimated. According to these authors it could impact on the military (the South African Defence Force), its morale, structures of command and control as well as on issues that involve military professionalism and ethics. Ultimately it is important to remember that the search for truth should be dealt with in such a way that it does not complicate already existing tensions in the broader military system. This is even compounded by the fact that the military is going through a process of simultaneous restructuring.

Wiechers (1998:14), a constitutional expert at the University of South Africa, advances a compelling argument thus:

Tragically, political expediency will not remove South Africa's legacies of apartheid. Besides this, notwithstanding one's intense desire for peace and reconciliation, one has to ask the agonising question whether trading with blood, guilt for political expediency does not simply become negotiations in blood.

Hamber (1995:4) postulates that the process of the TRC could be psychologically healing as well as rehabilitating to those who live with the experiences of the past abuses. The resulting individual and collective emotional responses to political violence, like responses to trauma in general, can be understood as a cognitive process. Trauma and violence can destroy individual cognitive assumptions about the self and the world. The author further observed that severe forms of trauma could alter cognitive assumptions of personal invulnerability, which might result in the victim experiencing insecurity. It is these distortions which can cause posttraumatic stress phenomena. In terms of Hamber's above proposals to the TRC, and from a psychological perspective, he states: "some survivors were left feeling vulnerable, helpless, deprived of the explanation of events as well as humanity".

The author also points out that by creating a realistic perspective of past human rights abuses it can lead to individual and collective cognitive recovery. This could also aid survivors by allowing them to accept what happened to them and deal with their emotional responses. Of importance too is that it could absolve the feelings of guilt and personal responsibility that some of the victims may experience. It is for this reason that the silence and misinformation, which sometimes characterise repressive societies, should be reversed.

### **3.3.1.3 Newspaper reports**

Since the official opening of the TRC in Cape Town on 13 February 1996, the printed media daily reported on its dynamics, which involved testimonies from both the victims as well as the perpetrators (Meiring, 1999:14). A number of victims

expressed anger and bitterness at their traumatic experiences, others upheld the spirit of reconciliation by verbalising their forgiveness to the perpetrators who made full disclosures. The same can be said of the perpetrators, some of whom alleged that they had been betrayed by the apartheid Government. Articles in Rapport, The Sunday Times, The City Press, The Daily Dispatch, Die Burger, Beeld, The Sowetan, The Star, The Sunday Independent, Business Day, Mail and Guardian, Cape Argus, as well as The Evening Post were regularly studied between August 1998 and August 1999 to understand the relevance of the problem to society, and to cast light on the multi-faceted nature of political crime in South Africa. All these sources highlighted the experiences of the victims of political crime of the apartheid era, with its resultant manifestations on the quality of people's lives. Articles by Carter (1998), Brand (1998), Sepotokele (1998) were of assistance to researcher as they all set out human rights violations perpetrated by both the defenders of apartheid (the State security forces) as well as those who opposed it (political activists). Thus a balanced view on the trauma endured by South Africans of **all races** was obtained (see paragraph 1.1).

Although the above sources were studied prior to the research, researcher contended that irrespective of the completion of the TRC Report on 29 October 1998, its revelations continue to impact on the victims. This emanates from the disclosures, which were made by the perpetrators, since the Amnesty Committee of the TRC at the time of compiling this thesis had not yet completed its task. The following newspaper articles can be regarded as proof of this:

- Brown (1998:19) and Northly (1998:3) identified the intensity of the victims' experiences of the TRC as some were willing to forgive for the sake of reconciliation. However, others were angered by their seemingly senseless suffering at the hands of known as well as unknown perpetrators.
- Seale (1998:3) and Radebe (1998:6) as well as Banda (1998:6) documented that the former liberation movements with the exception of the United Democratic Front (UDF) were angered that the Commission's Report had equated the struggle against apartheid with apartheid transgressions. The authors pointed

out that, the above political parties alleged that since apartheid had been declared a crime against humanity internationally, victims of the system could not be placed on the same scale as its defenders.

- Chandler (1998:3) and Yazbek (1998:12) expressed the people's mixed feelings about the completion of the long awaited TRC Report. Some persons verbalised that the recommendations of the Commission could only widen the gap that exists between black and white citizens in South Africa. However, others believed that it could be the healing document, which the country needs.
- Malala (1999:1) and Rickard (1999:2) reported that the ANC had signalled that the government will not pay reparations to more than 20 000 people classified as victims of gross human rights violations. This action was described as a betrayal to the victims by the head of the Reparations Committee, Hlengiwe Mkhize.
- Makone (1999:25) alluded to the so-called untold story of District Six, a coloured residential area in Cape Town, which was demolished in the late 1960s. During this process the State forcefully removed the residents to the Langa Township in Cape Town.
- The South African Press Association (SAPA) (1999:10) reported on the TRC's Amnesty Committee hearing into the 1992 Boipatong massacre in which one woman was also sexually assaulted in the attack by members of the security forces.

#### **3.3.1.4 Popular articles**

Researcher gained insight into the trauma endured by the victims who testified before the TRC by studying magazines such as *Bona*, *Drum*, *Huisgenoot*, *Pace*, *Rooi Rose*, *Sarie* and *True Love*. These popular magazines gave researcher information on the general public's perceptions. In this way, she was able to access the victimisation experiences and how this affected the respective family systems of the victims of all races. This created a challenge to researcher to adapt the available

literature and to contextualise the experiences of the research participants.

### **3.3.2 Documentary studies**

Bailey (1994:96) postulates that a major source of data that is sometimes neglected, is the analysis of records, such as any written material that could contain information about the phenomena which is studied. According to Hagan (1997:243), documentary studies that were originally gathered for other purposes such as the census, are a good economiser of research time in data gathering and are non-reactive. For this specific research, a documentary study refers to the structured records, which were compiled by the TRC researchers, and files containing statements of the victim respondents in the study. The latter were made when they gave their testimonies to the TRC and, besides this, the TRC Report was also studied and interpreted.

According to Hagan (1997:243) researchers can also obtain original data from official reports. The TRC Report is a good example of such a document. Bogdan and Biklen (1992:68) identified several **advantages** of a documentary study, which were also practically applied to this research, namely:

- It allows a researcher to have insight into the experiences of the victims and the incidence of violent crime, even if the victims are not physically available, due to death or other reasons.
- In terms of Bogdan and Biklen's argument, the documents were written by the officials of the Investigation Unit of the TRC for later use by the Commission during the hearings. These were subsequently utilised as they were considered non-reactive.
- It allows verification of information, since the contents of the documents can easily be compared with the victims' interview responses. In this way the respondents may be reminded of aspects they did not mention thus also controlling the credibility of the information contained in the document.

### **3.3.3 Audio-visual reports**

Audio-visual reports, such as television, can have a great effect in that the event being covered is taken to viewers' homes through news and current affairs programmes. In this way, researcher became aware of the impact of the revelations of the TRC on victim respondents. In conjunction with this there was also the Special Assignment Report which was presented every Sunday by Max du Preez, the then SABC journalist who reported on the TRC hearings until they were concluded. The following programmes contributed further to researcher's knowledge of the nature and effect of the manifestations of the political conflict of the apartheid era on both the victims as well as the perpetrators.

- In the Ceasar Molebatsi's Two-way show on SABC TV1, December 8, 1998, at 21:00, victims who made submissions to the TRC verbalised their trauma. These people represented all the racial groupings in South Africa that had suffered in different ways as a result of the conflict of the past. The common denominator amongst them was the re-living of their trauma through the revelations given at the Commission. Noteworthy is that most agreed that this had been the beginning of the healing process for them. The Deputy Minister of Education and also a Catholic priest, Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, also a victim of past abuses, was one of the panellists on this show. Responding to Mr Molebatsi's question on the possibility that one could be healed by testifying, he stated:

You have to connect with your anger as this is a very important part of healing. I thought I could be capable of committing murder as a means of revenging myself on my tormentors, but when I confronted my anger, I forgave them.

Speaking about reconciliation, another panellist, Pastor McCaully of the Rhema Church, pointed out that it could be possible for individuals to have the capacity to forgive if they drew their strength from God. However, he stressed that the victims as well as all South African citizens should lower their expectations of the TRC. He also stated that people should accept that it is difficult to measure the financial trauma endured by the victims.

There were many examples of people from all races, who were willing to reconcile and negotiate, despite the trauma they and their families had suffered. As an example, Linda Biehl, the mother of Amy, the American Fullbright student who was murdered by APLA members in Cape Town during 1993, verbalised that although she is heartbroken, she nevertheless forgave the perpetrators for the sake of peace in South Africa (TRC Report, Extract 5, 1998:12).

- Sibongile Sokhulu, reporting in the 19:30 SABC TV1 news bulletin on June 14, 1999, stated that Eugene de Kock, the former Commander of Vlakplaas, while applying for amnesty at the TRC hearings, verbalised his trauma, anger and contempt. These were directed at a former President of South Africa, PW Botha and his reformist successor, FW de Klerk, whom, he claims, knew about the activities at Vlakplaas. However they used him and others as sacrificial lambs by denying any knowledge thereof. Explaining his past actions he pointed out that he beat, suffocated and even murdered anti-apartheid fighters, detonated bombs and fuelled violence between rival black groups with the aim of destabilising the country before the 1994 General Election.

## **3.4 TECHNIQUES**

According to Mouton and Marais (1991:64) techniques are instruments which are applied to conduct research. Bailey (1994:182) supports this as he explains that techniques are tools for research as they enhance the research process. Researcher employed the following techniques:

### **3.4.1 Sampling**

Bailey (1994:83) notes that sampling involves the designation of a population of interest, such as all registered voters in the USA, then an attempt should be made to select a subset of some predetermined size, which should represent the entire population. Depending upon the size of the body of research participants to be selected, sampling usually takes place after a research problem has been identified

and the most appropriate type of sampling techniques has been selected. According to Hagan (1997:136), sampling is a method of selecting some part of a group to represent the total. The latter is known as the population, while that part of the total that is selected represents the sample.

Two different types of sampling methods can be distinguished, namely **probability** and **non-probability sampling** (Bailey, 1994:93). In the first instance, the probability of selection of each respondent is known, thus the universum's boundaries are known. In the non-probability sampling, the probability of selection is unknown because the universum's boundaries are not known and this represents the dark figure in research. Hagan, (1997:136) further indicates that non-probability sampling techniques include convenience, purposive (judgemental), snowball, quota, theoretical, partial, as well as saturation sampling.

Lofland (1971:91) points out that since qualitative studies are based on intensive interviewing, typically, only 20 to 50 respondents are interviewed. Given the material management problem, numbers in that range seem reasonable, as one legitimately sacrifices breadth for depth. Beck (1990:122) is of the opinion that the end product of qualitative research is not control and prediction but the understanding of human experience.

Both the purposive as well as the snowball sampling methods were used to gather the data for this study. When the point of saturation was reached and no further victims could be obtained, researcher concluded the search for additional respondents. Bailey (1994:67) postulates that in purposive or judgemental sampling the investigator does not necessarily have a quota sample. Besides this, the researcher also does not, in Bailey's terminology, "just pick the nearest warm bodies", as in the convenience sampling method. Hagan (1997:181) who supports this view endorses that the researcher uses his own judgement about which respondents to choose, and only includes those who best meet the purpose of the study.

According to Guy et al. (1987:190), the term snowball is taken from the analogy of a



snowball which begins small but becomes larger and larger as it rolls downhill. However, Newman (1994:199) states that most researchers, who use qualitative methods, do not allow the snowball to proceed unguided on its downhill course. Once it has started to roll, theoretical sampling is used to direct its course. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990:190), theoretical sampling is the process of data collection employed to generate theory whereby the researcher jointly collects, records, codes and analyses data. In this way, he constantly decides which data to collect next and where it should be collected in order to develop a grounded theory as it emerges. Data is systematically collected and analysed until the sample is saturated. Thus, no new or relevant data emerges and the correlation between categories are well established and validated.

### **3.4.1.1 Composition of the sample**

The sample of this study consisted of **three components**, namely ten Commissioners of the TRC, ten Co-ordinators who worked in the TRC offices, as well as 30 **female** victims of **all races**.

#### **3.4.1.1.1 Sample of TRC Commissioners**

The **ten** respondents were drawn during the period 1 May 1999 to 15 May 1999, and was taken from the Commissioners of the TRC, as researcher was of the opinion that they could enrich the findings of this study (see paragraph 3.6.1.1).

The final sample of the Commissioners of the TRC was structured as follows:

- After attending a conference on Truth and Reconciliation on 21 and 22 April 1998 in Johannesburg, researcher requested **four** TRC Commissioners, who were present at the conference, to form part of her study group. Two of them completed their task when the final draft of the TRC Report was presented to President Nelson Mandela by Archbishop Desmond Tutu on October 29, 1998. The other two were still serving on the Amnesty Committee while this study was conducted.

- The other six Commissioners were introduced to researcher by the two Commissioners who were still serving on the TRC at that time.

The following resulted from the interviews that researcher had with the Commissioners.

- Researcher was sensitised to the dynamics of the factors that could influence the experiences of the victims, this knowledge assisted her in the construction of an interview schedule for the victims.
- Thus the interview schedule consisted of questions which were relevant to the problems that the victims experienced and duplication could therefore be avoided.

It was important for researcher to commence the study by exploring the perceptions of the Commissioners, as they were the pillars of the TRC, for the following reasons:

- They assessed the submissions made by the victims of human rights abuses (the Human Rights Committee).
- They evaluated the applications made by the perpetrators for amnesty (the Amnesty Committee).
- They participated and made rulings about the payment of reparations to the victims (the Reparations and Rehabilitation Committee).

These Commissioners advised the researcher to liaise with the Co-ordinators of the TRC in order to obtain insight into the relevant issues pertaining to the needs of the victims.

#### **3.4.1.1.2 Co-ordinators of the TRC offices**

Researcher held general discussions with the ten Co-ordinators who were recommended to her by three of the Commissioners. The first five were consulted in East London during the period 16 to 26 May 1999. It was convenient for her to begin with this first group as she had lived in this area for 20 years. Thus she was

familiar with the people and also spoke their language, namely Xhosa. She then completed the discussions between 28 to 29 May 1999 with the remaining five that worked in the Johannesburg offices.

Discussions were held with the Co-ordinators as they interacted ongoingly with the victims of abuses whom they assisted with the completion of the application forms for reparations. In this way, the applicants were made aware of relevant documentation they had to attach to the forms to validate their claims (e.g. school registration documents) which proved that a child which belonged to a deceased parent was a student and was thus eligible for reparations. They also availed themselves to the victims who were unable to complete the forms themselves, for reasons such as semi-literacy or illiteracy.

After these general discussions, researcher excluded irrelevant questions from the interview schedule that she had prepared to interview the victims.

#### **3.4.1.1.3 Sample of the victims**

The **third** component of the sample consisted of 30 female victims and the interviews were completed in Johannesburg during the period 1 June 1999 to 12 August 1999. This number of the respondents was decided on for the following reasons:

As this is a descriptive study, generalisation was not planned and the 30 respondents were regarded as sufficient because of the sensitivity of the topic under discussion. These **30 female victims were deliberately not demarcated by race** in order that an analysis of the experiences of **all races** could be done. As this is a qualitative study, requiring in-depth interviews of the victim respondents' experiences, this number was seen as a manageable group.

Researcher personally conducted all the interviews and, as such, she was convinced that a larger sample would not be time or cost effective. Because of the trauma experienced by the victim respondents, they could recall memories, and

researcher anticipated that situations could occur where she would have to interrupt the sessions to allow the respondents some time to compose themselves.

