

CHAPTER THREE

POVERTY, UNDERDEVELOPMENT and UNEMPLOYMENT

"The word "poverty" is, no doubt, a key word of our times, extensively used and abused by everyone. Huge amounts of money are spent in the name of the poor. Thousands of books and expert advice continue to offer solutions to their problems. Strangely enough, however, nobody, including the proposed "beneficiaries" of these activities, seems to have a clear, and commonly shared, view of poverty. For one reason, almost all the definitions given to the word are woven around the concept of "lack" or "deficiency". This notion reflects only the basic relativity of the concept. What is necessary and to whom? And who is qualified to define all that?"

(Rahnema, in Escobar, 1995: 21).

3.1 POVERTY: AN INTRODUCTION

Poverty and underdevelopment are manifold phenomena. They occur all over the world and can be found in many different forms. Throughout history, human beings have always been affected by the devastation of poverty, inequality and the severe and grave consequences of underdevelopment.

According to MacDonald (1998: 15) the concept of Sustainable Development is based on the assumption that all types of human activity are interrelated. MacDonald (1998: 15) further stated that in "sustainability-speak", this is usually expressed as "the importance of integrating social, economic and environmental objectives into planning, decision-making and implementation of projects and programmes". An appropriate example is that a sustainable approach to economics must, by definition, also take into account the social and ecological aspects of a problem. The South African Women's National Coalition (2002: 74) contributed the following in this regard: "We hold that the eradication of poverty and the securing of the health of people is a critical requirement for economic development in poor countries. Health is not an outcome of economic growth".

Therefore, the importance of addressing poverty, underdevelopment and unemployment becomes self-evident.

According to Belshaw, Claderisi and Sugden (2001:68) when the prerequisites for sustainable peace are not fulfilled, a society is unstable and prone to violence in the form of either civil conflict or external war. Any fundamental need (physical security, human identity, or social interaction) that is not adequately satisfied tends to generate conflict. The failure to meet these fundamental needs has powerful consequences because these needs address the “being,” the “having”, and the “doing,” of each person in his or her interaction in society.

MacDonald (1998: 25) stated that social development refers to how well societies are meeting basic human needs such as food, shelter and clothing. Providing the support services that determine the quality of life, including health care, education, culture and human rights are part of social development. The principal objective is to provide a realistic and concrete answer to the problems of underdevelopment and marginalization through sustainable solutions in the medium and long term. MacDonald (1998: 97) postulated that the underlying assumption is that economic development, is not an end in itself but must be interpreted as a means to improve the quality of life and to offer better opportunities to people living on the outside of the mainstream of society. When a community follows this approach, economic development serves the larger goal of human development. (Compare Naudé and Jansen van Rensburg, 2002: 9.)

Addressing poverty and underdevelopment is of such importance, not merely for the sake of economic growth or expansion, but because it is morally indefensible that suffering and hardship should continue on such a scale. Rogge and Darkwa, (1996: 395) stated the following in this regard: “Living in poverty increases susceptibility to disease and vulnerability to sudden and dramatic misfortune and limits control over life choices. For people living in poverty, life is often a gruelling trial of survival in which pessimism, hopelessness, resignation, depression and

shattered hopes are common”. (Compare International Labour Organization, 1998: 1.) Affolter (2000: 1) contributed some valuable perspectives in this regard and emphasized that development organizations interested in promoting social well-being will have to consider how context enhances or inhibits socio-emotional development. Wilkinson (in Affolter, 2000: 1) summarized this viewpoint in the following statement: “To feel depressed, cheated, bitter, desperate, vulnerable, frightened, angry...to feel devalued, useless, helpless, uncared for, hopeless, isolated, anxious, and a failure; these feelings can dominate people’s whole experience of life, coloring their experience of everything else”.

The People’s Movement for Human Rights Education ([sa]: 1) reported that poverty is a human rights violation. Every woman, man, youth and child has the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, to food, clothing, housing, medical care and social services. (Compare Naudè and Jansen van Rensburg, 2002: 9.) These fundamental human rights are defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants and other widely adhered to international human rights treaties and declarations (The People’s Movement for Human Rights Education, [sa]: 1-2). The human right to live in dignity, free from want, is a fundamental right, and is also essential to the realization of all other human rights – rights that are universal, indivisible, interconnected and interdependent.

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right to be free from poverty includes:

- The human right to an adequate standard of living.
- The human right to work and receive wages that contribute to an adequate standard of living.
- The human right to a healthy and safe environment.
- The human right to be free from hunger.
- The human right to safe drinking water.

- The human right to primary health care and medical attention in case of illness.
- The human right to have access to basic social services.
- The human right to be free of gender or racial discrimination.
- The human right to education.
- The human right to participate in shaping decisions that affects oneself and one's community.
- The human right for children to develop in an environment appropriate for their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

Dr Franklin Sonn, (1999: 1) a former South African Ambassador to the United States, delivered a powerful keynote address to the 11th International Symposium of the IUCISD, in July 1999 and contributed the following: "Poverty is the single greatest social burden in the world today. It is a timeless matter. It defies all economic and social systems. It, up to this day, occupies the national debate in varying degrees depending on the nature of the government in power. Governments' success is often determined by the extent to which it is able to meet the challenge of poverty. Poverty brought governments down. It ensured the demise of economical systems. It ensured the rise of dictatorships. So it was also the case in our country".

Roberts (2000: 1) expressed similar sentiments and referred to a statement contained in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), White Paper Discussion Document, Government of National Unity (1994) namely: "No political democracy can survive and flourish if the majority of its people remains in poverty, without land, without their basic needs being met and without tangible prospects for a better life. Attacking poverty and deprivation will therefore be the first priority of the democratic Government".

According to Silungwe, ([sa]: 3) in recent years, a growing number of studies and discussions have been concerned with the extent of poverty in Southern Africa,

its causes and possibilities of various interventions to alleviate it. Some of the studies and discussions have been influential to the extent that they attracted international interest, amongst others, from international lending institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. However, ever since vigorous studies on poverty began in the nineteenth century, no single political and economic idea has provided definite, decisive answers to the complexity of poverty. It is of paramount importance to examine the damage poverty inflicts on the individual and the community who must endure it. Silungwe ([sa]: 3) stated that any attempt to tackle the problem of poverty in the developing world requires changes in the structures of the world's economic relationships. Marginal concessions cannot substitute genuine reform, and proper structural changes are needed. Poverty is a complex, multidimensional social problem and is a product, in part at least, of the impact of political process and policy development. (Compare Kiirya, 2001: 2-3.) Silungwe ([sa]: 3) emphasized the following viewpoint: "The World Bank itself declared in recent reports that eradication of severe poverty worldwide was feasible; the political will to do so is what is lacking". It is clear therefore, that poverty is a political, moral and ethical issue, and it requires appropriate action by all stakeholders. The Human Development report (1997: 106) discussed the importance of eradicating poverty, emphasizing that it is more than a moral imperative and a commitment to human solidarity. It would therefore appear to be that it is a practical possibility – and in the long run an economic imperative for global prosperity.