**The composition of the sample, which originally consisted of 37 victim respondents, was undertaken by means of the purposive as well as snowball sampling techniques. The sample was composed as follows:**

- **The first five victims were obtained through a purposive sampling technique in the following way:**

During the literature search, researcher became aware of the existence of the Khulumani Support Group in Johannesburg, Gauteng, and she made contact with Ntombi Mosikare, who was its Co-ordinator. This is a non-governmental group (NGO), which supports victims of human rights violations as well as political violence. She then invited researcher to an Annual General Meeting of the group, which was attended by 150 female victims who had testified before the TRC. With the permission of the respondents, researcher randomly selected **five** of them through the numbers-in-the-hat system.

Researcher only opted for **five** respondents from the above-mentioned because the Khulumani Support Group is an organisation which had already been motivated by its Co-ordinators to approach the Commission with clearly demarcated requirements, which related to human rights violations. It was researcher's contention that a large sample drawn from a group, which shared common goals, could be biased and therefore could compromise the objectivity of the study. The composition of these above-mentioned five victims were as follows:

- Two had buried activist brothers (one each) who had been fatally dead by the security police during 1985.
- One suffered physical injuries when a stray bullet which had been aimed at a mob, fleeing from the police, hit her erroneously.

- One had buried a family member who was a victim of a necklace slaying in a township.
- Another female's son was abducted by members of the then Mandela Football Club, which was under the management of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and was never seen alive again.

The rest of the sample was composed as follows:

- **Five** female victims who personally suffered violent victimisation as a consequence of their political activism were introduced to researcher by the Coordinators of the TRC offices in Johannesburg.
- **Five** respondents whose children were victims of bomb attacks of whom four were killed, at the hands of political activists, were obtained from newspaper clippings.
- **Five** research participants whose children were victims of necklace murders in black townships. These were introduced to her by two of the above respondents.
- **Seven** victims whose loved ones sustained various physical injuries which were inflicted by the security officers as well as unknown persons. The details of these participants were obtained from the TRC Officers when researcher interviewed them.
- **Ten** victims (also political activists) whose family members disappeared or were killed by unknown persons during the apartheid era and were thus never buried by their families. The particulars of these respondents were obtained from members of the Khulumani Support Group. However these victims did not belong to this group.

The sample then became **saturated** when researcher could not obtain any further victims and at this point she decided that these **37 respondents** were sufficient.

However **seven** these victim respondents were later **excluded** from the sample during the interviews because they verbalised that they were exhausted from the stress of recalling the accounts of their trauma during testifying before the TRC and that they were not willing to complete the interviews. For ethical considerations researcher then decided to eliminate respondents who manifested emotional symptoms. **Thirty** victim respondents thus formed the final sample of this study. The composition of the sample also met researcher's need for diversity and represented their trauma experiences, namely:

- Violations perpetrated to the victims as a consequence of their **political activism**.
- Abuses of victims who were not discriminated against by the apartheid system as a result of their race. However, they became indirect victims of the system for example, **victims of bomb attacks** by members of progressive movements.
- Violent victimisation committed by members of their own groupings for example **necklace slayings** of the persons who were suspected of being police informers (iimpimpi).
- **Torture of political detainees** by members of the security forces and which resulted in death.
- **Human rights violations** which were perpetrated by unknown persons during the political conflict of the mid-1980s.

### 3.4.2 Interviews

Hagan (1997:164) says that interviewing can refer to a variety of face-to-face situations in which the researcher orally solicits responses, which can range from in-depth, lengthy interviews of one or a few subjects to fairly structured surveys of large groups. This author mentions that, as with the other techniques of data gathering, the **advantages** and **disadvantages** of interviewing as a means of obtaining

information should be carefully considered along with other techniques before a decision is made to proceed. Hagan mentions the following **advantages** of interviewing:

- The interview provides an opportunity for personal contact between the researcher and the subject.
- Because of the face-to-face relationship, interviews generally bring about a higher response rate than mail surveys. Besides this, being present, the interviewer can prevent misunderstandings or confusion the respondents may have in interpreting questions.
- Additionally, the interviewer can also act as an observer, and not only record verbal responses, but also make notes of body language such as fidgeting with their hands or the clenching of fists.

Bailey (1994:175) mentions the following **disadvantages** of interviewing, namely:

- Interview studies can be costly especially when complex research requires small bureaucracies with a number of administrators, field supervisors, interviewers, and in some cases even public relations personnel.
- Interview bias can be introduced to the study when the interviewer misunderstands the respondents' answer or understands it but makes an error in recording it, or may simply record an answer even when the respondent failed to reply. According to Singleton, Straits and Straits (1993:271) the problem of bias may be produced not only by the wording, order and format of the questions, but also by the interaction between the interviewer and the respondent.
- The interview offers less assurance of anonymity than a mailed questionnaire study, particularly if the latter includes no follow-up. In this way, the interviewer poses a potential threat to the respondent if the information is incriminating, embarrassing or otherwise sensitive. Thus the respondent can minimise the

threat by referring or responding in a way he thinks the interviewer wishes him to respond.

Given the advantages as well as the disadvantages of interviewing researcher decided to construct an interview schedule with the **TRC Revelations Aftermath Model** (see Figure 2.1) as a theoretical basis with the aim of attaining objectivity.

### **3.4.3 Interview schedule**

Bailey (1994:188-189) defines an interview schedule as a data collection method in which one person puts questions to another from a list of topics and/or subtopics within an area of enquiry. He further postulates that one may employ semi-structured interviews by using a combination of open- and closed-ended questions or semi-structured focused ones. Hagan (1997:166) substantiates this by pointing out that on the one hand the structured interview schedule consists of questions which are comparable to an objective educational test. On the other, the unstructured one is similar to tests in which a person is asked to explain the topics that are being tested. He states that semi-structured focused interviews do not provide predetermined response categories. Researcher was therefore obliged to make use of the semi-structured interviews because they best suited the majority of the respondents in the study due to the fact that they had never been exposed to research before. However, Hagan (1997:166) cautions that because in-depth interviews are more intensive and detailed, a researcher has to exercise great discretion and flexibility in the manner, timing, as well as direction of questioning. At the end of the interview, respondents were asked, in line with the aims and goals of the research (see paragraph 1.4), to offer solutions towards addressing their needs, as well as suggestions relating to reconciliation and national unity in general. This information was also taken into consideration when recommendations were made in Chapter 5 (see paragraph 5.3).

#### **3.4.3.1 Composition of the interview schedule**

The interview schedule was structured according to the **TRC Revelations**



**Aftermath Model** in the following manner (see Figure 2.1):

- Assumptions
- Bereavement
- Biological subsystem
- Personality subsystem
- Social subsystem
- Cultural subsystem
- The meaning of suffering
- Transformation of behaviour.

### **3.4.3.2 Interviews with the respondents**

The researcher interviewed the following categories of respondents:

- **Commissioners**

It took researcher one hour to interview each Commissioner, as the interview schedule (see Appendix A) that was used was much shorter than that for the victims. She had already established rapport with them at the time she arranged the appointment with them and thus also explained the purpose of the study (see paragraph 3.4.1.1.1). The Commissioners advised researcher to have informal discussions with Co-ordinators as they assisted victims to complete documentation to appear before the TRC. As researcher regarded this as valuable advice she contacted four Co-ordinators.

- **General discussions with the Co-ordinators**

Although no use was made of an interview schedule with the Co-ordinators nevertheless general discussions took place. These discussions lasted between one to one and a half-hours. The Co-ordinators explained the application forms for reparations, which the victims had to complete. This conversation proved to be both cost effective and practical as researcher was able to ask questions

based upon those to which the victims in general had already responded (see paragraph 3.4.1.1.2).

- **Interviews with the victims**

First of all researcher explained the aim of the study and assured the respondents of the **confidentiality** of the research. In terms of the victim respondents, researcher spent an average of two and a half hours with each interviewee. An attempt was made to establish rapport within the first 15 minutes of such a meeting. This involved asking them about their daily activities in general and included a less intense discussion of life events in the post election South Africa.

The above-mentioned time interval, for a study as emotionally sensitive as this one, could be construed as traumatising to the victims. However, it is crucial to emphasise that researcher was responding to the latter's requests. The victim respondents explained to her that it would be stressful for them if there had to be more than one meeting, since it was difficult to deal with the pain of recalling the past. Thus researcher decided that she would attempt to have only one long interview with each respondent which proved to be possible and successful.

### **3.4.3.3 The use of the tape recordings**

Hagan (1997:208) points out that tape recorders, videotapes as well as films can greatly improve the ability to recall information gathered during interviews. Nevertheless such devices must be used with caution if the subject matter is a criminal activity. Saunders (in Hagan, 1997:208) reports that during a participant observation study of detectives, he soon realised that taking notes made his subjects nervous. He thus argues that if the researcher sought permission to make use of a tape recorder, this could be acceptable and of practical value.

Therefore researcher made use of tape recordings to collect data for this study as all the respondents had reacted positively to her request. The tape recordings were

transcribed and missing information was added to the interview schedule. In this way, researcher could also verify that the information that she gathered was correct and comprehensive.

#### **3.4.3.4 Probing**

Bailey (1994:189) identifies several functions and characteristics of probing (follow-up questions) in qualitative research when open-ended-questions are used. He defines the latter as questions that yield lengthy statements requiring the respondents to structure their thoughts on a topic about which they may not have thought of before. In conjunction with this Denzin (1994:506) states that it creates the conditions for authentic, or deep emotional understanding of a phenomenon. According to Mouton and Marais (1991:64) the main functions of probing are:

- To get the respondent to answer in more detail and accurately, or at least to provide a minimal acceptable answer. Probing can thus be used whenever the respondent hesitates in answering, or gives an unclear or incomplete answer, and this does not form part of the interview schedule, as each interview is unique.
- A second function is to structure the respondent's answers and to make sure that all the topics of the research problem are covered and that irrelevant information is reduced.
- Probe questions may be written on the questionnaire in advance or developed in the pre-test phase if it becomes evident that respondents' incomplete answers fall into several predictable categories.
- A specific probe may be written for each category, thus probes are essentially contingency questions to be used only when the respondents had previously given a vague answer.

### 3.4.4 Scientific validity and reliability of the study

In accordance with Schurink (1995:6) qualitative studies lack hard, strict, controllable and rigid rules and, as such, qualitative researchers are often confronted with questions which can make them feel uncomfortable. These could relate to customary standards that are set for scientific research. Denzin (1990:502-506) argues that because qualitative studies entail understanding of people's meanings, it is significant that great emphasis is placed on internal validity and, thus, the production of accurate findings that correlate with the subjects' life world. Therefore, an indication is given by researcher of how this study met the ethical standards (see paragraph 3.4.1.1.3).

Athens (1994:206) mentioned that there are two issues associated with authenticity, namely **reliability** and **validity**. Reliability concerns consistency in collecting, analysing and interpreting data, validity refers to the fact that a particular method yielded accurate and true-to-life results about the phenomena that were studied. The author further describes reliability of a measuring instrument as its level of precision of measurement - in other words, **how well** it measures what it is supposed to measure.

According to Hagan (1997:270), in the **test-retest method** of determining reliability, the same instrument, if administered twice to the same population, and if the results are the same, stability of measurement is accepted. In this way, a strong relationship between the two measures is assumed to indicate reliability. In the final analysis the following goals have to be reached:

- Research results must be convincing and meaningful.
- The subject studied must be better understood.

To ensure reliability and validity researcher made use of an interview schedule as well as open and closed-ended questions. This was followed by the construction of questions in such a way that the answers given by the research group were double-checked by cross questions which were built in (see paragraph 3.4.7.1).

### 3.4.5 Observation

According to Bailey (1994:242), observation is the primary technique for collecting data on non-verbal behaviour. Neuman (1997:112), who shares this view, points out that observation refers to a variety of strategies in which researchers study groups in their natural settings by observing their activities. Bailey (1994:243) has identified several **advantages** of observation, namely:

- The observer studying the respondents can discern ongoing behaviour as it occurs, as well as making field notes that record the salient features of the behaviour.
- Behaviour takes place in a natural environment and is, thus, less likely to be manipulated than other data-collection techniques such as interviewing and experimentation.
- While the respondent may experience some memory loss about events that occurred in the past, researcher is, by being the observer, studying behaviour as it occurs. A researcher can also observe telescoping of information, which could occur, for example when a respondent is not sure when the victimisation took place (Brown, 1998:211). Especially with traumatic events this is possible as respondents tend to be confused as to when the incidents took place.

Shafir and Stebbins (1991:140) also warn against the **disadvantages** of observation, namely:

- In a natural environment the researcher often has no control over extraneous variables such as family members who volunteer information because they were

present when the violence occurred, and this could affect the outcome of the data. Researcher resolved this problem by politely excusing family members who did not testify before the TRC from participating in the interview.

- Measurement in observational studies generally takes the form of the observer's unquantified perceptions, rather than the quantitative measures often used in survey research and experimentation.
- Since the observer is often in contact with the subjects for an extended period of time, the relationship between them can become more intimate and informal. However, the survey is different in that the interviewer only sees the respondents for a short period and on a very formal basis; or makes use of mailed questionnaires and never sees the respondents at all (Bailey, 1994:69).

Denzin (1990:86) also warns against the researcher over-identifying with the study group, as well as being antagonised by them, which raises the question of objectivity in social research. Researcher realised that no data-gathering technique is devoid of problems and this could also be applicable to the information contained in the files of the victim respondents kept by the TRC. To a great extent over-exposure to the respondents was prevented which could introduce biasness.

### **3.4.6 Case analysis**

Groenewald (1986:9) postulates that case analyses entails the study of a number of cases, events or phenomena in terms of factors which occur in a causal relationship to each other. In doing so, the ultimate aim is to determine the statistical probabilities of relationships between the causes and effects. Bogdan and Taylor (1982:59) point out that the general design of a case study is best explained by using the example of a funnel. In this way, the study begins wide and then narrows down to the data that is relevant to it. Hagan (1997:111) contends that case studies involve in-depth analysis of one or a few cases as a way of a sensitising strategy when approaching the subject matter.

The Commissioners were asked about their perceptions of the experiences of the victim respondents based on the submissions they had received at the time the hearings of the TRC were in progress. In addition, it was inquired from them whether the Commission has accomplished what it had set out to achieve. These were correlated with the information which emanated from the general discussions researcher had with the Co-ordinators of the TRC offices, and this resulted in some of their answers validating what most of the victim respondents had verbalised. They were asked about the manifestations of the impact of the TRC on them and their families. Researcher enquired from them what their needs were and what their opinion was in relation to the role played by the Commission in their lives. They were also asked if they had received any reparations, the nature thereof and whether that was in line with their expectations. Thus, researcher got insight into a complicated problem and analysed her data in such a way that enabled her to make practical recommendations at the end of the study (see Chapter 5).

### 3.4.7 Pilot Study

According to Neuman (1997:68) a pilot study can be defined as a small scale study of the problem, conducted before the onset of a larger research project, to test its relevance, as well as the possibility of the research being done in the proposed way. Hagan (1997:147) endorses that a pilot study is a reconnaissance operation or exploratory testing of the instrument, using subjects who are similar to the group to be studied. By employing a pilot study, researcher was able to identify problems in the research methodology and, in this way, effected some corrections and re-adjustments before commencing with the actual study.

Two groups of respondents were included in the pilot study. The first group consisted of **two** (20%) **Commissioners** and the second of **five** (16,66%) **victims**. According to Lofland (1971:191) usage of 10 to 20 percent of the sample for a pilot study is acceptable.

Thus the final composition of the pilot study was made up of **two** Commissioners which served on two of the main Committees that processed the issues of the

victims, namely one officiated in the Human Rights Committee and the other served in the Committee for Reparations. After conducting the interviews with the TRC Commissioners, researcher was advised to consult the Co-ordinators of the TRC to get insight in to the dynamics of the needs of the victims. She thus had general discussions with **ten** of them (see paragraph 3.4.1.2.2). The Co-ordinators did not form part of the formal interviews but were incorporated to obtain information on the structure of the application forms for reparations (see Appendix C).

**Five** victim respondents took part in the pilot study of which **two** lost family members, that were murdered by the security forces, **two** who had been tortured and detained for political activism and **one** who's loved one had been assaulted and had their homes gutted by fire because they were labelled as sell-outs.

All the respondents were subsequently included in the actual research as they were already familiar with the goal of the study. Researcher explained to them that certain questions needed clarification, that some questions had to be altered or adapted. Therefore a second interview with these respondents who formed the pilot study, was necessary. Although the respondents indicated that they would have preferred a single interview they expressed their willingness as they understood why it was necessary to arrange a second meeting (see paragraph 3.4.3.2).

#### **3.4.7.1 Problems experienced during the pilot study**

Hagan (1997:234) attests to the limitations of official data by stating that the problem with this type of information for research purposes is that it may not contain the degree of accuracy the researcher desires, since the data had been gathered for agency purposes. Researcher experienced some problems during the pilot study, which she attempted to resolve as follows:

- During the pilot study with the TRC Commissioners, researcher discovered that the issue of amnesty might have been less simplistic than the victim respondents assumed. For illustrative purposes they believed that they would be consulted by the TRC before the perpetrators could be granted amnesty. However, the



Commissioners made it clear that the decision pertaining to amnesty was the Committee's responsibility. For this reason researcher built the following question into the interview schedule, which reads: "Which of the following describe your perception of the TRC?" (see Question 45, Appendix A).

It was discovered that, although important basic information to assess the needs and circumstances of the victims in the study was contained in the TRC Records, some limitations, nevertheless, existed. As these documents were not originally intended for research purposes, information such as educational qualification, marital status, as well as political affiliation of the respondents, which was important for this study, was omitted.

Researcher, however, circumvented this handicap by arranging her questions to the respondents in such a way that biographical characteristics preceded the incident of political conflict as can be seen from Questions 1- 7 (Appendix A).

- Researcher had the perception that most of the victim respondents who were not political activists would experience the violent conflict of the past as a result of the involvement of their **sons** in the struggle for democracy. However, it became apparent at this stage that a number of the victim respondents were adversely affected by the political conflict because of the involvement of their **daughters** in the liberation struggle. Researcher then included a question whose answer would reveal the gender of a victim respondent's child as Question 11 (Appendix A) shows which reads: "What is/was the gender of your child/children?"

It became clear that friends of the children of the victim respondents, who had been visiting the victims' homes were also being assaulted, arrested or killed as a result of the political conflict. Researcher therefore added Question 12 (Appendix A), which was directed at the relationship of the arrested, injured or murdered persons to the victim respondents which reads: "What was the relationship between you and the injured/arrested or the murdered person/persons?"

- At this stage, researcher discovered that some victims were still unable to trace their family members who had disappeared many years before the political conflict and that they were thus presumed dead. She thus built in Question 10 (Appendix A) which reads: “Did you lose a family member through death as a result of the incident?”
- It became clear that the TRC had evaluated the needs of the victims for which reparations were promised. However, at the time of conducting the interviews the respondents were angered by the fact that although this was promised during June 1996, no reparations had yet been effected. The following question was added, namely Question 29 (Appendix A) which reads: “How do you feel about the fact that reparations have not been effected?”
- The researcher discovered that some victim respondents were traumatised by not being informed about the whole truth concerning their experience during the TRC hearings. Others again, received no information at all from the TRC, which frustrated them. This made them lose all hope of ever getting any feedback, given that the Commission had concluded the hearings on the violations of human rights. Researcher thus built in a cross-question, namely Question 31 (Appendix A) which reads: “Do you think it was worthwhile to make submissions to the Commission?”.

Researcher realised that the five respondents who had formed part of the pilot study were of value to this research. By verbalising to her their misunderstanding of the questions made it possible for her to make adjustments to the interview schedule before beginning with the actual interviews. After the above-mentioned interview schedule for this study was rectified in terms of the information as discussed above, researcher was of the opinion that the schedule was ready for empirical testing and she thus proceeded.

### **3.5 TECHNIQUES USED TO ANALYSE DATA**

According to Denzin (1990:31), in the social sciences, nothing speaks for itself and as such data must be interpreted. Confronted with a gross amount of impressions, documents, and field notes, the qualitative researcher faces the difficult and challenging task of making sense of data gathered. Schurink (1995:2) states that the aim of the analysis and interpretation in qualitative studies, as in social science research generally, is to attempt to gain insight and understanding into the phenomena under investigation. Bailey (1994:338), who holds this view, asserts that this is achieved logically through:

- systematically ordering and re-ordering of the data
- continually trying to classify and categorise data according to similarities and dissimilarities in the study
- looking for, and extracting patterns, themes as well as universals.

Graphical representation of various categories of respondents' profiles was constructed in line with data analysis. As Shaffir and Stebbins (1991:153) point out, one way in which researchers can illustrate qualitative data graphically is to construct an outline chart depicting different types and subtypes of patterns.

### **3.6 RATIONALE FOR ACCEPTING OR REJECTING RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS**

This is an in-depth study of 30 research participants whose responses were tested by using an interview schedule. Ten Commissioners of the TRC were also interviewed to sensitise researcher to problems that she could encounter. Information was also collected from the Co-ordinators (see paragraph 4.2). Researcher made use of both open-ended as well as closed-ended questions which were coded to correlate certain information as well as to enhance reliability and validity. As a result of the sample size and the intensity of the in-depth interviews no

statistical techniques were used. Researcher decided to use percentages and to interpret research expectations as follows:

- If 75 percent of the research participants supported a research expectation, the findings was fully accepted.
- If 50 percent of the research participants agreed with a research expectation, it supported the findings of this study.
- If respondents who accepted a research expectation were below 50 percent, the findings were rejected.

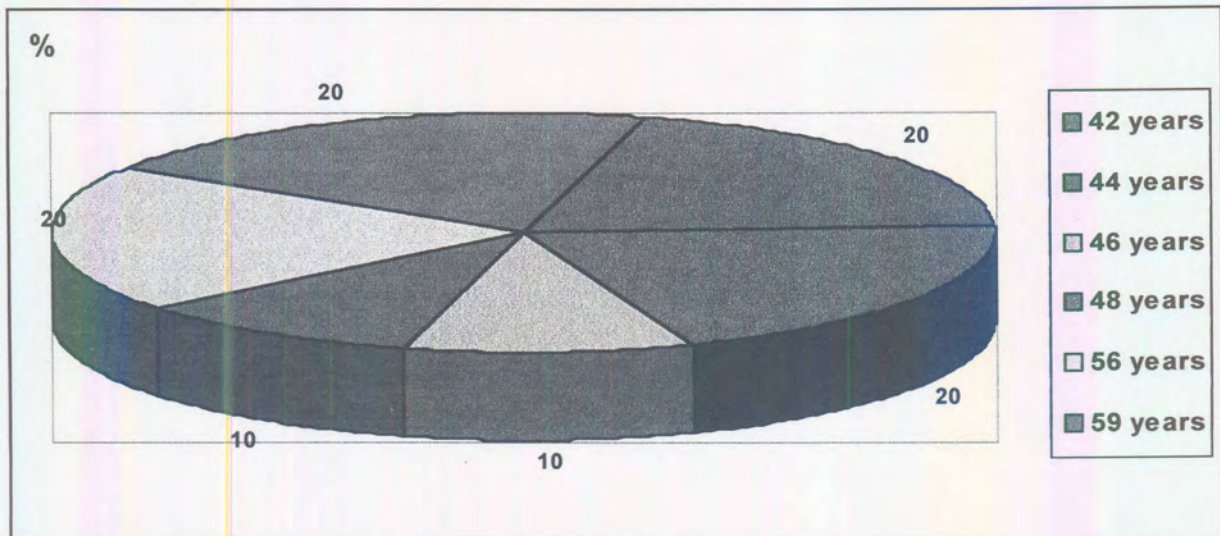
## **3.7 PROFILE OF THE RESEARCH GROUP**

### **3.7.1 Commissioners**

A discussion of respondents' biographical characteristic will now be rendered.

### 3.7.1.1 Age group of the Commissioners

The age group of the Commissioners who participated in this research is set out in Figure 3.1.

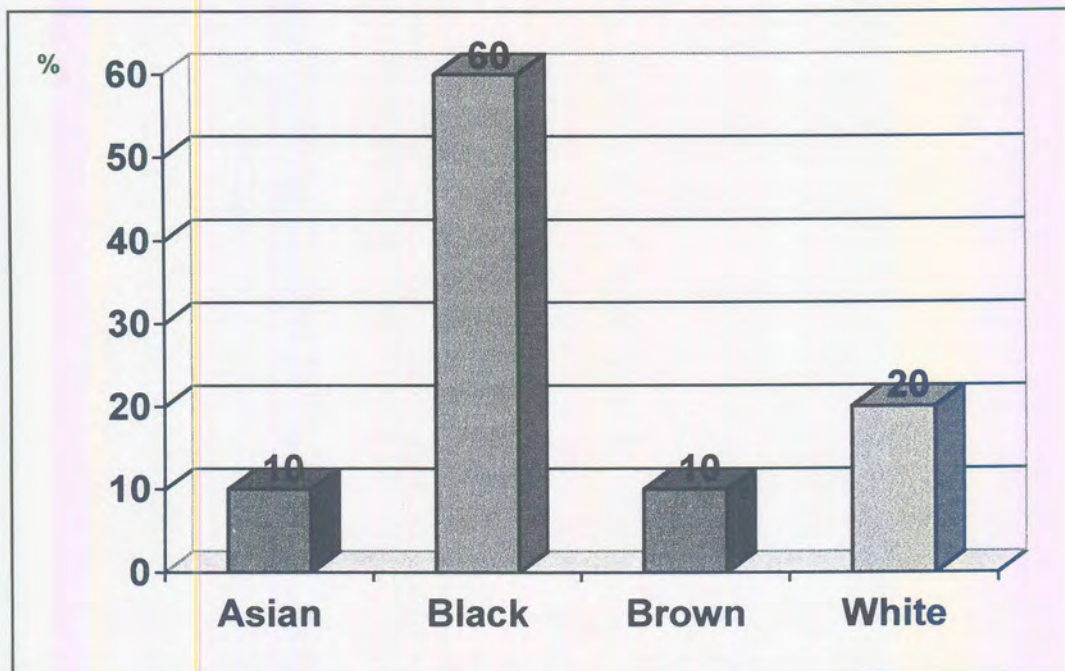


**Figure 3.1 Age distribution of the Commissioners**

As can be observed from the above Figure, six (60%) of the Commissioners were in the mid-forties age group. This could be an indication that they were selected as professional people who had been successful in their work, had sufficient experience as well as wisdom which could contribute to their objectivity.

### 3.7.1.2 Race of the Commissioners

The race of the Commissioners who participated in this research is set out in Figure 3.2.

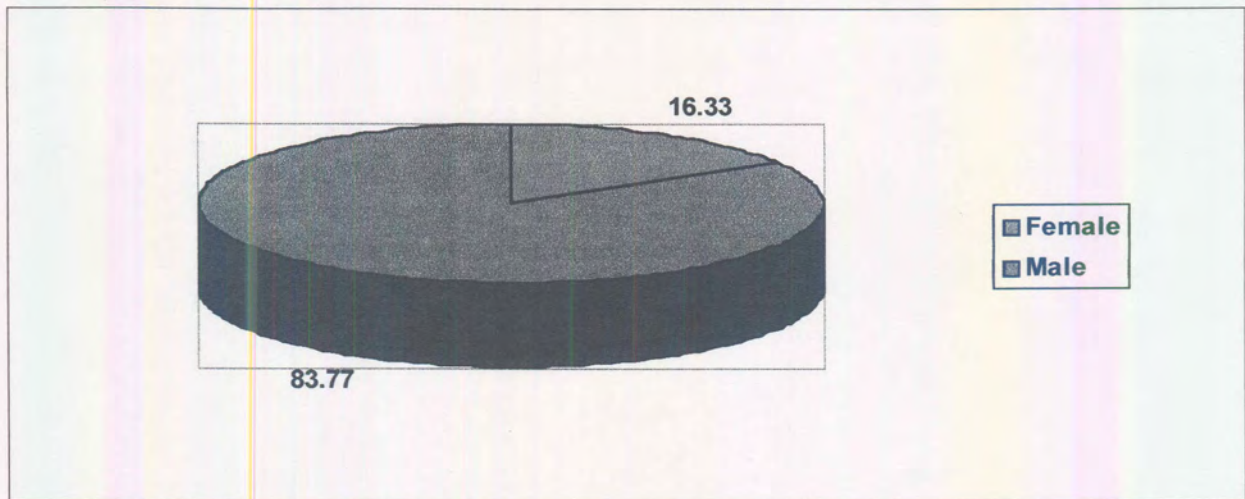


**Figure 3.2 Race of the Commissioners**

The above Figure 3.2 shows that there were more black Commissioners in this study than others, namely six (60%). Because the snowball sampling technique was used the above was a spontaneous result of the technique. Researcher is of the opinion that it was much easier for the black Commissioners to suggest the names of persons they were more familiar with (i.e. other black colleagues).

### 3.7.1.3 Gender of the Commissioners

As can be seen from Figure 3.2 there were nine (90%) males and only one (10%) females Commissioner. As this was not planned, researcher believes that since she had started with the males, it had been easy for them suggest other male colleagues, as they were also over represented and thus she only ended with one (10%) woman Commissioner. To illustrate this point only one (16,33%) woman served on the Committee on Amnesty, out of the total of six (83,77%) male Commissioners.



**Figure 3.3** Gender Distribution of the Commissioners

### **3.7.2** Victim respondents

#### **3.7.2.1** Age group of the victim respondents

The age group of the victim respondents who participated in this research is set out in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

*Age Distribution of Victim Respondents*

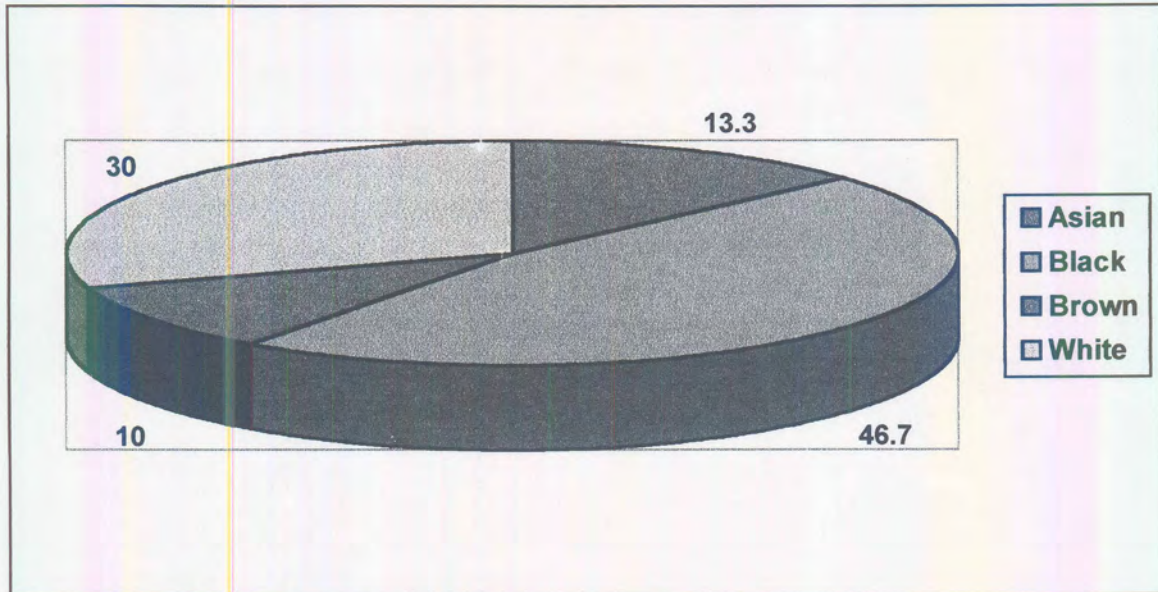
Age	N	%
26	1	3.3
28	1	3.3
29	1	3.3
34	1	3.3
35	1	3.3
37	1	3.3
38	2	6.7
40	1	3.3
46	1	3.3
48	1	3.3
49	2	6.7
50	2	6.7
51	2	6.7
52	1	3.3
55	1	3.3
58	2	6.7
64	1	3.3
66	3	10.00
69	1	3.3
70	1	3.3
71	1	3.3
74	1	3.3
79	1	3.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>100.00</b>

The above table indicates the age distribution of victim respondents. It is clear that respondents of all the age groups were included in this study as South Africans, of all age groups, suffered the negative consequences of the political conflict. Researcher is thus of the opinion that this distribution could give an objective opinion over a broad lifespan of victims.