It is in the deprivation of the lives that people can lead that poverty manifests itself. Poverty can involve not only the lack of the necessities of material well-being, but the denial of opportunities for living a tolerable life (May, Woolard and Klasen, 1997: 3). The Human Development Report (1997: 15) stated in this regard: "Life can be prematurely shortened. It can be made difficult, painful or hazardous. It can be deprived of knowledge and communication. And it can be robbed of dignity, confidence and self-respect – as well as the respect of others.

All are aspects of poverty that limit and blight the lives of many millions in the world today". (Compare Belshaw, *et al.*, 2001: 133-134.)

The Human Development Report (1997: 2) stated unequivocally that human poverty is more than income poverty (income consists of occupational wages or salaries and earnings from investments). Poverty constitutes the denial of choices and opportunities for living a tolerable life. It would therefore appear accurate to conclude that a state of poverty is an extreme negative influence on maintaining, for example, social sustainability. In Bynner's (2002: 3) opinion, social sustainability is considered to involve maintaining quality of life and social cohesion through:

- Meeting basic needs (food, accommodation and security);
- Personal autonomy through work, and equal opportunities in access to education and employment;
- Social resources to support tolerance and cohesion.

Human development is all about the process of enlarging people's choices. Such choices are neither finite nor static. The most critical ones are to lead a long and healthy life, to be educated (to acquire knowledge) and to have access to the resources needed to enjoy a decent standard of living. Additional choices include political freedom, guaranteed human rights and various ingredients of self-respect. These are among the essential choices, the absence of which can block many other opportunities. Anand and Sen (1994: 17) emphasized that human development in the form of people being better educated and enjoying better health, is not only constitutive of a better quality of life, but it also contributes to productivity and an overall larger contribution to the material and social progress of all people in a community. Human development is thus a process of widening people's choices as well as raising the level of well-being. Income is one option that people would like to have, but it is not the sum total of their lives.

3.2 DEFINING POVERTY

“In a country well governed, poverty is something to be ashamed of. In a country badly governed wealth is something to be ashamed of”.

(Confucius)

Defining and measuring poverty are complicated tasks because there are different ways of defining poverty and little consensus about what the best approach is. It is difficult to discuss and make comparisons with regard to poverty internationally. Hasegawa (2001:3-4) and Belshaw, *et al.* (2001: 132) discussed the fact that poverty has many dimensions and has been defined in various ways. The following are five basic definitions of poverty:

- Income poverty refers to a lack of minimally adequate income or expenditures.
- Extreme poverty is the inability to satisfy even minimum food needs.
- Overall poverty refers to the inability to satisfy essential non-food as well as food needs.
- Relative poverty refers to poverty defined by standards that can change across countries or over time. Absolute poverty refers to poverty defined by a fixed standard. The international one-dollar-a-day poverty line, which is designed to compare the extent of poverty across different countries, is an example of relative poverty.

(Compare Estes, 2002: 23.)

A number of definitions of poverty evolved over the past decade together with international knowledge about the nature of poverty and its determinants. The reduction of poverty is a global challenge for the international community. In the past poverty has been largely measured by income level and food security, now the phenomenon has gained a more thorough understanding. Poverty reduction means improving access of the population to basic resources, including land and water, as well as employment, education and health care services, ensuring

human rights for all, meeting needs for infrastructure and services, improvement of sanitary and hygienic conditions and providing adequate living standards for the population.

According to The World Bank (2000: 69), poverty has many dimensions, one important element being material deprivation, commonly measured in terms of income or consumption. According to Booth, Hanmer and Lovell (2000: 11) the essential implication of a multidimensional definition of poverty is to underline the way public actions in different sectors – e.g. health, education, agriculture, infrastructure and the environment – are needed to address the needs of the poor. Parnell and Mosdell (2003: 4) compiled a wide definition of poverty and stated that: “Poverty is more than a lack of income. Poverty exists when an individual or a household’s access to income, jobs and/or infrastructure is inadequate or sufficiently unequal to prohibit full access to opportunities in society. The condition of poverty is caused by a combination of social, economic, spatial, environmental and political factors”. Parnell and Mosdell (2003: 5) further mentioned that recognizing the multiple dimensions of poverty emphasized the range of actors who needed to be involved in an overall poverty relief and reduction strategy.

Urban poverty has a broad character, including squalid living conditions; risks to life and health from poor sanitation, air pollution, crime and violence, traffic accidents, and natural disasters; the breakdown of traditional family and community safety nets; and a sense of powerlessness and vulnerability that undermine human potential and social capital. Moreover, income inequality is worsening in many urban areas, implying further exclusion of low-income groups from employment opportunities, basic services, political representation, legal and social protections, and a range of amenities (World Bank Group, 2001:1-3). Urban populations are also hit particularly hard by macroeconomic and financial shocks. Within the South African context, the increases in the cost of living and

the greatly reduced number of job opportunities in formal sector employment have a particular significant impact on the urban poor.

In 1990, the World Development report expanded the traditional income-based definition (i.e. categorizes people as poor if their income falls below a defined income measure) of poverty to further include capabilities – such as health, education and nutrition. This framework explicitly recognized the interaction and causal relationship among these dimensions (Klugman, 2001: 2). Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon, with different faces, characterized by low income, low consumption, hunger and malnutrition, poor health, lack of education and skills, lack of opportunity, lack of access to water and sanitation, and vulnerability to economic and social shocks. (Compare Milojevic, 2002: 3 and Klugman, 2001: 2.) The World Bank Group (2003: 1) provided the following powerful description: “Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not being able to go to school and knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom”. The multidimensional nature of poverty is clearly evident in the above passage. It would therefore appear to be extremely difficult for poor people to survive the daily struggles of their existence.

The Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive System of Social Security for South Africa (2002: 15) defined poverty as the inability of individuals, households or entire communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living. (Compare May, *et al.*, 1997: 14 and Kehler, 2000: 1.) According to Hulme, Shepherd and Moore (2001: 4) the notion of what constitutes “basic needs” has expanded to encompass food, water, shelter, and clothing, but also access to other assets such as education, health, credit, and participation in political process, security and dignity. These characteristics are closely integrated with one another; low income restricts

access to basic goods and services, and lack of access to goods and services limits income-generating opportunities. The interlocking of different factors determines the social exclusion of an individual from active life of the community. (Compare Cohen and Kennedy, 2000: 138 and Midgley, 1983.)

Poverty can be plotted along a continuum. Whether it is measured or defined by level of income, access to a range of goods and services, opportunities to participate in the range of activities that society offers, or the likelihood of being treated with dignity and respect, it is an experience that shades imperceptibly from the poorest and most despised through to the affluent (Lavalette and Pratt, 2001: 183-184).

According to Parnell and Mosdell (2003: 5) the “basic needs” concept is one of the most influential international perspectives on poverty, especially in the context of the South or “Third World”, where millions of people are without adequate food, shelter or sanitation. Basic needs can include “hard” infrastructure such as a storm water drainage system or “social” infrastructure such as schools or clinics.