### 3.7.2.2 Profile of victim respondents

The race of the victim respondents who participated in this research is set out in Figure 3.4.

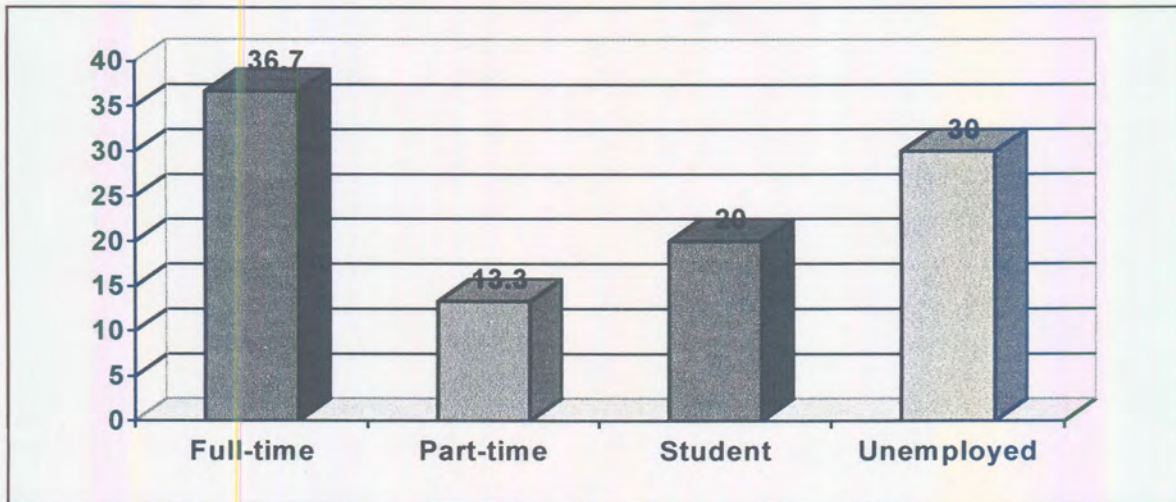


**Figure 3.4 Race of Victim Respondents**

Figure 3.4 shows that whites formed only nine (30%) of the respondents and although this is not absolute, it can be seen as a reflection of the demographic distribution of the white population in South Africa.

### 3.7.2.3 Employment status of the Victim Respondents

The current employment status of the victim respondents who participated in this research is set out in Figure 3.5.

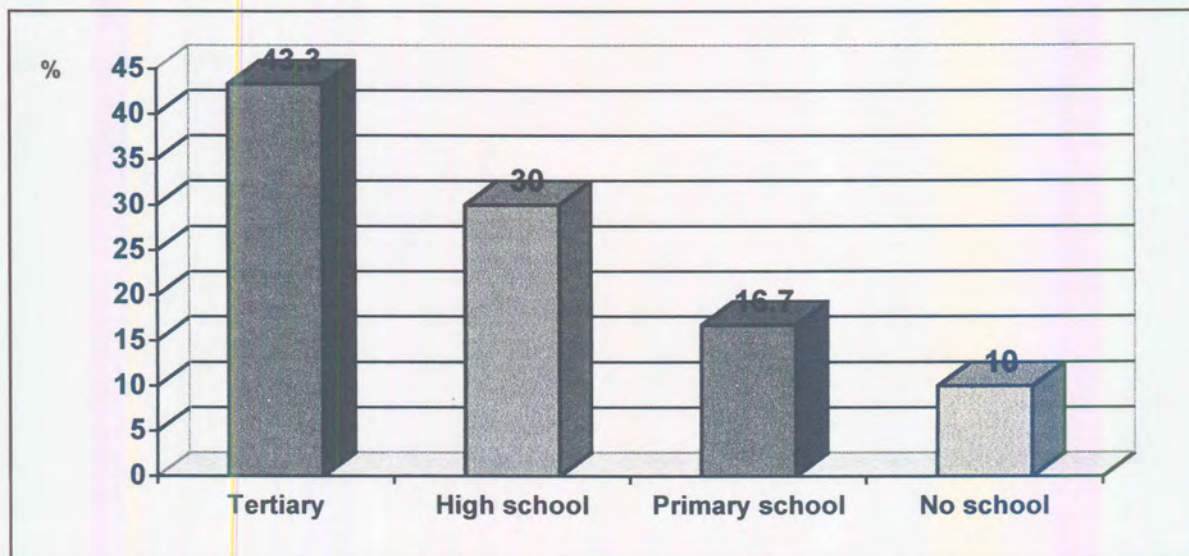


**Figure 3.5 Current employment status of the Victims Respondents**

Figure 3.5 indicates that six (20%) of the victim respondents were students at the time of the incident and the political situation at schools made it impossible to complete their education. At the time of conducting the study they did not have the opportunity to pursue further studies which could also be one of the reasons for the high unemployment figure, namely nine (30%) of the respondents.

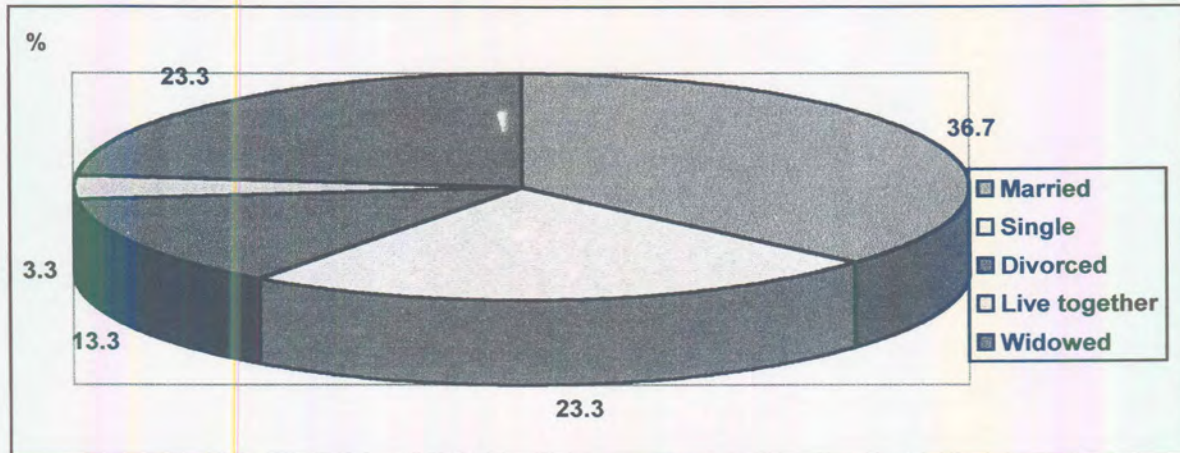
### 3.7.2.4 Educational qualifications of the Victim Respondents

The educational qualifications of the victim respondents who participated in this research is set out in Figure 3.6.



**Figure 3.6 Educational Qualifications of the Victim Respondents**

As can be seen from Figure 3.6 most 13 (43.3%) of the victim respondents had tertiary education as to a third who had no education at all which was one of the reasons that an interview schedule was important. The discussion with the Co-ordinators especially sensitised the researcher to the fact that victims could be semi- or illiterate and this is indicated in this table.



**Figure 3.7** Victim Respondents' marital status

Figure 3.7 shows that 11 (36.7%) of the victim respondents were married while seven (23.3%) were widowed. This implies that for these 18 (60%) women there were no husbands to care for them.

### 3.8 CONCLUSION

The research procedures, which were employed to collect the data for the study as well as the profile of the respondents, were discussed in this Chapter. In Chapter 4 the analysis and interpretation of the data, which was collected according to the stipulated procedures and techniques, was done.

# **CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

## **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter the data obtained qualitatively was analysed and interpreted. The explanatory model: the **TRC Revelations Aftermath Model** (see Figure 2.1) was used as a basis. The analysis was conducted according to the information obtained from the Commissioners, the Co-ordinators as well the victims. The following is a cursory exposition of how the data was interpreted.

**Component 1: The Commissioners**

**Component 2: The Co-ordinators**

**Component 3: The victims**

As the victim respondents formed the central focus of this study only the data obtained from them was therefore analysed and interpreted according to the **TRC Revelations Aftermath Model** (see Figure 2.1). This model was developed to explain their experiences of the TRC revelations, and was therefore discussed as follows:

- Janoff-Bulman and Frieze's Victim Experience Model (see paragraph 4.4.1).

The assumptions, which the above authors postulate about how people view themselves and also experience the world, were relevant in the interpretation of the effect of trauma on the victim respondents in this study. Thus it was possible for researcher to explain that before the impact of political violence on the research participants, they had believed in personal invulnerability, which resulted in them having a positive regard of themselves. They also viewed the world as controllable and thus predictable. However, when they were confronted with the trauma of the

apartheid era, these assumptions collapsed and this compounded their grief in such a way that they experienced anxiety, distrusted people and also viewed themselves in a negative light (see paragraph 2.1.1).

- The Bereavement Theories (see paragraph 4.4.2).

The phases which bereaved people cope with namely, numbness, despair, yearning, (which leads to protest) as well as recovery (which precedes restitution) were appropriate in the analysis of the experiences of the victim respondents in this study. Although they did not necessarily experience these stages in the above-mentioned order, when their loved ones were murdered during the political violence, they were adversely affected. It was therefore possible to explain how some suffered shock and disbelief, while others had guilt feelings, sleeping disturbances as well as release from the loss (see paragraph 2.2).

- Parsons' General Action Theory (see paragraph 4.4.3).

The impact of the revelations on the respondents was discussed in terms the following:

- Victims' experience of the revelations at the TRC hearings in terms of adaptation (biological subsystem) (see paragraph 4.4.3.1).
- Victims' experience of the revelations at the TRC hearings in terms of goal-attainment (personality subsystem) (see paragraph 4.4.3.2).
- The impact of the revelations at the TRC hearings on the victim respondents in terms of the social subsystem (integration) (see paragraph 4.4.3.3).
- Victims' experience at the TRC hearings process in terms of the cultural subsystem (latency) (see paragraph 4.4.3.4).

The above-mentioned subsystems of Parsons' General Action System were used effectively during the interpretation of the data. Thus researcher explained the impact of the trauma of the revelations of the TRC on the victims. Based on this theory the victim respondents in this study, as biological entities, experienced symptoms related to injuries, ulcers and weight loss, inter alia. They also functioned as personality subsystems, who were angry as well as depressed. However, they did not suffer these symptoms in isolation as through the social subsystem, they had to cope with regret for having testified, as some did not receive the reparations promised to them. In conjunction with this, others were not satisfied with the information they got from their perpetrators. Lastly, despite the fact that a number of the research participants by means of their cultural subsystem, came to terms with their trauma and reconciled, many others did not succeed in finding the meaning in their suffering and were thus non-forgiving. Lastly, the victims coped with their biological manifestations through adaptation and goal-attainment was used to fulfil their personality problems. In addition to this, integration and latency managed conflict and maintained equilibrium respectively (see paragraph 2.4).

- Victims' experience in terms of the Existential Theory of Frankl (see paragraph 4.4.4).

The exposition by Frankl (1970:66) that some people can derive meaning from their grief was used by researcher to interpret how the victim respondents, as individuals, responded differently to their trauma. Thus to some, it was possible to reconcile with their perpetrators and find inner peace despite their trauma. Researcher also explained why others could not understand their grief and thus were unable to forgive (see paragraph 2.5).

- Victims' perception of behavioural change in terms of Maslow's Theory of Personal Growth (see paragraph 4.4.5).

Maslow's exposition that behavioural change can be effected among the youth by the introduction of a new value system was relevant mainly for purposes of making recommendations in Chapter 5. The author however stresses that only the value system of the youth and not of adults can be influenced. However, this theory also

made it possible for researcher to interpret the responses of the research participants when they were asked to make some suggestions on changing deviant behaviour (see paragraph 2.6).

It was significant to assess how the victim respondents experienced life in general before political conflict impacted on them, which culminated in their interaction with the TRC. This was discussed in relation to how they perceived themselves, which could be determined by the assumptions they had about life events, such as political conflict in South Africa. According to this model (see Figure 2.1) the victim respondents experienced the revelations of the Commission in various ways, which determined how they coped with their trauma.

## **4.2 THE COMMISSIONERS**

As the Commissioners of the TRC formed a significant dimension of this study researcher viewed it important to discuss their perceptions of how the victim respondents adapted to the impact of the TRC process on their lives. It was therefore necessary to analyse their responses, as this was used to corroborate some of the disclosures made by the victim respondents (see paragraphs 4.2 - 4.6).

### **4.2.1 Perceptions of the Commissioners of the TRC**

Ten (100%) of the Commissioners highlighted the fact that they felt privileged to have been involved with the TRC process in that it had enriched their lives. However all of them said that the experience traumatised them. As a consequence of this, all (100%) of them had consulted services of the TRC psychologist who was employed solely for the purpose of dealing with members of the TRC's emotional trauma. This emanated from having to repeatedly listen to the testimonies which related to violent actions perpetrated on the victim respondents or their loved ones in varying degrees. It could be linked to the statements made by the victims to the Commission during the hearings, concerning the effect of political conflict on their lives.



The following response of a Commissioner could possibly summarise the experiences of the others

When I came on board, I was very reluctant since I had mixed feelings. However, practical experience changed my attitude, as I began to realise that it is imperative that I carry out the task of facilitating reconciliation in South Africa – I had no choice.

Of course I was apprehensive and very sceptical to an extent that I had to constantly search my soul from the day I was invited. I also know that had I not received valued and enriching support from my wife, my children as well as friends, perhaps I could have declined to participate. However, when I assessed in retrospect the few strides which have been accomplished thus far, I realised that I have no regrets. Inroads have been made and the results thereof could be seen in the future.

Questions 6 to 8 (Appendix B) probed the performance of the Commission in terms of its mandate. In responding to it ten (100%) of them mentioned that they accepted the fact that the TRC could have partially accomplished its mandate as it resolved the problems of some of the victims. However, others needs were not fulfilled. In some cases, human rights abuses were adequately investigated and this resulted in the perpetrators being subpoenaed to give evidence in terms of their transgressions. Although a number of the victim respondents were not satisfied with the disclosures made, others reported that they felt a sense of accomplishment because the TRC made it possible for them to see the persons responsible for their trauma.

Emphasising the limitations of the TRC's Investigation Unit, one Commissioner stated:

The Investigation Unit of the TRC could not have escaped blame, as it was faced with many practical problems. As an illustration they did not have enough time at their disposal nor were the resources such as financial assistance as well as manpower sufficient. Besides this, as a means of promoting reconciliation, they opted to also employ services of ex-police personnel to undertake the investigations. However, as the latter did not have credibility in the communities because of having worked within the apartheid system in the past, this resulted in people withholding valuable information. As a result of this, many cases could not be concluded as evidence was

inadequate and in some cases, lacking. Hence amnesty could have been granted to undeserving people because of insufficient evidence. Another possibility could have been the labelling of an innocent person as the perpetrator because of uncorroborated evidence by the victim respondent. One can thus appreciate why many victims have the perception that even though the TRC has finished its work, they are still left with more questions than answers. However, some perpetrators have also been vindicated for accusations made against them.

Another Commissioner reported that:

All the victims were eager for information or more information than they had received. For illustrative purposes those who knew the identities of their perpetrators still wanted to be told of the persons who authorised their imprisonment. Other victims required knowledge of the persons who ordered the detonation of the bombs, which maimed them or their loved ones. Although some victims knew the comrades who necklaced their family members, nevertheless, they still required information about the identities of the youths who accused their family members of being police informers.

It is significant to highlight that nine (90%) of the Commissioners agreed that all the respondents said that they felt that it was necessary for them to be given the opportunity by the TRC to relate their experiences. In conjunction with this, one Commissioner reported the following reply from a victim who was asked during the submissions: "What can we do for you?" and the answer was "Nothing! It is good to be here, to be able to speak, this is a healing experience for me." However one (10%) Commissioner differed on this, as she stated that a number of the victims were angry for having wasted their time by coming to testify when their needs could not be satisfied.

Furthermore nine (90%) of the respondents emphasised that the gap between the submissions of the testimonies on the human rights violations and the implementation of the reparations could be one of the major failures of the TRC. In addition, they also stressed the fact that although many victims reconciled with their perpetrators they still verbalised their anger. One (10%) of the respondents had the perception that the role played by the TRC in the transition from authoritarian rule to

democracy should not be measured within compartments. He stated that its successes could only be seen holistically. In this way, he disagreed with the view held by the other nine above (see paragraph 4.5).

Alluding to the issue of reparations one Commissioner said:

We were all concerned about the reparations, and as a result of this we took a long time studying the needs of the victims. This exercise involved many role players and culminated in us writing out a proposal which was first sent to the Provincial Government and subsequently to the National Government. We all believed that the proposal was both acceptable and implementable. It is for this reason that we are disturbed by the fact that reparations have only been paid to 8 000 out of the 21 000 victims of Human rights abuses. Thus I strongly feel that had the reparations been commenced as soon as the Human rights abuses had been processed and evaluated, the TRC could have accomplished much more.

Six (60%) of the ten Commissioners conceded that some of the victims admitted that they forgave their perpetrators, while four (40%) stated that not all perpetrators were forgiven by the victim respondents. Responding to Question 10 (Appendix B) all (100%) Commissioners mentioned that some victims received reparations but others not. They cited as the reason for this discrepancy the fact that the TRC failed to process the reparations to the victims simultaneously with the granting of amnesty to the perpetrators.

#### **4.2.2 Information about the victims' experience of bereavement**

Ten (100%) of the Commissioners, while answering Question 11 (Appendix B), agreed that victim respondents' well-being was affected by the revelations of the Commission in relation to their bereavement. Victim respondents who lost loved ones stated that they suffered from despair, low self-esteem, distrust, anxiety, depression, guilt, anger, self-blame, numbness, shock, disbelief as well as being stunned. These emanated from the emotions which are associated with listening to the revelations concerning the way in which their loved ones met their deaths.

However, four (40%) of the research participants said that some victims cried uncontrollably, others had “wooden appearances” and were uncomfortable with the perpetrators (see paragraph 4.4.2). One Commissioner pointed out those three families; the Mxenges, the Ribeiros as well as the Bikos could be sighted as examples. According to the TRC Report (1998:5) these family members approached the Commission for redress as a result of having lost their loved ones through death.

- **The family of Griffiths Mxenge**

This family was represented by a brother of the late Griffiths Mxenge, formerly a lawyer who had a practice in Durban. The latter was assassinated by security police as well as State agents through the instructions of Eugene de Kock (under the Vlakplaas Operations). His wife, a qualified nurse, who also trained as a lawyer after the slaying of her husband was also ambushed and executed during 1983.

- **The family of Fabian Ribeiro**

The eldest son, who was the family spokesperson during the submissions of the testimonies, was bereaved when both his parents were executed by security forces in their home during 1985. The father was a medical doctor in Soweto.

- **The family of Steve Biko**

Ntsiki Biko, the widow of the late Steve Biko, former black consciousness leader, and also a member of the Azanian Peoples Organisation (AZAPO) who died in police detention during 1971, also opposed the granting of amnesty to the perpetrators.

### **4.2.3 Information on the search for the meaning of suffering through the revelations**

Eight (80%) of the Commissioners pointed out that victim respondents experienced problems in adjusting to their trauma. However, two (20%) disagreed with this statement. These problems were associated with the fact that the victim respondents

experienced anger as well as resentment towards the perpetrators for having abused them.

On being asked what an achievement of the TRC had been through of Question 18 (Appendix B) all (100%) the respondents believed that the fact that it could reconcile some of the victims of abuses could be seen as an achievement.

One Commissioner concluded by saying:

If I were to grade the success of the TRC, I would give it 70% since even the Act itself was not conclusive.

When researcher probed the limitations of the Act the respondent highlighted that the TRC Act (Act 34 of 1995) premeditated the outcome of the process. In doing so, it stated that full disclosures should be made so that amnesty could be granted. This resulted in the perpetrators telling it all; some of which could have been perceived as lies; yet the Act did not specify anything for the victims.

However, another Commissioner said:

Although the amnesty process took away from the victims the right to legal assistance, by promising the granting of reparations, it acknowledged their suffering.

#### **4.2.4 Information about the introduction of a new value system**

Although this section consists of questions on behavioural change as well as recommendations, the latter received attention in Chapter 5 where recommendations were made in this respect.

When Questions 19-22 (Appendix B) were put to the Commissioners their response were as follows: Nine (90%) were emphatic that the value system of the deviant youth in South Africa could be changed. However, one (10%) disagreed with this,

and explained that transforming the conduct norms of children had to be contextualised. When researcher asked for an explanation, the respondent said:

The militant youth who were struggling for the attainment of democracy during 1976 are adults now. They are the teachers who are too eager to go on strike and leave the pupils unattended to in the schools. It is therefore not difficult to imagine how they socialise their offspring and the pupils at school. Unless something is done from Government level, especially if recognised politicians could be at the forefront of transforming the value system of young people, it will not change. However, [she warned], they would have to lead by example.

Responding to Question 21 (Appendix B) six (60%) of the respondents were positive about the possibility of reconciliation in South Africa. They stressed that the TRC did achieve this in some cases, where both the victims and the perpetrators embraced each other, expressing joy at discovering one another through their trauma. In addition to this, some perpetrators had offered to do community service in the neighbourhoods they had violated. However, three (30%) were reluctant to commit themselves, stating that a lot more should be done to facilitate reconciliation as the TRC was merely the beginning of the process. However, one (10%) stated that: "reconciliation in the country could only be effected by the children, as adults have left it too long".

### **4.3 THE CO-ORDINATORS**

Researcher had informal unstructured discussions with ten Co-ordinators as a result of the advice given to her by the Commissioners. However, although the information, which emanated from these were not intended for interpretation, it proved to be of value for this study. Researcher got insight into the criteria used for the granting of reparations to the victims by perusing the application forms which victims had to complete in order to get reparations (see Appendix C).

## 4.4 THE VICTIMS

The results are thus presented according to the **TRC Revelations Aftermath Model** (see Figure 2.1) as explained in paragraph 2.1.

### 4.4.1 Janoff-Bulman and Frieze's victim experience model

The way in which the victim respondents perceived themselves and their world during the conflict of the apartheid era and how it impacted on their lives is discussed. Questions 8-9 (Appendix A) were used to test the impact of political violence on the victim respondents. All 30 (100%) of them accepted the assumptions of vulnerability, which resulted in them having a high regard of themselves and also viewing life as controllable. However, after the impact of political violence on them, their responses changed, as can be observed in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1  
*Victims' Experience of Political Conflict*

Victims' assumptions	N	%
About themselves		
Perception of unsafety	26	86.67
Perception of safety	4	13.33
Total	30	100

In answering Question 8 (Appendix A), 26 (86.67%) of the victim respondents disclosed that they perceived themselves to be **unsafe from being the victims of political violence**, while four (13.33%) verbalised that they were certain of their safety.

Ten (38.46%) of the 26 (86.67%) respondents who perceived themselves to be unsafe were political activists. Seven (26.92%) of the 26 (86.67%) stated that their lives were subjected to frequent raids by the security police. However, three (38.46%) of the 10 activists (30%) verbalised that though they were harassed only twice by the security police, they had anticipated eventually being injured or arrested.

When the research participants responded to Question 9 (Appendix A), the four (13.33%) of the total research group who had verbalised that they had the perception of safety, still experienced the world as controllable, predictable as well as meaningful. However, the 26 (86.67%) who had felt unsafe as mentioned above, regarded the world as meaningless and uncontrollable. One (3.33%) of these victims, verbalised how her outlook in life transformed after her son became a victim of a bomb blast which was detonated by members of progressive movements during 1983:

Before my boy was injured and sustained paralysis which culminated in his quadraplegic status, I was virtually at peace with the world and myself. I never thought that my family could be confronted with this tragedy. I could have been guilty of taking many things for granted. Many black persons were suffering hardships in the country at the time, but I had always felt safe from victimisation. It was only when our safety was shattered that my view about the world and myself changed. I experienced a sense of imbalance, vulnerability as well as loss. For the first time, I knew that something was unhealthy and evil in the country, a perception I never had about the beautiful South Africa before.

This quotation summarises the trauma endured by some families of the victims of political conflict and the way in which this adversely affected the positive assumptions they held about themselves.

Another victim respondent stated that:

We were a happy family, although poor and were at peace with the world as Christians, who never interfered in other persons lives and circumstances. Thus we expected people to leave us in peace. However, when my younger daughter returned home to inform us that my grandson had been necklaced during the night, I could not comprehend this. Although in denial, I went to investigate and yes, it was him. The remnant of the yellow skipper I had bought him was all that confirmed for me that it was my child, as the face was completely disfigured. Yet, his legs and feet helped me to be certain of his identity. From that day onwards, I developed a negative regard of myself and lost all the passion to live. This culminated in my distrust of people because of what befell my grandson.



The above findings can be regarded as an indication that traumatic life experiences had a negative effect on those who were victimised, whether directly or indirectly.

These results are similar to what Getzel and Masters (1983:85) reported, namely, that direct as well as indirect victims of violent crime are forced to modify their conventional view of the world as just and stable. The reason for this is that man's worst fear, namely to become a victim of crime and more specifically violent crime, had come true. The trauma to which they had been exposed could also have contributed to the collapse of their belief in personal invulnerability as well as safety. Although the violence others were confronted with may not have influenced them before, when they were victimised their fear concerning personal vulnerability and a safe existence was strengthened.

In conjunction with this, during group therapy with indirect victims of murdered children, Getzel and Masters (1983:81) found that the following could determine how the family of the deceased would come to terms with their grief:

- The situation and the circumstances surrounding the murder.
- The state of the murdered child's body.
- The parents' perception of their murdered child's possible complicity.
- The parents' perception and experience of the criminal justice system.
- The characteristics of the offender and the way in which he is treated by the criminal justice system.
- The position and role of the murdered child in the family.

The above findings of Getzel and Masters can be linked to those of Lurigio, Skogan and Davis (1999:51). These authors observed that reactions to crime and other traumatic experiences are often varied. Thus it is important to study individual

differences in response to criminal victimisation. According to Kilpatrick, Veronen and Best (in Lurigio, Skogan & Davis, 1999:52) researchers should abstain from engaging in the client uniformity myth (which does not allow for the uniqueness in man). This, they do when examining victim distress and adjustment. Findings suggest that the recovery of victims of traumatic episodes can be a function of their characteristics, predispositions as well as the assumptions they had about themselves.

- **Conclusion**

Data was analysed and interpreted in terms of the assumptions the victim respondents had about themselves and their world before they were victimised. Research findings were compared with the reports of other authors who obtained results, which could be related to those in this study. Thereafter, research expectations in terms of respondents' assumptions were analysed:

Research expectation 2.6.7.1.4 which states: **Victims of the TRC will believe in personal invulnerability before the impact of the political conflict on them** as well as research expectation 2.6.7.1.5, namely: **Victims who testified before the Commission will believe that the world is meaningful** and research expectation 2.6.7.1.6, which reads as follows: **Victims of the TRC will have a positive view of the self** will be interpreted together, as one leads to the other and could be viewed as interrelated. Responding to Questions 8-9 (Appendix A), 26 (86.67%) of the victim respondents accepted that they had experienced fear of being victimised, which resulted in them having a negative view of themselves. However, four (13.33%) of all the respondents verbalised that they did not have any reason to expect political victimisation, as they had the perception of safety, which resulted in a positive attitude to life. As these research expectations were supported by the findings of this study, as shown by the responses of the 30 (100%) research participants, they are therefore fully accepted.

These findings correspond with that of Hamber (1995:4) although he researched the influence of the TRC as a psychologically healing initiative for the victims, he also observed that the resultant individual and collective emotional responses to political violence could be understood as a cognitive process. Linking this reaction to

adaptations to trauma in general, he highlighted that adverse experiences shattered people's assumptions about their safety, the self, as well as the world. Severe forms of trauma could alter personal invulnerability, viewing oneself positively and the world as meaningful and a comprehensible place. In addition to this, Ramsay and Happeé (1977:55) postulate that the above-mentioned psychological processes, which can be linked to posttraumatic stress symptoms, can manifest themselves on the victims for years after their confrontation with the trauma. Viano (1990:29) who states that victims of recurrent violation of their rights experience a heightened awareness to the aggressive exploitative potential of the other. Their paranoia is generalised to the world and in this way, they view it as being unpredictable. As all (100%) of the respondents viewed life as meaningful they were in general positive towards it and therefore felt safe before the political violence affected them, 26 (86.67%) of the respondents mentioned that their viewpoints were shattered; thus all three of the research expectations are therefore fully accepted.

#### **4.4.2 Bereavement Theories**

It was important for researcher to ascertain how these victim respondents, who lost loved ones as a result of political violence, coped with their bereavement. Responding to Questions 10-16 (Appendix A) nine (30%) of all the victim respondents confirmed that they had lost loved ones, 11 (36.67%) verbalised that they had no such experience, while eight (26.66%) had relatives who disappeared but were never confirmed dead and were thus never buried. As a result of this, these victims refused to accept that their relatives were deceased, hoping that they were still alive. All the research participants whose family members had died experienced trauma which varied in intensity, duration as well as frequency, as can be observed from Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

*Impact of Bereavement on the Victim Respondents*

Impact of bereavement	N	%
Experienced shock and disbelief	9	30
Suffered guilt feelings	6	20
Were recovering from the pain	3	10

The above table shows the impact of bereavement on the victim respondents.