An alternative measure of poverty is to express the number of poor as a proportion of the population. This is known as the headcount index and is the percentage of the population below the poverty line. Although the headcount index is useful for comparative purposes, it has been criticized because it overlooks the extent to which the poor fall below the poverty line (World Bank, 1990: 27-28).

The 1995 Copenhagen Social Summit was the first major international gathering to mark the expansion of the concepts of poverty and well-being, and by the year 2000, the World Bank (2000) described poverty in terms of material deprivation, low levels of education and health, exposure to vulnerability and risk, voicelessness and powerlessness.

Development looks at a community as a whole and measures change and advancement along different dimensions of well-being. Poverty focuses on a segment of a community. It compares different dimensions of human well-being to a standard, for example a poverty line, and then classifies a person or household as poor or non-poor. This standard can be defined in absolute or relative terms. For example, an absolute standard could be all households that do not have the means for human survival. It refers to subsistence below minimum, socially acceptable living standards. Muzaale (in Osei-Hwedie, 1995: 63) noted that absolute poverty, as human deprivation, is a physiological phenomenon denoting lack of basic necessities of human life including food, safe drinking water, housing, clothing and health care. People in this situation suffer from chronic malnutrition and sickness, live in squalor, live short lives, and many die in infancy.

Muzaale (in Osei-Hwedie, 1995: 63) stated that relative poverty is a social definition, which refers to human suffering resulting from the inability to meet needs, which other people, in the same society, have come to take for granted. Lok-Dessallien (1999: 2) contributed to this definition and stated that relative poverty compares the lowest segments of a population with upper segments, usually measured in income quintiles or deciles (Human Development Report, 1997: 15). Hulme, *et al.* (2001: 6) supported this view and stated that poverty is usually viewed as either a form of absolute deprivation or relative, but significant, deprivation. Absolute poverty is perceived as subsistence below the minimum requirements for physical well-being, generally based on a quantitative proxy indicator such as income or calories, but sometimes taking into account a broader package of goods and services. (Compare Todaro, 1997: 676.)

Kehler (2000: 1) pursued a more pragmatic approach and stated that the level of poverty is generally defined as the inability to attain a minimum standard of living, which is measured in terms of basic consumption needs or income required to satisfy those needs. According to the South African NGO Coalition (SANGOCO)

(1998: 2) when the question “What is poverty?” were posed to different groups of South Africans, in different parts of rural and urban South Africa, a central theme emerged: That poverty is not only about lack of money, but more centrally about a lack of opportunities and choices which allow people to build decent lives for themselves.

Between 31 March and 19 June 1998 the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) and SANGOCO convened a series of ten hearings on poverty. Hearings were held in each of the nine provinces. Over 10 000 people participated in “Speak Out on Poverty” by attending the hearings, mobilizing communities or making submissions. Nearly 600 people presented oral evidence over the 35 days of the hearings. The piles of written testimony bore evidence to the fact that poverty is causing misery and hunger, and often laborious and menial work do not offer adequate compensation to relieve the suffering (Africa Action [sa]: 1).

The Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive System of Social security for South Africa (2002: 15-16), reported that during research for the Poverty and Inequality Report (PIR), developed in 1998, the poor characterized their poverty in the following manner:

- Alienation from the community: They are isolated from the institutions of kinship and community.
- Food insecurity: The inability to provide sufficient or good quality food for the family is seen as an outcome of poverty.
- Crowded homes: The poor are perceived to live in crowded conditions and in homes in need of maintenance.
- Use of basic forms of energy: The poor lack access to safe and efficient sources of energy. In rural communities the poor particularly the women, walk long distances to gather firewood or water, risking physical attack and sexual assault.

- Lack of adequately paid, secure jobs: Lack of employment opportunities, low wages and lack of job security is regarded as a major contributor to people's poverty.
- Fragmentation of the family: Many poor households are characterized by absent fathers or children living apart from their parents. Households may be spilt over a number of sites as a survival strategy.

(Compare May, *et al.*, 1997: 3-4.)

The World Bank commissioned an extensive worldwide study on poverty, consisting of three books, which brought together the experiences of over 60,000 poor people. The first book "Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?" (2000), gathered the voices of over 40,000 poor men and women in 50 countries from the World Bank's participatory poverty assessments; the second book, "Voices of the Poor: Crying Out For Change" (2000), drew material from 23 countries in a comparative study. The final book, "Voices of the Poor: From Many Lands" (2002), offered regional patterns and country case studies. These studies explored poor people's definitions of poverty and used an inductive approach to uncover the underlying issues of poverty that are important to poor people and captured their perceptions of poverty. Together with the "World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty", it presented a multidimensional view of poverty and underscored the importance of increasing poor people's access to opportunity, security, and empowerment for economic growth and poverty reduction (Narayan, 2002: xvii).

The World Bank Study: "Voices of the Poor" indicated that despite diversity and location specificity, there was a striking commonality of experience across countries, cultures, rural and urban areas, and age and gender divides. People described well-being and ill-being in terms of the following related dimensions: material well-being, physical well-being, safety and security, freedom of choice and action, and good social relations (The World Bank Group, 2000: 1).

Five main findings emerged from these reports with regard to the analysis of definitions of poverty (Narayan, Patel, Schafft, Rademacher and Koch-Schulte, 2000a: 26). For the purpose of this study a brief discussion of each of the findings will follow.

3.2.1 Poverty is multidimensional

Thomas (in Lee, 1994: 1) reported on the absolute deprivation that is caused by a state of poverty. When Sudeka, a fifteen-year-old girl, living in a poor community, was questioned about her life, she made the following statement: "...What we see? Misery... Falling like rain".

Many factors converge to make poverty a complex, multidimensional phenomenon. (Compare Alcock, 1997: 6.) Definitions of poverty and its causes vary by gender, age, culture, and other social and economic contexts. Perceived causes of poverty are affected by one's status and location. (Compare May, *et al.*, 1997: 3 and Mayfield, 1997: 61-64.) Narayan, *et al.* (2000a: 27) stated that in Madagascar for example, farmers linked poverty to drought; the poor in the city linked poverty to rising prices and fewer employment opportunities; and the rich linked poverty to deterioration in domestic and international terms of trade; neglect of Malagasay traditions and norms, lack of motivation among certain classes and groups of people, price liberalization and devaluation, lack of education and absence of governance.

Embry-Nimmer, (in Barberton, Blake and Kotze, 1998: 211) wrote: "Homelessness does not happen in a vacuum. It is the end result of many things gone wrong. No one thing causes it; no one thing will solve it". Poverty very seldom results from the lack of one single thing, but from a vast number of interlocking factors that cluster in poor people's experiences and definitions of poverty. Bevan and Joireman (in Hulme, *et al.*, 2001: 4) supported this view and stated in this regard, "While poverty everywhere involves people experiencing

very real material and other deprivations, the concept of poverty is used to cover a wide-ranging set of interrelated life-chances which vary and are valued differently in the diverse cultures and sub-cultures of the world". (Compare Alcock, 1997: 19.)

According to the "Poverty Mapping" project (2002: 1), a joint initiative by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the CGIAR, consisting of a network of institutions, poverty intersects and overlaps with other concepts, notably development and equity. It is therefore accepted that poverty and development are multidimensional concepts. (Compare Lok-Dessallien, 1999: 2.)