Responding to Question 19 (Appendix A), nine (30%) bereaved respondents who lost a loved one through death, experienced shock and disbelief when they heard about the death of such family members. Six (66.67%) of the nine, suffered guilt as well as intense feelings of pain which related to their failure to prevent their loss. However, three (33.33%) of them, verbalised that although they were devastated shortly after receiving the news, they subsequently learnt to live with the pain which was no longer as intense as in the beginning. All nine (100%) of them stressed that they no longer enjoyed life as much since the tragedy. This was corroborated by all ten (100%) TRC Commissioners when they answered Questions 11-16 (Appendix B). All the Commissioners verbalised that the victim respondents experienced adverse effects from their bereavement (see paragraph 4.4.1). The above findings are similar to those of Stroebe, Stroebe and Hansson (1993:160) who reported that grief from the loss of a loved one produces different reactions from people. All these were associated with pain, depending on the attachment of the deceased to the survivor, as well as the factors associated with the death. Recovery from grief could be an ongoing process, as the deceased could not be forgotten. In addition, factors like special occasions such as birthdays brought back memories which were sometimes distressing and could leave a permanent feeling of loss.

Van den Berg and Pretorius (1999:5) who did research on the impact of the murder of a loved one on the family members also obtained the above findings. They reported that shock at the news of the death could manifest itself in various ways.

For example, physical pain, a feeling of emotional bluntness, apathy, withdrawal or an abnormal emotional calmness. In conjunction with this, the authors point out that the indirect victim's line of thought could at this stage be incoherent, confused and vague. Besides this, the bereaved person could also harbour guilt feelings for not having been able to protect their loved ones.

The above findings concur with those which were obtained by Shneidman (1980:266) in his study of bereaved children. This author is of the opinion that:

just as dying children benefit from being able to communicate their feelings of grief, anger and bewilderment, those whose loved ones are deceased have also a need to talk to someone about their grief. This can be attributed to the fact that the death of a parent can be particularly traumatic for a child. It can be characterised by emotions of betrayal, as the child may feel that if the parent had loved him enough, he would not have died and thus abandoned the child.

In conjunction with this, bereavement can be accompanied by physical symptoms including panic attacks, insomnia, lack of appetite and nightmares. However, unresolved grief, especially in children, can lead to ongoing somatic illnesses as well as long lasting psychological problems.

- **Conclusion**

Data was analysed and interpreted in terms of the impact of bereavement on the victim respondents. Research findings were compared with other similar studies and subsequently research expectations in terms of the impact of bereavement were then analysed.

Research expectation 2.6.7.1.4 which states that: **victims who lost their loved ones during the political conflict of the mid-1980s will suffer from numbness** and research expectation 2.6.7.1.5 which reads as follows: **victims who lost family members through murder during the apartheid era will experience yearning as they protest against the loss** as well as research expectation 2.6.7.1.6 which states that: **victims whose loved ones were killed as a result of political conflict of**

**the apartheid era will suffer from despair** as well as research expectation 2.6.1.7.1.7 which states that: **victims who lost family members during the political conflict of the apartheid era will experience restitution as they recover from their grief** (see paragraph 2.6.7.2) will be interpreted together as the symptoms overlap and are also interrelated. As nine (30%) of the total victim respondents who lost family members through death accepted that they suffered from emotional symptoms which were related to grief, so this research expectation is therefore rejected.

#### **4.4.2.1 Victim respondents' experience of pathological grief**

It was crucial for researcher to analyse the effect of pathological grief on the research participants. The aim was to accommodate victims who lost family members through traumatic deaths such as those who were killed by bomb explosions. In addition to this, there were also victim respondents whose relatives could not be traced by the Investigation Unit of the TRC and thus they could also be incorporated into this category (see paragraph 2.2.5). Rando (1995: 211) classifies sudden, unanticipated death, especially if it is violent as morbid or pathological. In response to Question 19 (Appendix A), all the nine (100%) victim respondents whose family members were killed, as well as the ten (33.33%) victims whose family members disappeared, verbalised that they did not suffer the symptoms of pathological grief. Richardson (1995:xiii) also reported on similar findings about the experiences of persons who cope with bereavement by accepting the death, and as the pain receded, they were then liberated from the past. In this way, they experienced growth, deeper insight, understanding, openness, as well as personal freedom, which protected them from suffering the symptoms of pathological grief. Although 19 (63.33%) of the total respondents did not experience pathological grief they did however admit that they were bereaved. This finding could be linked to a similar research report of Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995:27) who studied the negative effects of trauma on victims. These authors reported that some persons who are exposed to grief would not admit or show any signs of distress. However they also observed that such individuals are denying their pain, by not admitting the awareness thereof. The conventional expectation is that such denial will produce a lack of apparent distress but that the repressed emotions could cause psychological problems for them in the future.

The above findings can be linked to the observations of Freeman (1984:1) although she studied the effects of conjugal bereavement by comparing the experiences of widows and widowers. She found that bereavement has psychological as well as physical consequences for those who mourn, which can be characterised by anxiety, anger, hostility and depression. However, this author emphasises that the loss of a spouse appears to increase the risks of mental and physical illnesses, and can also result in the premature death of the survivor.

- **Conclusion**

Research expectation 2.6.7.1.8, which reads as follows: **victims whose family members disappeared during the apartheid era will suffer symptoms of pathological grief**, was interpreted. Although 19 (63.33%) respondents of the total research group did experience symptoms of bereavement, none (0%) of them reported pathological bereavement symptoms. As none (0%) of the bereaved victims reported that they had experienced symptoms of pathological bereavement this research expectation is therefore rejected.

### **4.4.3 Parsons' General Action Theory**

#### **4.4.3.1 Victim's experience of the revelations of the TRC in terms of adaptation (biological subsystem)**

The way in which the biological manifestation impacted on the victim respondents will now be discussed. Questions 21 and 22 (Appendix A) were used to test the impact of the revelations of the TRC on the biological subsystem of the victims. The following findings were obtained: thirty (100%) of the victim respondents admitted that they suffered the effects of emotional trauma, as can be seen from Table 4.3

Table 4.3

*Victim Respondents' Adaptation to the Biological Effect*

Biological effect	N	%
Suffered from recurrent headaches	30	100.00
Suffered from gastric ulcers	15	50.00
Experienced insomnia	7	23.34
Were treated for hypertension	6	20.00
Chronic hypertension	2	6.66

The above table shows how the victim respondents adapted to the biological effect of the testimonies they had to make.

In answering Questions 21 and 26 (Appendix A), all (100%) of the victim respondents admitted that when the revelations at the TRC were made, they suffered from recurrent headaches, which resulted in them being dependent on painkillers. As a complication of the above treatment, 15 (50%) of them developed gastric ulcers. This could also be linked to the stress brought about by bereavement. However, to seven (23.34%) of the total group of respondents, it was problematic to sleep at night during the testimonies as they relived the trauma they had endured during the incarcerations and torture of their sons. Nine (30%) of the 30 victims verbalised that although they had prayed that the perpetrators should disclose the truth, the trauma of the revelations was unbearable. As a consequence of this, six (20%) of the total research group victims had to be treated for hypertension during this phase and two (6.66%) of them developed chronic hypertension.

However, mixed feelings followed from what was unearthed by the Investigation Unit of the TRC as well as the disclosures made by the perpetrators. One respondent summarised her experiences as she addressed the TRC (TRC Report, Extract, 1998:4):



On the 13 November 1985, it was a Wednesday morning. A crowd of people who were stoning him drove my son out of the house. Shortly afterwards he was killed and his body burnt. I have been scarred by my son's death. After the incident, I had to remove my children from Uprisington and enrol them at schools elsewhere. During this time I suffered so much, I felt I had been ostracised by the community. People said I had betrayed my son to the police, for which I was paid.

In addressing the Chairperson of the TRC one respondent reported the following:

I know Chairperson, that the Commission has got a programme of therapy, but I hope it can be sustained. My own experience in the few months has been that the wounds of some of the women who testified about the Human rights abuses they endured, had been opened. However, not much time, nor enough opportunity was given to them to allow the healing process once they left these halls (TRC Report, Extract 4, 1998:7).

The findings of this study bear similarities to those of Egan (1975:294) who reported on how people adapt to the emotional impact of violent victimisation. The author observed that when a person is victimised, particularly if it is unanticipated, he could undergo an initial period of shock. This can be followed by disbelief, which can be characterised by a gradual mobilisation of counter forces to recover from it. However, the author cautions that in terms of individual trauma, the process of recovery may be relatively predictable and time limited, or may be life-long and never fully completed. Stavrou (1992:69) also found that the emotional effect of violent victimisation on victims could be characterised by a feeling of anger, sadness, depression, generalised anxiety as well as bitterness.

The above research results can be linked to those of Conklin (1996:109), who observed that many victims of violent crime can sustain injuries from which they can be permanently incapacitated. The trauma can compromise a person's well-being to such an extent that he may suffer from debilitating medical conditions such as diabetes or hypertension. In conjunction with this, Hamber (1995:9) highlights that severe victimisation may result in emotional symptoms such as fear, anxiety and well as insomnia, although this may vary from one individual to another.

These findings correspond with those of Salasin (1981:22) who points out that when a psychological wound is sustained, it can result in a continuing condition of subclinical hyperstimulation. This is often characterised by irritability and persistent nightmares, fright reactions, as well as fear.

- **Conclusion**

When the data was analysed and interpreted in terms of the impact of the revelations of the TRC on the biological subsystem and how the victim respondents adapted to this, research findings were compared with reports of other authors that obtained similar results. Thereafter the research expectation in terms of the effect of the revelations of the TRC upon the biological subsystem was analysed.

Research expectation 2.6.7.1.9, which states: **the impact of the revelations of the TRC will have a direct effect on the biological subsystem (adaptation)** will now be interpreted. Responding to Question 21 (Appendix A) all (100%) of the victim respondents admitted that the revelations of the TRC affected them to such an extent that they suffered a variety of psychosomatic illnesses. As this research expectation is fully supported by the findings of this study, it is fully accepted.

#### **4.4.3.2 Victims' experience of the revelations at the TRC hearings in terms of goal-attainment (personality subsystem)**

Responding to Question 27 (Appendix A), Table 4.4 indicates how the victim respondents experienced the impact of the TRC in terms of goal-attainment.

Table 4.4

*Victim Respondents' Personality Manifestations*

Personality subsystem	N	%
Accepted that the TRC affected their psychological well-being	30	100.0
Verbalised that the TRC had caused them second wounds	8	26.66
Stated that their trauma made them angry at the TRC	5	16.67

The above table shows the personality manifestations of the revelations at the TRC.

As can be seen from the above figure, 30 (100%) of the victim respondents who responded to Question 25 (Appendix A) admitted that in submitting testimonies to the TRC their psychological well-being was adversely affected. The fact that they were confronted with the persons who traumatised them, although it could also have been cathartic, caused them to suffer mental anguish. They also attempted to reconstruct what had taken place during the incident. Eight (26.66%) of the 30 respondents' relatives disappeared during the 1980s. The TRC could however not assist them in tracing these persons. These respondents were dissatisfied, disillusioned and perceived that the Commission caused them further trauma. Five (16.67%) of the 30 respondents whose loved ones were victims and had suffered as a consequence of the necklace slayings of their children experienced anger towards the TRC. This could be related to the fact that their perpetrators wanted to be pardoned. In reaction, the victims stressed that the latter never exercised justice at the time they were interrogating their children and they asked the question "Why should they receive sympathy now?"

Responding to Question 25 (Appendix A) five (16,67%) of the 30 respondents whose loved ones were victims of bomb explosions which were set off by youth activists,

expressed that they were shocked by this violation and were angry at the perpetrators.

The above findings correlate with the TRC Report (Extract 4, 1998:2) which commented on studies involving the reactions of the victims of abuses and stated that:

Human rights violations can be characterised by patterns and trends, in relation to the psychological effects these have on the victims as well as their families. Internationally the best-documented psychological consequences of Human rights violations relate to be effects of torture. These include depression, anxiety disorders and psychotic conditions, inter alia. It is vital to observe that these effects are multidimensional and interconnected, leaving no part of the victim's life unaffected.

Ten (33.33%) of the respondents accepted that the TRC had partially accomplished its mandate by resolving some of their problems for example allowing them to meet the perpetrators of their abuses. However the others were not satisfied with the process. Human rights abuses were adequately investigated and this resulted in the perpetrators being subpoenaed to give evidence of their violations. Although eight (26.66%) of the total group of respondents were not satisfied with the disclosures made, nevertheless, the fact that the TRC made it possible for them to see the persons who were responsible for their trauma, was a victory for them and provided answers to some of the unanswered questions with which they had to live.

Meiring (1999:67) also reported on similar psychological manifestations which could impact on the whole family:

When Johan Roos began talking, many people buried their faces in their hands. This person's family were victims of a landmine explosion in Nelspruit on 27 August 1976, which killed his wife who had been driving their car. Marietjie's right leg was amputated below the knee, her left one crushed while her throat was ripped open. I knew that a piece of her skin was still in the wreck. I went looking for it so that I could bury it. Instead I found a piece of my son's forehead. I found parts of his brain on the seat, picked everything up, put it in a tissue wrapped it and went to bury it at my house. After such an experience, how can one ever be normal again?

The above quotations from victims emphasised the psychological impact of the revelations to the Commission on their personality subsystem. Lurigio and Resick (in Lurigio, Skogan & Davis, 1998:51) also found that there was increasing evidence that victims of serious crimes may suffer adverse psychological consequences. For example, in a study of burglary, robbery and non-sexual assault, it was found that these victims expressed higher levels of vulnerability, fear, anxiety, unpleasant thoughts, as well as upset stomachs.

The above findings can be linked to the research results of Snyman (1992:475) who concluded that victims of violent crime can be confronted with a variety of emotional and psychological problems which can easily be overlooked.

- **Conclusion**

An account of the manifestations of the revelations of the TRC on the personality subsystem of the victim respondents was outlined. After the findings had been analysed and interpreted, it was compared with the results of other researchers. Similarities were obtained between the results of this study and the other findings. Research expectations in terms of the personality subsystem were then analysed.

Research expectation 2.6.7.1.10, which reads: **the impact of the revelations of the TRC will have a direct effect on the personality** will now be interpreted. Responding to Question 25 (Appendix A), 30 (100%) of the respondents agreed that having to make submissions to the Commission affected their well-being adversely. As this research expectation is fully supported by the findings of this study, it is thus accepted.

#### **4.4.3.3 The impact of the revelations at the TRC hearings on the victim respondents in terms of the social subsystem (integration)**

The victims' experiences of the TRC in terms of the social subsystems were interpreted and it was found that all (100%) of the respondents accepted that the

Commission was necessary to obtain information about past abuses. However, they had different views on the effectiveness of the TRC as is shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

*Victim Respondents' Experience of the Social Subsystem*

Social subsystem	N	%
Perceived the TRC as Necessary	30	100.00
Were disappointed at the reparations and viewed the TRC as biased	20	66.67
Were satisfied with the reparations and viewed the TRC as fair	8	26.67
TRC had caused embarrassment which could divide the people	2	6.67

The above table shows the impact of the TRC on the social subsystem.

In answering Questions 29-32 (Appendix A), as can be seen from the above, 20 (66.67%) of all the respondents were disappointed with the Reparations Committee for not redressing the trauma they had suffered and thus viewed the TRC as biased. Only eight (26.67%) of the 30 respondents were satisfied with the reparations they received and perceived the Commission as being fair. It is significant to stress that the victims whose needs had been fulfilled by the TRC were content with its performance, as one of the respondents confirmed:

The people who shot me were brainwashed by the apartheid system, they were not themselves. Knowing that has made it possible for me to forgive them, I appreciate what the Government has done through the TRC. It has brought some balance between perpetrator and victim.