Milojevic (2002: 4) contributed to the discussion on poverty and emphasized that poverty is a cumulative process. The longer it goes on the more difficult it is to uproot it. Milojevic (2002: 4) wrote that while the common understanding is that the poor somehow get accustomed to the situation, in fact, the longer poverty goes on the more difficult it is to bear it. Milojevic postulated that people who find themselves temporarily poor might respond to the situation with dignity, humour and resourcefulness. Unfortunately other feelings such as shame, humiliation and despair might set in after some time. Often under these circumstances, opportunities are lost and assets for ingenuity decrease. It is the opinion of Milojevic that the poor do not get accustomed to the situations of poverty and that can be easily seen from the higher level of poor health and illness among the poor as well as from their higher mortality rates. According to Milojevic (2002: 4) around 500,000 women die yearly from pregnancy and birth related complications, which are usually related to a lack of proper nutrition and adequate health services. It is estimated that around 30 million people die each year from hunger.

According to Mayfield (1997: 55) in a discussion on the vicious cycle of poverty, any person who considers the causes of poverty has to acknowledge that some

things are causes of poverty while others are seen as consequences or symptoms of poverty. The question arises: Is ill health a cause or consequence of poverty? Mayfield postulated that in some sense, poor health reduces the amount of time a person can work and the level of strength the person needs to work in the fields and factories of a community. That can lead to a reduction in income. When a person is poor, the resources needed to purchase medicine or consult a doctor are not available and for that reason poverty may better be seen as the cause of poor health. Mayfield further stated that disease and malnutrition are responsible for poor health, which leads to lower production, which leads to lower income, which in turn, leads to lower surplus that means less taxes collected, which means less health facilities which means less treatment available which means more disease and sickness which leads to poor health. According to Mayfield (1997: 55) this rather simple cycle of poverty fails to capture the complexity of most Less Developed Countries (LDC) settings. Poor health is not simply caused by the lack of health facilities. Mayfield emphasised that there are many other factors to take into account, namely: lack of potable water (clean drinking water), the prevalence of unsanitary conditions, poor housing that does not provide protection from the natural elements, and the use of open-pit fires with poor ventilation. (Compare Alcock, 1997: 88.)

According to Mayfield (1997: 55) the complexity of poverty should be apparent. It might be argued that the lack of education would be a good first place to start. Mayfield (1997: 56) proposed that low levels of education are often associated with a lack of knowledge, lack of skills, awareness, self-confidence and motivation, innovation and creative problem solving. Mayfield emphasized that these consequences of a lack of education do lead to lower levels of production and lower levels of productivity. That in turn, will lead to lower income that ensure lower levels of surplus in society and therefore lower levels of taxation, with the consequence that there will be less financial means to provide for schools and teachers in a given society. Mayfield (1997: 56) further explained that another perspective might be that the causes of poverty are ultimately related to

economics and access to resources. A lack of income means that an individual will have no financial means to save. Such a person will have great difficulty in obtaining a bank loan or credit. Without access to reasonable credit, many farmers for example, rely on moneylenders who charge high rates of interest. Mayfield emphasized the lack of education often means lack of knowledge about more productive forms of agriculture, the lack of modern skills ensures lower levels of productivity, less profit, inability to compete with larger farmers, often forcing smaller farmers to sell their land. Loss of land forces such farmers to seek employment usually at even lower wages, and therefore the cycle of poverty often spirals ever downward. Mayfield concluded by stating that with every study of poverty in the LDCs, the multiplicity and many interrelationships between and among causes of poverty became more apparent. (Compare Alcock, 1997: 109.)

3.2.2 Poverty and material well-being

"Your hunger is never satiated, your thirst never quenched;
you can never sleep until you are no longer tired."

(Poor person from the Senegal study, 1995; Narayan, *et al.*, 2000a: 29)

Lok-Dessallien (1999: 4) stated that several poverty concepts are derived from perceived causes of poverty. It can be divided into two types of deprivations – physiological and sociological. Physiological deprivation implies that people are poor because they lack income, food, clothing and shelter. Both the income and basic needs concepts of poverty stem from physiological deprivations. Lok-Dessallien (1999: 4) further emphasized the strategies to reduce poverty emerging from these approaches focus on increasing the income and consumption of the poor and their attainments of "satisfiers" of basic needs, such as health and education. Hulme, *et al.* (2001: 4) supported this view and according to these authors material and physiological approaches view poverty as a lack of income, expenditure or consumption, and money-metric approaches that measure these deficiencies are commonly used by economists for quantitative analysis. These approaches permit precise measurement and

comparisons over time and between regions. In recent years, poverty has been viewed in a more holistic sense, based in part on the increased value given to the views of the poor themselves.

As previously stated, poverty is routinely defined as the lack of what is necessary for material well-being – especially food but also housing, land, and other assets are important elements of survival (Johnson and Schwartz, 1994: 55). It would therefore appear to be that poverty is the lack of multiple resources leading to physical deprivation. The material aspects of poverty are well known. Hunger and food insecurity remain the core concerns. For poor families, meeting their most basic needs for food, water, and shelter can be a daily struggle: this become acute when there is unemployment and underemployment, or lack of productive land or other income-earning assets (The Poverty and Inequality Report, 1998: 3 and Booth, *et al.*, 2000: 9). When people do not have access to land or the ability to grow food on other people's land, access to dependable wage labour become crucial for survival. The World Bank study, "Voices of the Poor" found that in many countries women are the primary sources of family income and are engaging in all types of activities. These occupations include paid domestic work as well as work traditionally considered men's work only, such as informal industrial jobs, trading and service enterprises (The World Bank Group, 2000a: 1-4).

Housing, typically considered an asset, can be a liability as well because it can limit options and maintenance costs can drain resources. Sub-standard housing is a serious concern for the poor. The most frequent problems include leaking roofs, cracked walls, broken windows, rotting floors, and very often a complete lack of indoor plumbing. The "Voices of the Poor" study (Narayan, *et al.*, 2000a: 41) refer to data gathered in Uganda, India, Georgia, Zambia, Cameroon, Latvia and Ethiopia, where it became evident that personal or household property is an asset insofar as it can be sold in emergencies, and salable property may constitute one of the few safety nets that exists for poor families. Very often poor

families do not have any household or personal property because many families have already sold off these assets.

3.2.3 Poverty and psychological well-being

Poor people's definitions reveal important psychological aspects of poverty (Belshaw, *et al.*, 2001: 40). During the extensive World Bank study, poor people were asked to share their ideas of good and bad experiences of life, and their perceptions of "well-being" and "ill-being" were explored.

According to Dasgupta (1993:8), the ability to identify "well-being" requires a thorough understanding of destitution or a state of ill-being. To comprehend destitution, it is crucial to know what a person is deprived of. Living embodies circularity in that all people need food and care in order to reproduce food and care. To be poor was to experience ill-being in many ways. Poor people suffer multiple disadvantages that reinforce each other and interlock to trap them in a vicious cycle of deprivation (The World Bank Group, 2000b: 1).