Two (6.66%) of the 30 respondents verbalised that the TRC had caused the country embarrassment, which could divide the racial groups by looking into the conflict of the past.

In verbalising her anger at the biasness of the TRC, one respondent stated that:

The Commission ignored the victims of abuses when it structured the whole process. We were never consulted on suggestions we may have had concerning our own welfare. It is the poor people of South Africa who desperately need the money in order to survive. Most of us do not work as a consequence of the injuries we sustained and this excludes those who are able to work but do not get employment opportunities.

Another said:

The ANC had an influence on the TRC which resulted in it over-emphasising on the violations perpetrated by our sons. These were young men, who had to obey the laws and had to go to war at all cost. Do you know how this TRC process has traumatised my child? How can they be called perpetrators, when they need all the support they can get to deal with the mental scars caused by the border war?

According to the TRC Report (Extract 4, 1998:8) Winnie Madikizela-Mandela was found to be responsible for gross human rights violations which were perpetrated by the Mandela Football Club members. She was also convicted of the murder of a 14-year-old youth activist, Stompie Seipei (see paragraph 1.1). However, researcher is of the opinion that the manner in which the chairman of the TRC Archbishop Desmond Tutu dealt with the allegations against Winnie Madikizela-Mandela at the Human rights hearings can be construed as biased. This can also be seen to be discriminating against the other perpetrators in favour of the ANC. In Special Report, at 22:00 on SABC TV 1 News Bulletin on August, 9, 1999, Archbishop Tutu begged Winnie Madikizela-Mandela to apologise to Stompie's mother and also told her to say, "certain things went horribly wrong" during the struggle. The fact that he forced a perpetrator to say she was sorry, left many South Africans embarrassed, as a person cannot be forced to apologise, especially in an initiative encompassed by truth and reconciliation.

Meiring (1999:91) who was part of the Reparations and Rehabilitation Committee as a Commissioner confirmed this. He reported that he had to conduct consultations with certain victims who were reported to be impatient or frustrated with the performance of the TRC in terms of the reparations. The author points out that most of them were elderly people who were dependent on their children. As they had lost sons during the political conflict, they were left with nobody to take care of them.

- **Conclusion**

Based upon the analysis and interpretation of data regarding victim respondents' experience of the social subsystem the research expectations in terms of the effect of the TRC upon the social subsystem will now be analysed.

Research expectation 2.6.7.1.11 states that the: **impact of the TRC will have a direct effect on the social subsystem (integration)**. This research expectation was fully accepted as 30 (100%) of the victims who responded to Question 32 (Appendix A) stated that they did expect the TRC to fulfil their social needs which impacted directly on their social subsystem.

#### **4.4.3.4 Victim respondents' experience of the TRC process in terms of the cultural subsystem**

Table 4.6 shows how the victim respondents experienced the impact of the TRC in terms of the cultural subsystem.



Table 4.6

*Victim Respondents' Experience of the Cultural Subsystem*

Cultural subsystem	N	%
TRC affected them	30	100,00
Did not experience problems for having made submissions to the TRC	20	66,67
Were under strain in their neighbourhoods	5	16,67
Victim respondents' whose loved ones disappeared were in conflict with their communities	2	6,67

The above table shows the impact of the TRC on the cultural subsystem.

Responding to Questions 39-42 (Appendix A), 30 (100%) of the respondents said that the TRC had an effect on their cultural subsystem. Twenty (66.67%) of them mentioned that they did not experience problems with members of the communities for having made submissions to the TRC. However, five (16.66%) of the total group admitted that they were under strain in their neighbourhoods. The latter explained this as resulting from the fact that their children were victims of necklace slayings in the black townships. This also resulted in the whole family being perceived with suspicion and being ostracised. Five (50%) of the ten (16.66%) who testified that family members had disappeared under suspicious circumstances verbalised that they were in conflict with members of their communities who ostracised them. They also did not receive the sympathy which was usually shown to the families of activists.

Five (16.66%) of the victim respondents experienced strain in their neighbourhoods and elaborated on its dynamics, which they described as discrimination. They verbalised that since they were women and seven (23.3%) of them widowed, members of their communities, men especially often overlooked them or were disrespectful to them. According to Reynolds (1994:5) patriarchy had resulted in

women being subjected to male dominance and in this way they endured hardships. These are related to not having an important role to play in terms of decision making nor for their own welfare. This also impacted on how other males in general perceived women and thus some children took advantage of this and victimised their mothers (see paragraph 1.2.1).

The above findings can be linked to those of Reiff (1987:86) who observed that members of their communities often accused victims of being responsible for their own victimisation. This author states that this blaming may take a subtle form by which the other person may ask seemingly helpful questions or advice that indicates that the victim is at fault. For example questions such as "Why didn't you?" or "Don't you think you could have done this?" can be asked. One (3.33%) victim reported the following on the failure of the TRC to grant reparations to them:

It is unfair that the Commission had to raise our expectations for nothing. Since its inception, we were given the impression that it was founded on Christian principles, which to me, implied that the truth and honesty would prevail. Archbishop Desmond Tutu assured us that our needs will be met by the granting of the reparations and thus we should be willing to forgive for the benefit of reconciliation. We were asked to be the forgiving children of God, which we have done. However, we got nothing in return, but the perpetrators have been awarded amnesty even if they told lies. It is difficult for me to have faith in the Commission. What the TRC has done was to deprive us of our right to sue the perpetrators of these abuses. Are we expected to reconcile?

From the above the impact of the cultural subsystem on the victims is indicated. As the TRC could be construed as a symbol of the criminal justice system, the disappointment with which the victim respondents were confronted could be linked to that which can impact on victims of traumatic events for which there are no benefits. The above findings are similar to the research results of Lurigio, Skogan and Davis (1998:61) argue that the participation of victims in the prosecution of criminal cases may be regarded as stressful and disruptive to their recovery. This could especially be worsened amongst victims of emotionally disruptive life stresses such as the revelations to the TRC. In addition to this, individuals can be described as the forgotten persons of the criminal justice system.

According to Meiring (1999:314) dissatisfaction at the granting of amnesty by the TRC was not only limited to the victims. The author postulates that when the 37 ANC members were granted amnesty many people, including some TRC Commissioners and other members of the Commission, were dissatisfied. This also impacted negatively on both the National Party as well as the Democratic Party who threatened with legal action. It is significant to mention that these persons included, inter alia, President Thabo Mbeki as well as Trevor Tutu, Archbishop Tutu's son. A statement could therefore be made that some instances, such as the one above, the creditability of the TRC was questioned even by the Commissioners themselves. This could lead to the conclusion that the 20 (66.67%) victim respondents who perceived the Commission as biased could not be blamed (see Table 4.5).

Given the diversity of the victim respondents' requirements, and the problems which had been mentioned concerning the disjunction between the awarding of reparations and the granting of amnesty, researcher decided to test their perceptions. Question 38 (Appendix A) yielded the following responses: Twenty (66.66%) of the 30 respondents agreed that their perception of the TRC was that it was biased in favour of the perpetrators. However, ten (33.33%) of the 30 respondents were satisfied with the reparations, as they had already received it.

- **Conclusion**

Data was analysed and interpreted in relation to the impact of the revelations made at the TRC hearings on the cultural subsystem and compared with other studies, which had similar results. Thereafter research expectations in terms of the impact of the TRC on the cultural subsystem were analysed.

Research expectation 2.6.7.1.12 reads as follows: **the effect of the TRC's revelations will have a direct impact on the cultural subsystem (latency)**. Thirty (100%) of the victim respondents mentioned that the impact of the TRC on the cultural subsystem manifested in different ways. The fact that only eight (26.66%) of the 30 victims who were promised reparations did receive them and the rest of victims, 22 (73.33%) did not, compounded this groups' trauma and uncertainty. These victim respondents were responding to Questions 39-42 (Appendix A).

Therefore the deduction can be made that the TRC's revelations had a direct impact on the cultural subsystem of the victim respondents. This expectation was thus fully accepted.

#### **4.4.3.5 Victims' experiences in terms of the Existential Theory of Frankl**

It was crucial to analyse what the revelations of the TRC meant to the victim respondents in terms of the meaning they attached to their trauma. The fact that the Commission was a new initiative in the country which had a mandate to facilitate unity through reconciliation, the victim respondents would be in position to share their perception of this process with society.

It is important to highlight that when the victims', responses were analysed it appeared as if age could be linked to their search to find meaning in their suffering. In turn, this influenced their coping mechanisms. When all the 30 (100%) of the victim respondents answered Questions 43-45 (Appendix A), nine (30%) who were in the early adulthood (26-40) age group, as can be observed from Table 4.7, could not derive meaning in their suffering. As a result of this they failed to reconcile with their perpetrators. The above have been interpreted together with the 13 (43.33%) of those who belonged to the middle adulthood (41-65) age group. The reason for this is that they shared similar perceptions in terms of the search for the meaning of suffering. As can be seen in Table 3.1, these 13 (43.33%) research participants, although middle aged, were nevertheless younger as their years ranged from 46-55 years and thus none were within the 56 to 65 year old range. However the remaining eight (26.77%) who succeeded in finding meaning in their trauma belonged to the late adulthood (66-80) age group. It is significant to stress that although these eight (26.7%) victim respondents, who succeeded in finding meaning in their trauma had received remuneration from the TRC it could not replace their emotional trauma. Bee (1992:434) found that all human beings undergo sequences of changes in their personalities, which could have an influence on peoples' reaction to life stresses such as the TRC revelations. These can inter alia be influenced by the age category into which a person falls with the persons in the late adulthood coping better with their trauma than the younger individuals. This could result in persons being anxious and

disturbed that they cannot accomplish their needs. In addition their health can also be put at risk and thus deteriorate. Some people may lack the capacity to come to an understanding of changing life events such as coping with the socialisation of problematic adolescent children. The above author describes three developmental phases known as early adulthood (26-40 years), middle adulthood (40-65 years) as well as late adulthood (young/old) (66-80 years) as indicated in Table 4.7. The age division of the victims is done according to Bee's (1992:436-437) classification of the stages of adult life development.

Table 4.7

*Age Distribution of Victims*

Development stage	N	%
Early adulthood (26-40)	9	30,0
Middle adulthood (41-65)	13	43,3
Late adulthood (66-80)	8	26,7
	30	100,0

Table 4.7 shows the different domains of adult functioning over the years from 25 years to late adulthood of the respondents in this study.

Given the exposition of Bee (1992:436-437) the nine (30%) victim respondents were in their optimal physical as well as mental functioning age. This is also a time when the conformists worldview begins to give way to a more individualistic approach, which could be characterised by independence. Thus, the significance of National Unity and Reconciliation was less important to them than their trauma as well as their disillusionment.

The above can also be said of the 13 (44.3%) respondents in the 41-65 age group, as has already been explained. Bee (1992:440) postulates that most persons have completed at least some of the social roles ascribed to them, such as that of bringing up children. It is, however, significant to mention that a greater openness to one-self emerges, which includes openness to unexpressed emotions as well as the

development of a deeper dimension of one's personality. There is also a likelihood of some inner growth or transformation. At this phase, especially females might be likely to experience depression, which could be the result of a midlife crisis. However, others may have uplifting feelings as people's temperaments determine their attitude to life. As has been explained, these 13 (43.3%) persons were still on the earlier stages of early adulthood (see Table 3.1). This can be related to the findings of Cavanaugh (1997:277) who reports that the debate over the degree to which personality in adulthood remains stable or changes has resulted in the development of numerous theoretical perspectives.

In the light of the argument of Bee (1992:437), the eight (26.7%) victims could have succeeded in deriving meaning in their suffering possibly because they had already found inner peace. Some could have redefined their life goals and sense of self, which can be characterised by not being selfish and a willingness to sacrifice. For example, these were the victims who overlooked their needs for the sake of unity and reconciliation in South Africa. In conjunction with this, the absence of challenges such as marital conflicts, problematic children as well as demanding jobs, could have allowed these people space to be content with life. However, researcher argues that a factor, which cannot be overlooked, is that during the liberation struggle in South Africa, the youth were conditioned to be militant and thus they were self-centred, violent and intolerant. On the other hand, many parents were disregarded and intimidated by these children and especially females and were thus scared of them. As a consequence of this, they could have been conditioned to be co-operative for the sake of peace (see paragraph 4.4.3.4). Bee (1992:437) could be challenged for not including the cultural dynamics of the socialisation of children within the black culture. Researcher stresses that most black females in this age group are still confronted with bringing up grandchildren as well as great-grandchildren because of the following reasons:

- Children who are born out of wedlock become the responsibility of their grandparents when their mothers or fathers work. If the parents get married eventually, then the children remain permanently with their grandparents. It is crucial to mention that the old people do not perceive these children as a burden, but rather as important gifts from God who have been sent to them for a purpose.

In this way, many complain if these children are welcomed to stay with their stepparents in the event of their single parents getting married, and their spouses verbalising willingness to adopt these stepchildren.

- Most couples, who still have parents, send their children to them when they divorce, and especially if they then re-marry.

Based on the above argument, it could be stated that the eight (26.7%) victim respondents in the late adulthood, despite having succeeded in deriving meaning in their suffering, could still have been experiencing the stresses associated with providing guidance to children experiencing problems (see paragraph 5.3.3). The above argument is similar to the findings of Dlamini (1987:638), who observed: “although families all over the world do have similarities, African researchers, lecturers and schools often find western textbooks on the family unsuitable for a full understanding of the dynamics of African family life”. This substantiates Kayongo-Male and Onyango’s findings (1984:1) that there is a need for research on family law in respect of black people.

Table 4.8

*The search for the meaning of suffering through the revelations*

Search for meaning	N	%
TRC compounded the trauma	22	72.72
They found the meaning of their suffering	8	26.66
TRC was necessary	27	90
TRC was not necessary	3	10

Table 4.8 shows the search for the meaning in suffering of the respondents in this study.

The 22 (72.72%) victim respondents in the early and middle age category, namely 26-65 years, who did not find meaning in their suffering, admitted that after testifying before the TRC, they realised that their trauma had been exacerbated. They explained that as they had not received any reparations, they found it difficult to reconcile themselves. However, the eight (26.66%) belonging to the late adulthood category, namely 66-80 years, who had succeeded in reconciling themselves with their perpetrators reported that they were ready to carry on with their lives.

The Commissioners did not have an estimation of the victim respondents who had found meaning in their suffering. However in validating the victims' statements, they mentioned that some perceived their pain as meaningful, while others regarded the Commission as unsuccessful. Thus, 22 (73.33%) of the 30 respondents who failed to reconcile themselves, admitted that their suffering had been aggravated, while the eight (26.67%) acknowledged that they had resolved the pain and had redefined their loss. This finding can be linked to the research of Meiring (1999:26) as he reported about an individual who had found meaning from her suffering and in this way was able to forgive those that had caused her injuries. According to Meiring (1999:26) Beth Savage's testimony was one of the most moving reports he had heard during the TRC process. She was a victim of the King Williams Town bomb explosion and sustained the injuries that lead to open heart surgery, a part of her intestines had to be removed and she had pieces of shrapnel which could never be removed from her body. Members of APLA detonated this bomb on 28 November 1992. Despite the above, Meiring (1999:26) points out that she stated that not everything was bad because what had happened enriched her as she could relate to other people who may be going through the same trauma. When she was asked how she felt about her attackers, she replied:

What I really want, is to meet the man who threw the hand-grenade. I would want to do it in a spirit of forgiveness, in the hope that he, for whatever reason, will also forgive me.