The organization Jubilee Gauteng, (2001: 7) together with the South African Graduates Development Organisation (SAGDA), the South African Students Congress (SASCO) and the Johannesburg Central Branch of the South African Communist Party (SACP) developed a document titled "Towards a People's Budget". This particular group stated with regard to the psychological impact of poverty: "Poverty is eating away at people's spirits, it is eating at the essence of people's humanness". (Compare Venter, 2001: 104-105.)

The International Movement ATD Fourth World (2002: 1) emphasized that poverty has various manifestations, including a lack of income and productive resources to ensure an ongoing livelihood; hunger and malnutrition; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; limited or no access to education and other basic services; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments,

and social discrimination and exclusion. (Compare Alcock, 1997: 92.) The International Movement ATD Fourth World further stated that poverty is also defined by a lack of participation in decision-making in civil, social and cultural life. The most prevalent characteristic of life in extreme poverty is therefore an accumulation of mutually reinforcing types of insecurity. These types of insecurities have unavoidable effects on each other. When these insecurities persist exclusion becomes worse and starts to erode family and social life.

Poor people are acutely aware of their lack of voice, power, and independence, which subject them to exploitation. Their poverty also leaves them vulnerable to rudeness, humiliation, and inhumane treatment by both private and public agents of the state from whom they seek help. Poor people also speak about the pain brought about by their unavoidable violation of social norms and their inability to maintain cultural identity through participating in traditions, festivals, and rituals. The World Bank Group study (2000c: 3) emphasized that the bad life is deeply embedded in insecurity and feeling vulnerable. Insecurity is related to the external world, to the individual and family – exposure to shocks, stress, and risks that increase unpredictability and instability. Insecurity is also the experience of worry and fear. The World Bank Group study (2000c: 3) reported that even where poverty has declined, poor people reported that life had become more unstable and uncertain, particularly as a result of increased crime, violence and corruption.

Poverty has psychological affects such as distress at being unable to feed one's children, insecurity from not knowing where the next meal will come from, and shame at having to go without foods that have strong symbolic value (The World Bank Group, 2000c). Poor people report the humiliation and intimidation they suffer, and fear of the very systems designed to provide assistance. The shame and stigma they often have to bear can have a devastating effect on children particularly.

Adams, Dominelli and Payne (1998: 274-275) were of the opinion that absolute poverty blights the life chances of children. Waterhouse and McGhee, (in Adams, *et al.*, 1998: 275) stated as follows: “There is an urgent need to protect children from the worst consequences of social and economic change.... children who come from poor families may also face additional adversities which threaten children’s social development. Social adversity, like poverty, is accumulative and is harder to fight as parental reserves diminish”. Morris (2002: 135) emphasized that poverty, economic deprivation and social exclusion impact the skills and resources that families can develop to participate, with many families only able to gain help on an individualistic, crisis management basis. Morris stated in this regard: “With professional input repeatedly confined to acute need, the possibility of empowering effective service user participation and partnership to achieve best outcomes for children remains the critical issue facing those developing best practice with children and families”.

According to Barberton, Blake and Kotzé (1998: 252-254): “Poor people are poor because they do not have access to sufficient resources to meet their basic needs. It is therefore almost trite to point out that poor people find it difficult to participate in actions that seek to address their poverty, as such actions invariably require some kind of investment, whether it is time, energy or money. In the day-to-day grind of trying to eke out subsistence, often simply to survive, poor people do not have any surplus resources left to devote to organizational activities. When does a woman with five children to care for, water and firewood to fetch and a field to tend get time to go to meetings in the neighbouring village? In addition poor people often do not have the kinds of resources, particularly skills and information that are needed to address many of the problems they face. Lack of money or income is the most immediate and obvious resource based obstacle poor people face. However, there are others that are in some ways more important as they are not only obstacles to enabling people to organize effectively, but are also the underlying reasons why many poor people do not have access to incomes”.

The “Voices of the Poor” (2000a: 31) study referred to experiences related by poor people from different parts of the world. In Latvia, for example, poor people reported that their children experienced shame, stigma and humiliation in school when they were stigmatized because they received free lunches and were dressed in second-hand clothing and were not able to purchase school materials. According to May, *et al.* (1997: 18) a child who experiences poverty is vulnerable to the risk of impaired physical and mental development. Even if the child suffers no permanent physical damage, the disadvantage is evident. Often children from poor households are kept out of school to assist the parents or caregivers with the task of providing for the family. If a child is hungry, concentration becomes difficult at school and at the same time if there is no electricity at home; studying in the evenings is not possible and schoolwork suffer as a result of the poor conditions.

The World Bank Group study (2000b: 2) reported on a group of young men in Jamaica. They ranked lack of self-confidence as the second biggest impact of poverty and made the following statement: “Poverty means we don’t believe in self, we hardly travel out of the community so frustrated, just locked up in the house all day”. The World Bank Group study (2000b) further emphasized that poor people spoke about loss, grief, anguish, worry, madness, frustration, anger, alienation, humiliation, shame, loneliness, depression, anxiety and fear. This study revealed the importance of psychological factors in poor people’s life choices and opportunities. Their inability to fully participate in community life leads to a breakdown of social relationships and networks.

According to Belshaw, *et al.* (2001:40) poor people’s definitions of well-being are holistic. The good life is seen as multidimensional, with both material and psychological dimensions. It includes a dependable livelihood, peace of mind, good health, and belonging to a community. It encompasses safety; freedom of choice and action; food; and care of family and spirit. It is life with dignity.

In a review of the literature with regard to poverty, poor men and women very often expressed a sense of hopelessness, powerlessness, humiliation, and marginalization. Widespread corruption, from Africa, Eastern Europe, Asia and South America, were reported by the World Bank study. The World Bank Group study (2000d: 1), "What the Poor Say" report, mentioned that poor people described four pervasive and systemic problems that affected their lives adversely almost everywhere: corruption, violence, powerlessness, and insecure livelihood. Corruption is a fundamental poverty issue, not just a problem affecting high levels of governments and business. The different studies revealed how pervasive low-level corruption and lack of access to justice and protection affected poor people's lives – the problems of corruption, "connections", and violation of basic human rights with impunity were voiced repeatedly. The World Bank Group study (2000d: 2) emphasized that in country after country, poor people spoke of corruption in the distribution of various commodities that they desperately needed. Seeds, medicines and social assistance for the destitute and vulnerable were extremely difficult or impossible to obtain. Poor people reported on pervasive corruption in every sphere of their daily existence, namely: corruption in getting loans; corruption in getting teachers to teach; corruption in customs and border crossings; corruption in the construction of roads; corruption in getting permission to move in and out of cities or stay in certain areas; corruption in street and market trading; and corruption in obtaining identity cards. The World Bank Group study (2000d) reported that in many countries, poor people's access to justice and courts was a distant dream because of lack of information, distance from the courts, and a strong belief (based on experience) that only money buys justice. According to Belshaw, *et al.* (2001:44:) problems of corruption at the local level, sometimes called petty corruption, were widespread. Such problems may seem small, but from the perspective of those with limited resources, petty corruption plays a significant role in poverty. Hundreds of incidents of corruption were reported as poor people tried to seek health care, education for their children, claim social assistance, get paid, obtain justice, seek police protection, and trade in the marketplace.