Shantall (1998:9) who studied the trauma endured by the victims of the Holocaust, which, though different in many ways to South Africa's apartheid, obtained findings, which are similar to the present study. This author observed that victims of trauma



can find meaning in their suffering and that they are “also prepared to endure hardship and to make sacrifices for the sake of a cause or purpose they could identify with”. Frankl (1970:122) emphasises that the search to find meaning in suffering should be viewed as an individual exercise. Although the respondents in this study could share their unique experiences on this issue, their individual traumas should not be generalised for the sake of reconciliation without acknowledging the individual needs and traumas. It is however important to emphasise that according to the **TRC Revelations Aftermath Model** (Figure 2.1) researcher envisaged that some of the persons who attended the Commission’s sessions could also have been encouraged by those victims and perpetrators who had disclosed that they found purpose through the impact of the revelations.

- **Conclusion**

The data was analysed and interpreted in relation to the impact of the TRC on the victims in their search for meaning in their suffering. Research findings were compared with other similar studies and the research expectations were analysed.

Research expectations, 2.6.7.1.13 to 2.6.7.1.17, which relate to the experience of the meaning of suffering by the victims through the revelations at the TRC will now be interpreted. Research expectation 2.6.7.1.13 which reads: **victims that attended hearings of the TRC will expect to find meaning in their suffering through discovering the truth** and research expectation 2.6.7.1.14 which states that: **victims who appeared at the TRC hearings will expect to be freed from not having all the information related to the cause of their trauma**, research expectation 2.6.7.1.15 which reads: **victims will expect to begin the healing process by making submissions to the TRC** as well as research expectation 2.6.7.1.16 which states that: **victims who made testimonies to the TRC will expect that the South African society will be healed by the revelations of the Commission as that can promote national unity**. The fact that one leads to the other, caused researcher to interpret them together for continuity.

In answering Questions 43-45 (Appendix A), 27 (90%) of the 30 victim respondents accepted that the Commission was a successful venture, but three (10%) disagreed.

Thus these research expectations are supported by the findings of the study and are therefore fully accepted.

#### 4.4.4 Victims' perception of behavioural change in terms of Maslow's Theory of Personal Growth

Responding to Question 46 (Appendix A), 15 (50%) of the 30 respondents verbalised that although there are deviant children in the country, the majority are well behaved. However, three (10%) respondents of the total research group stated that because the majority of criminals in South Africa is found amongst the youth proves that they are deviant and can therefore not be trusted. Nine (30%) of the 30 respondents said the behaviour of the youth is unacceptable since they experiment with liquor as well as drugs while still attending school. Three (10%) of the 30 respondents were non-committal about this issue. The perceptions of the victim respondents of the behaviour of the youth are illustrated in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9

*Victim Respondents' Perceptions of the Behaviour of the Youth*

Behaviour of the Youth	N	%
Majority of children are well-behaved	15	50,00
Behaviour of youth can be Changed	10	33,30
Behaviour is hopeless	9	30,00
Respondents were non-committal	3	10,00

The above table shows the perceptions about the behaviour of the youth.

All the respondents were optimistic that the youth could be motivated to change their value system for the better. Responding to Question 48 (Appendix A), ten (33.33%) respondents stated that children should be educated in human rights and that it

should form part of the school curricula. Six (20%) of the 30 victims stressed that politicians should set an example for the youth by conforming to the normative rules. This could be linked to Maslow's Theory in which it was stressed that the value system of the youth could be influenced in order that their behaviour may change. However, 11 (36.66%) of the 30 respondents were of the opinion that an organised learning environment at school had to be ensured to facilitate this transformation, while three (10%) could not suggest anything. The 11 (36.66%) of the 30 respondents concluded that there is such destruction of the moral fibre of society that nothing could be done to change it and that therefore the value system could not be used to make a significant impact on the morals of the youth.

The above findings are consistent with the reaction of the ten (100%) Commissioners, who responded to Question 15 (Appendix B) by saying that the implementation of various projects such as including human rights education in the school curricula could equip young people who are uneducated. In this way these life skills might dissuade them from deviant ways.

As indicated in Table 4.9 five (16.66%) of the 30 respondents whose trauma was caused by the actions of youthful comrades rejected that the value system of the deviant youths in South Africa could ever change. However, 15 (50%) of them were positive that it could improve, while three (33.33%) said they could not commit themselves.

- **Conclusion**

The data was analysed and interpreted in terms of the victim's perceptions regarding the possibility to introduce a new value system in the country and the research expectations were analysed.

Research expectation 2.6.7.1.18 reads: **the parents of children who display deviant behaviour will expect them to develop a positive value system** and 2.6.7.1.19 states: **parents of former youth activists who are unemployed will expect them to be engaged in skill programmes to better their lives.** In analysing the respondents answers to Questions 46-48 (Appendix A) only ten

(33.3%) of the respondents said that the behaviour of the youth could be changed. Therefore this research expectations was rejected in the findings of this study.

## 4.5 CONCLUSION

In this Chapter the data, which was obtained by conducting interviews with respondents, was analysed. Interpretation was done against the research expectations which were formulated in Chapter 2. The findings of this study confirmed the relevance and practical application of the **TRC Revelations Aftermath Model** (see Figure 2.1). Research findings of this study formed the basis from which conclusions and recommendations were made in Chapter 5.

# **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this study the impact of the revelations at the TRC hearings on the female victims who made submissions about their trauma was assessed. Emphasis was placed on the traumatic effects that these victims and their family members had to endure as they relived their experiences through the revelations. Of importance too were the respondents' perceptions of the achievements as well as the limitations of the TRC, which were primarily based on the support they had received from the Commission. The revelations were based on the following:

- Those which came from the evidence supplied by the Investigation Unit of the TRC.
- Testimonies supplied for the first time at the TRC hearings by the perpetrators.
- Information provided by the victims to the TRC which had not been disclosed by some of the perpetrators. In this way the respondents observed that, for example, police records which were obtained by the Investigation Unit of the TRC had contained distortions.

The analysis of the research data presented in Chapter 4 was done in accordance with the **TRC Revelations Aftermath Model** (see Figure 2.1). In this way researcher was able to determine whether the aims of this study have been met. Finally recommendations in general as well as those pertaining to further research are presented in paragraph 5.3.2.

## 5.2 CONCLUSIONS

### 5.2.1 Conclusions in connection with the aims of this investigation

Aim 1.8.1 was **to construct a theoretical model according to which data could be analysed**. This aim was fully met as researcher constructed the **TRC Revelations Aftermath Model** (see Figure 2.1) and succeeded in explaining the dynamics of the TRC hearings as well as the trauma the victims experienced while testifying and listening to the revelations. It was also possible to analyse the data of this study effectively according to this model. Researcher is thus of the opinion that she succeeded in this aim.

Aim 1.8.2 reads: **to ascertain whether the TRC had fulfilled its mandate of granting reparations to the victims**. The data in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.7 showed that this aim was fully met as it became clear that some of the victims were re-victimised by not receiving the reparations, which were promised to them. What compounded their trauma was the perception that the TRC was less sensitive to their needs as some of their perpetrators had been granted amnesty. It was also reported by one Commissioner that the frustration of the victim respondents relating to the non-payment of reparations could be linked to the fact that the government allocated money for only 8 000 victims although there were 11 000 applications. It should also be noted that it took the Commission two and a half years to effect the above payments to the victims. It therefore became clear that the TRC did not succeed to fulfil its mandate to grant reparations to the victims.

Aim 1.8.3 was **to find out whether victim respondents were willing to reconcile with the perpetrators, whether known or unknown to them so that the momentum of reconciliation and unity, which the TRC facilitated, could continue**.

The Investigating Unit of the TRC acknowledged that it disappointed a number of victims whose loved ones were killed or disappeared by not being able to successfully trace them. However in some of the hearings, reconciliation was effected between the victims and the perpetrators. Victim respondents did admit that after exchanging some

information with the perpetrators some of their unanswered questions were answered and this eased the anger they had felt before the TRC hearings. Researcher is of the opinion that this aim was met.

Aim 1.8.4, which reads: **to ascertain whether the victims did not require therapeutic support as a consequence of the revelations.** It was emphasised by the respondents that the evidence they had to give in the hearings as well as to listen to the perpetrators' accounts of the abuses, traumatised them. This resulted in them re-experiencing the physical and psychological symptoms they had experienced when political violence affected them. It is important to state that some of the respondents had limited medical aid, which made it possible for them to obtain only basic therapy. However, this was later exhausted and they had to make use of their life savings or go to state hospitals and clinics. By implication, those respondents who were unemployed and could not access professional help were still in need of support services at the time that this study was conducted. As it became evident that the research participants in this study did require therapeutic support, it proved that this aim had also been met.

## **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.3.1 Healing and rehabilitation**

Recognising that the victims of abuses as well as their perpetrators needed healing, it is recommended that the following should be effected:

#### **5.3.1.1 Support services**

As victim respondents in this study experienced a biological, psychological as well as social impact of the revelations at the TRC hearings it is recommended that support services should be established to assist them. Because of cost implications it is recommended that existing facilities such as municipal clinics must be used and service providers such as nursing personnel should also organise themselves to co-

ordinate their skills and services in order to prevent duplication, which could ensure that they could function cost effectively as well as to be multi-professional in their approach. As the perpetrators and the victims who made submissions at the TRC hearings live in various places around the country it should be considered that for them to access these services, use must be made of existing clinics in their areas to extend these services. Volunteers should be trained to assist them to render an effective support service.

Women victims of political violence should be motivated by the above-mentioned service providers to organise themselves into support groups in order that they can share experiences as well as coping mechanisms. This could accommodate single parents and other victims who did not have the opportunity to attend or testify before the TRC.

### **5.3.1.2 Non-Governmental Organisations**

Existing NGOs should be sensitised to the need to interpret the TRC Report, which could give them an account of the health needs of the victims and the perpetrators. This could enable them to explain the TRC findings and recommendations to the people at grass roots level. This could help to prevent recurrences of human rights abuses. Funding should be allocated to all NGOs who are working in the field of reconciliation and support so that the granting of reparations to the victims can continue and thus not be centralised. However it should be effectively controlled and monitored by the relevant appointed personnel without compromising its effectiveness.

### **5.3.1.3 Reintegration and rehabilitation**

In terms of promoting national unity and reconciliation in the country the rehabilitation of people of all political perspectives and reintegrating them into the South African society could be done as follows:



- People who were accused of being collaborators (former State agents), political activists as well as informers (iimpimpi) could be involved in community organisations and other bodies such as Community Police Forums (CPFs). The CPFs have already made numerous attempts and in some areas made substantial progress with community integration. It could be of value if the CPFs could be a component of this initiative as they have already overcome a number of problems like the distrust shown in them by community members especially people living in black townships. The reasons for the distrust could be associated with the fact that the police were viewed as if they supported the State in promoting apartheid. At meetings organised by community leaders mediation mechanisms can be implemented which might encourage forgiveness and integration by promoting dialogue and feedback between the perpetrators and the victims in order to enhance and sustain communication. Youth organisations such as the ANC Youth League as well as individuals should also be involved in this community integration, as they could take responsibility for normative behaviour which could curb deviancy.
- Communities should be motivated and educated by political and church leaders to be willing and prepared to accept people like the perpetrators back into their midst if forgiveness and peace is to be attained in the country.

#### **5.3.1.4 Lustration**

Consideration should be given to the possibility of allowing perpetrators who held high profile positions in the Government to remain in these positions so that they do not become frustrated and use their experience to revenge themselves. They should however be motivated to undergo rehabilitation, which could be effected by trained therapists employed by the Government. As these persons could have guilt feelings due to the fact that they were either forced to perpetrate abuses or gave orders for violations to be committed to citizens of the country, therapy could assist them to resolve these feelings.

### **5.3.1.5 Popular publications**

As the work of the Commission and its Report are vital resources for human rights education, Government should make sure that the contents of the Report are made available as widely as possible. This information should also be made available to those who are not literate. This can be done by means of advertisements in newspapers, distribution of pamphlets, announcements at schools, churches, pension pay points, taxi ranks, shopping malls, local shops, bus terminals, airports as well as train stations with the request that literate people should communicate and distribute information regarding the TRC findings as far and wide as possible. Furthermore NGOs, welfare organisations, political parties and other organisations that have public platforms can be asked to bring the existence of the TRC Report to the attention of all South African citizens.

### **5.3.1.6 Promotion of a human rights culture**

To enhance the development of a human rights culture, which is central to reconciliation, the following is recommended:

- Regular and free elections should be promoted.
- Transparent, non-corrupt Government should be strived for.
- Human rights curricula should be introduced in formal education, specialised education and in the training of law enforcement personnel. Issues such as, inter alia, racism, gender discrimination, conflict resolution as well as the rights of women and children should be addressed.

## **5.3.2 Reparations**

A structure should be developed in the President's office whose function would be to oversee the implementation of reparation and rehabilitation policy proposals as well as

recommendations. This structure should be responsible for the following:

- Facilitation of mechanisms to implement the financial reparation as promised to the victims.
- Members of the above-mentioned NGOs could consult with organised business and civil society to establish a trust fund to support reparation and restitution. This fund must be well managed by officials appointed for this task and treated with the same seriousness as trust funds in general. There should be zero tolerance on any form of corruption.

### **5.3.3 Recommendations for further research**

After completing study researcher came to the conclusion that there is still a great deal of this research to be done in the field of alleviating the impact of psychological trauma on victims. The following recommendations are therefore made:

- As this was the first study of its kind it was exploratory in nature. The sample consisted of ten Commissioners, ten Co-ordinators and 30 female victims. Researcher thus recommends that this study be repeated with a more representative sample. She envisages that the findings could be different inter alia because as the Commission has finish its task with the exception of the Amnesty Committee, which will conclude its functions in March 2000, a more holistic perspective of the experiences can be given by the victims.
- She further recommends that a study on the functioning of support services for victims of trauma induced by political conflict should be undertaken and compared with the findings of this study.
- It is imperative that a study should be undertaken on how an effective and objective reparations awarding criteria for victims of political induced trauma should be developed and evaluated, as this remains a great obstacle for communities to help victims.

- It is also important that a similar study should be done on male victims of the TRC revelations.
- A study of the impact that politically motivated victimisation can have on children should be undertaken in South Africa.
- Research on the influence that political violence can have on desensitising citizens' attitudes towards violence is also of importance.
- Research on the evaluation of the effectiveness of reconciliatory measures on previously divided groupings should also be considered.
- Research on the family life of black people from a sociological point of view.

## 5.4 CONCLUSION

This study shed light on the way the revelations at the TRC hearings impacted on the research group. As no victimisation incident can be studied in isolation the **TRC Revelations Aftermath Model** was developed and the data was evaluated according to it (see Figure 2.1). The dynamic nature as well as the multi-causal influences that these revelations had on the respondents could successfully be analysed.

It became clear that there is a definite need for effective and urgent reparations as well as facilitation of a reconciliation scheme. These should both be done to ease the trauma suffered by the victims as well as to make an attempt at unifying South Africans of all races.

Researcher would therefore like to conclude by emphasising the following recommendation from the TRC Report (Extract 5,1998:2):

- .That institutions should be created, that are conducive to a stable and fair society. In addition to this, institutional, administrative as well as legislative measures should be introduced to prevent the commission of human rights violations.

It is clear that reconciliation and national unity could not be achieved without commitment, honesty and involvement by members of all communities. However, as these values should be individual choices, which should be free from coercion, it can be dangerous, if not simplistic, to assume that the foundation laid by the TRC alone will achieve this.