With reference to corruption, Camerer (1997: 1) cited the following report: “As far back as 1989, the authors of “Uprooting poverty in South Africa: Report of the Carnegie Inquiry on poverty and development in South Africa” predicted that corruption would loom larger in a new South Africa. Noting the high degree of corruption bred by apartheid, they argued that even if a democratic government gained power, the old clerks would not necessarily learn new habits. Unfortunately, their prediction was uncannily accurate. Since the transition, corruption has burgeoned in both the public and private sectors; besides violent crime, it is probably the factor, which most preoccupies those who express concern about South Africa’s future. Analysts have warned that corruption is the single biggest threat to the Reconstruction and Development Programme, and the establishment of a human rights culture. The comments from the analysts underline the fact that, contrary to perceptions in some quarters that the effects of corruption are largely confined to the middle classes, this phenomenon – particularly in the public sector – has considerable impact on the poor.

From Georgia, the following example illustrated the prevailing problem of corruption. Poor farmers equate privatization with theft, and reported that the best land is distributed to those who work for the police, courts, school directors and businessmen, while poor people received land that is not irrigated, land that is saline and less fertile soil, often many kilometres from their homes making it difficult to work the land and protect their harvest (Narayan, *et al.* 2000a: 32). From the Ukraine, street vendors reported their experiences in powerlessness where the police are silent observers or associated with the gangs and criminal organizations that control the markets (Narayan, *et al.* 2000a: 33). (Compare Alcock, 1997: 94.)

3.2.4 Poverty and state-provided infrastructure

The absence of basic infrastructure – particularly roads, bridges, pathways and rail-transport, water and sanitation, electricity, communications and health

facilities – which facilitates and integrates economic and social activities, emerged as critical (SANGOCO, 1998: 4). According to Booth, *et al.* (2000: 9) geographical isolation and difficulty of access by national roads, rail or other transport infrastructure can limit poor communities' participation in labour and product markets and have a negative effect on their economic opportunities. These authors emphasized that in different ways, inadequate transport conditions can contribute to both the causes of lack of income and consumption and the inability to accumulate private and social assets. Edmonds (in Booth, *et al.*, 2000: 39) made a valuable contribution to the debate regarding the importance of infrastructure with the following statement: "... poor access is one of the characteristics of poverty. In the first place, it has its effect at the most basic level of living. If there is poor access to health services, people will remain unhealthy; children will die; and any epidemic will be likely to have catastrophic results. If there is poor access to clean water, again health will suffer. If there is poor access to basic information the household will be unaware of ideas and technology that might help them to lift their level of living. And if there is poor access to education, children will probably share in the future limitations that confront their parents today". Appleby, Colon and Hamilton (2001: 30) contributed to this debate and were of the opinion that people do not choose to be poor or working class. They are limited and confined by the opportunities afforded or denied them by a social system.

Throughout the World Bank study (Narayan, *et al.*, 2000a: 37) poor people discussed the importance of key services such as roads, transportation, water, electricity, health care, marketplaces and schools. Poor transportation infrastructure also compounds problems with obtaining service provisions such as healthcare and education. According to Klugman (2001: 11) low educational attainment, illness, malnutrition and high fertility are major contributors to income poverty. Education and health capabilities are among the primary dimensions of individual well-being. (Compare Bhola, 2001: 12.) With regard to the provision of education facilities, Narayan, *et al.* (2000a) reported that while literacy was

viewed as important, schooling received mixed reviews, occasionally highly valued but often notably irrelevant in the lives of poor people. Narayan, *et al.* (2000a: 38) with reference to the study done in South Africa (1998) reported that in one of the South African villages, the costs associated with transporting children to schools are identified as a cause of poverty. (Compare SANGOCO, 1998: 4.) Booth, *et al.* (2000: 9) stated in this regard that the lack of transport services and infrastructure could contribute to the inability to strengthen human capabilities. According to May, *et al.* (1997: 20) education is judged by the poor in terms of its relevance as well as by issues of access and quality – and that relevance is seen primarily in terms of the likelihood of eventual access to employment. May, *et al.* (1997: 20) reported that in terms of specific problems over access to education, these could be grouped into the following broad areas:

- The costs of education whereby the amount and timing of school fees can be a significant barrier to accessing education.
- Lack of physical access to schools is a significant barrier for many poor children.
- Poor planning and resources of schools in some areas, especially schools located on farms.
- Factors linked to gender such as teenage pregnancy are major issues for girls' access to education.

The principal asset of the poor is labour time, and education increases the productivity of this asset. May, *et al.* (1997: 20) emphasized that at the individual level, a better education means a better income, and at the aggregate level, a better-educated population leads to a higher economic growth.

Ray (in Braun, Gidwani and Sugnet, 2003: 1) entered this debate and emphasized the essence of this discussion by stating the following: “No one in their right mind would ever suggest that economic development be identified, in a definitional sense, with the level or growth per capita income...development is also the removal of poverty and undernutrition: it is the increase in life expectancy, it is access to sanitation, clean drinking water, and health services; it

is the reduction of infant mortality; it is increased access to knowledge and schooling, and literacy in particular". It is therefore evident from the above that community poverty is related to infrastructure and service provision. According to the study "Voices of the Poor" (Narayan, *et al.*, 2000a: 39) the inadequate supply and high costs of electricity and telephones were the most frequently cited infrastructure problems. In addition to isolating communities from other infrastructure, lack of roads can also deny communities political access. Water security and sanitation distinguish the poor from the non-poor. Access to water is important for bathing and drinking as well as for agricultural production. Diseases like polio and malaria are common when safe access to water is not secured. Kehler (2000: 6) referred to a cholera outbreak in KwaZulu-Natal in September 2000, as a result of the lack of access to clean water.

May, *et al.* (1997: 21) reported on the higher prevalence of diseases of poverty among lower income groups, including tuberculosis, diarrhoea and fever. In addition, the much higher rates of mental disability among the poor are an indication of poor mental health facilities as well as the likely influence of violence and trauma on many poor people. May, *et al.* (1997: 23) reported that access to water, electricity and sanitation impact directly on quality of life. Access to clean water and sanitation has the most obvious and direct consumption benefits in reducing mortality and poor health and increasing the productive capacity of the poor. These authors offered the example of the poor (especially women) committing large shares of their income or time to obtaining water and firewood. This time would be better used in childcare or income-generating activities.

According to Booth, *et al.* (2000: 10) poverty creates an environment for individuals, which separates them from decision making in the broader society, participating in cultural events and the development of social relations. In their opinion a lack of transport services and infrastructure can be a contributory factor to creating an environment characterized by voicelessness and lack of links with the broader society. Booth, *et al.* further stated that a lack of income and

consumption, inability to accumulate private and social assets and inability to strengthen human capabilities all combine to increase insecurity and vulnerability to natural, social and economic shocks. Inadequate transport services and infrastructure constrain livelihood strategy options and restrict poor people's capacity to cope with, respond to and adapt to risks, shocks and violence.

3.2.5 Assets of the poor

Poor people focus on assets rather than income and link their lack of physical, human, social, and environmental assets to their vulnerability and exposure to risk. According to the study "Voices of the Poor" (Narayan, *et al.*, 2000a: 39) poor people rarely speak about income, but they do speak extensively about assets that are important to them. Poor people manage a diverse set of assets, physical, human, social, and environmental. These assets include a broad range of tangible and potential resources, both material and social, that individuals, households, and communities draw from in times of need or crises. The four primary classifications of assets are *physical capital*, which includes land, a house, household and personal belongings; *human capital*, which includes health, education, training, and labour power; *social capital*, which refers to the extent and nature of social networks such as family, neighbours, and associations; and *environmental assets* such as forests, rivers and oceans, wildlife and minerals. Assets function at several broadly distinguished levels: the individual, the household, and the community level. The four types of capital are of particular importance and relevance to this research study.

3.2.5.1 Physical capital

According to Booth, *et al.* (2000: 12) physical capital comprises the basic infrastructure (transport, shelter, water, energy and communications) and the production equipment and means, which enable people to pursue their livelihoods. The Department for International Development (in Kassim and

Hendriks, 2002: 33) stated that sustainable livelihoods could be defined as follows: “A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintains or enhances its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resources base”. Kassim and Hendriks (2002: 33) proclaimed that livelihood sustainability is an important precondition for sustainable development as it means that progress in poverty reduction is lasting and households are not dependent upon external support. With reference to physical capital, Narayan, *et al.* (2000a: 40) reported that the ownership of, or access to land is commonly identified as a key asset. Access to land and land rights, especially in rural areas, are at the core of much of the discussions on poverty.

3.2.5.2 Human capital

Carkhuff (in Charlton, 2000: 33) provided a concise, accurate definition of human capital. He stated the following: “Human capital, defined as the skill, dexterity and knowledge of the population has become the critical input that determines the rate of growth of the economy and the wellbeing of the population”. Booth, *et al.* (2000: 12) expressed similar ideas and in their opinion human capital comprises skills, knowledge, the ability to work (labour), and good health. These are all important to the ability to pursue different livelihood strategies. Bynner (2002: 3) supported this view and stated that human capital embraces the knowledge and skills that carry a premium in the labour market; thus individuals, who acquire human capital through education and training, and show returns on their investment in terms of improved earnings. Employers gain through improved productivity. Narayan, *et al.* (2000a: 42) stated that for those lacking material and productive assets, labour power is the core component of most survival strategies. It is for that reason that it is perhaps the most important human capital asset. The “Voices of the Poor” study (compare Narayan, *et al.*, 2000a: 42)

revealed that more than anything else, poor people dread serious illness within the family. Illness removes individuals from the labour pool and can push a household into poverty. Where formal institutions provide inadequate safety nets, the illness of one person within the family can affect the economic stability of the entire household. The Ghana study indicated that disease, sometimes followed by premature death, was often the cause of extreme poverty. Very often it was reported that poor health (including disability) was perceived as a characteristic of the poorest people. Leon, Walt and Gilson (2001: 5) were of the opinion that the understanding of the aetiological mechanisms that drive socioeconomic differences in health varies according to disease and context. Some of the links between absolute poverty and ill health are well understood. For example, poor housing, sanitation and hygiene can lead to increased exposure to communicable diseases, and malnourishment reduces resistance to infection. However, even among those living in absolute poverty, there seem to be differences in the extent to which parents are able to use their scant resources to influence their children's morbidity and mortality. Leon, *et al.* emphasized that this underlines the need to develop people's capacities and resourcefulness within broader strategies to reduce the effects of absolute deprivation on health. Leon, *et al.* (2001: 2) reported that poverty and ill health impair the capability of individuals to realize their own goals – and redressing that damage cannot be reduced to the economics of wealth creation.

- **Literacy** is a crucial component of building human capital. Narayan, *et al.* (2000a: 43) reported that literacy, or “the thirst for letters,” is valued everywhere. According to Barberton, *et al.* (1998: 255-256) levels of literacy and numeracy among poor people are very low. Groener (2001: 2) supported this view and stated in this regard: “Analysis of the statistics provided by Statistics South Africa shows that 64% of adults, who are unemployed have no education. These statistics seem to suggest a significant correlation between unemployment and illiteracy. As the unemployed and the illiterate are usually among the poorest in a society, it can be assumed that illiteracy is

also an indicator of poverty”. Barberton, *et al.* (1998: 255-256) expressed the concern that discrimination within the education system, is responsible for the low levels of literacy. Despite improving access for poor people recently, vast inequalities in access and quality persist in the education system. (Compare Stromquist, 2001: 1.) The following are crucial issues in the education, and more specifically the adult education and life-long learning debate:

- Low literacy effectively isolates people; limiting their contact with the outside world to those people they are able to speak directly to. This means poor people struggling in one area are unlikely to be able to link up effectively with poor people in other areas, regionally, nationally or internationally. Their combined power remains untapped.
- Awareness, through literature, of what is happening elsewhere can assist people in their struggle locally, but low levels of literacy and lack of access to such information inhibits this.
- Low literacy also means people are unable to get access to information essential for effective lobbying by way of newspapers, magazines, government notices, policy papers, bills of Parliament, information on development opportunities and agreements. (Compare Nuwagaba, 2001:2.)
- Low literacy complicates normal organizational activities like giving notice of meetings, taking minutes, using computers, developing position papers, planning and monitoring. It also makes engagement in lobbying activities difficult, as this usually requires the writing of letters, faxes and electronic correspondence.
- Low literacy also leads to the concentration of responsibilities on a few people who can read and write. Apart from overburdening such people, this can lead to a dilution of democratic accountability.
- Lack of numeracy skills inhibit people’s ability to engage in debates and processes that involve numbers in various ways, such as budgets, financial forecasting, and needs assessments. These are often instrumental in deciding how resources are allocated.

- Information is an important source of power. Illiteracy denies people cognitive skills to decode and adopt technology, access to information, knowledge and skills concerning better methods of food production and income generation, soil conservation, pest and disease control and marketing opportunities. Poor people by and large lack access to information that could assist them. These include information on rights protected under the new Constitution, where to get legal assistance, information on elections and structures of governance, how to gain access to pensions, housing grants and small business loans, on donor funding and development initiatives, and on creative organizational responses to development challenges and struggle to empower communities. (Compare Nuwagaba. 2001: 2 and Mayfield, 1997: 62.)
- Low literacy is a significant barrier to the dissemination of information in printed form.

According to Belshaw, *et al.* (2001: 148) one of the major goals that governments should adopt to combat poverty in Africa, is the achievement of functional literacy and numeracy. Belshaw, *et al.* (2001) noted that it has been found that people who complete a basic education earn significantly more than people without schooling. These authors suggest, therefore, that basic education should be made universal, free, and compulsory. There should also be functional literacy programs aimed at reducing adult illiteracy rates. Belshaw, *et al.* (2001) stressed that access to education is essential for sustainable development. Women and girls comprise 65 percent of the world's illiterate. Gender-sensitive education should be promoted to ensure sustainability. Rural and urban people, especially the poor, should benefit from education that is relevant to their needs. (Compare International Women's Caucus for the World Summit on Sustainable Development.)

Barberton, *et al.* (1998: 257) were concerned about poor people's lack of appropriate skills and indicated the following concerns:

- Underlying poor people's low levels of income is the fact that they have been denied the opportunity, either by law or circumstances to develop appropriate marketable skills.
- Lack of skills impedes poor people's capacity to participate effectively in institutions of governance and to organize their own initiatives and campaigns.
- The important role of skills training and development of people's capacity are highlighted. Skills training programmes would enable poor people, particularly poor women to become financially independent. The most important skill people need is literacy.

The "Voices of the Poor" study (Narayan, 2000a: 43) revealed that in Togo, India, Swaziland, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Vietnam people believed in the value of education and schooling. Investment in education is seen as the most important way out of poverty. Poor people recognize that literacy would help them manage their lives better. Literacy is defined as the ability to solve problems that are relevant and important to the learners in dealing with their families, communities, and the outside world. According to Stromquist (2001: 1) the value of literacy is as follows: "The virtues attached to literacy skills are undeniable. The ability to read and write creates numerous positive impacts and outcomes, generating both individual and social benefits. For women, education offers both promise and verifiable results".

According to Lalthapersad-Pillay (2001: 16) investment in human capital is the essential component of a long-term poverty alleviation scheme. Spending on education might have limited immediate benefits in the short run, but it accelerates development in the long run. Training people is not sufficient; it is important to provide the environment to facilitate the application of newly acquired skills. Better education, health and nutrition can help dissipate the core of poverty. Studies show that human capital investment, especially provision of education, can help minimize the primal causes of poverty. Improvements in

health, education and nutrition reinforce each other. Lalthapersad-Pillay (2001: 16) wrote that in education, government's have tended to more readily finance higher-level training at the expense of services that would benefit the poor. Evidence indicates that tertiary education yields the lowest social rate of return but many countries spend a disproportionate share of their education funds at that level. The problem in education is not strictly confined to enrolment rates because in practice, low enrolment rates exist in conjunction with high failure and dropout rates. According to Lalthapersad-Pillay (2001: 16) in low income countries more than 40 percent of those who enter primary school fail to finish.

Narayan (2000a: 43) reported that in Togo, people believe that illiteracy limits the ability of individuals to secure employment, follow written instructions, and take advantage of government services or access to credit. In this regard the following was reported from the India (1997) study (Narayan, *et al.*, 2000a: 43): "They understand that illiteracy has made them more dependent, less enterprising and more vulnerable to the machinations of the educated". It is often difficult for families to invest in education. Very often, parents make considerable sacrifices, including rationing food to reduce household expenses so that their children can go to school.

3.2.5.3 Social capital

Broadly defined, social capital refers to the benefits of membership within a social network, relationships of trust and access of wider institutions of society (Booth, *et al.*, 2000: 12). Bynner (2002: 3) mentioned three elements of social capital, namely: bridging, bonding and linking. Bynner (2002: 3) stated that bonding reflects the relations within communities; bridging stresses the need for links across communities and linking itself reflects the need for bridging across the different socio-economic strata of society, i.e. strong social relations within and across social classes and groups. The accessibility of additional resources via social connections enables poor people to meet everyday needs. In addition,

because poor people can rarely afford formal insurance to protect them in the event of crises such as natural disasters, financial crises, health emergencies and unemployment, reciprocal social relationships provide wells of financial, social, or political support that can be drawn from during times of need. Although friends, neighbours, professional ties, and links that extend beyond the community are critical assets for improving welfare, the most frequently mentioned coping mechanism for poor people is the extended family.

When poor people help one another, their scant resources may limit the gains made. It would therefore appear to be that social capital provides a hedge but rarely by itself lifts poor people out of poverty. The message appears to be that social capital is a two-way street. Social networks provide benefits such as access to scarce resources, but membership also entails having claims made upon one's own resources. Narayan, *et al.* (2000a: 45) reported that poor people from Mali felt that accumulating assets at the individual or household level was difficult or impossible because of the claims of family members. This kind of relationship within the extended family may even affect fertility decisions. A person might make the responsible choice to have fewer children in order to limit the drain on the family's resources, but in the end have to care for the children of relatives. It would therefore appear to be that while on the one hand the extended family is a powerful safety net, on the other it discourages behaviour that in the long run would contribute to alleviating poverty such as productive investments or limited family size. The levels of social capital are constantly in flux. Without connections to resources beyond poor communities, poor people's networks provide survival and defence in a struggle to meet the demands of daily existence.

3.2.5.4 Environmental capital/ Natural capital

According to Booth, *et al.* (2000: 12) useful resources flow from land, water, wildlife, minerals and biodiversity. Environmental management is an integral part

of poverty reduction. Poverty is a major cause of environmental destruction. In poor countries, because of the close relationship between poverty, population growth, and environmental degradation, the most important actions to conserve natural resources are those that are aimed at stabilizing populations and alleviating poverty.

Dodds, (2000: 124) referred to the conclusion drawn by the United Nations Environment Programme, when it was stated that the two basic causes of the environmental crises are poverty and misuse of wealth: the poor majority is forced to destroy, in short term, the very resources they will need for their long-term subsistence, while the rich minority makes demands on resources that are unsustainable in the long term, thus transferring the costs to the poor.

According to Goodstein (2002: 450- 453) and Dodds (2000: 126) sustainability cannot be achieved unless poverty is directly addressed, because poverty and environmental degradation go hand in hand. These authors mentioned some of the close connections between poverty and the environment, namely:

- For poor people, many environmental problems are problems of poverty. The biggest environmental health threat facing most people in poor countries is unsafe drinking water, compounded by inadequate sewage facilities. Around 1 billion people are without access to safe water, and over 1.7 billion are without adequate sanitation. Billions of illnesses each year and millions of deaths are attributed to water pollution. Exposure to indoor air pollution from cooking and heating sources rank close to urban air pollution as a concern. Some 400 million people worldwide are exposed to unsafe levels of indoor smoke, as against 700 million for outdoor air pollutants. Exposure to indoor pollution is typically more intense.
- Poor people cannot afford to conserve resources. Out of economic necessity, poor people often put an unsustainable burden on the natural capital in their immediate environment. Urban residents scour the

immediate countryside for fuel – firewood or animal dung – leading to deforestation or the elimination of fertilizer sources. Landless farmers are pushed into over-farming small plots, farming on steep mountain slopes that soon wash out, or farming in clear-cut rain forests incapable of sustaining agriculture.

- Population growth slows with increased income. The final link between poverty and the environment lies in income growth as a means of population control. As societies grow wealthier, almost universally families have fewer children.

Laltharpersad-Pillay (2001: 5) supported this view and indicated that poverty and population growth reinforces each other in a number of ways. By-products of poverty such as low wages (especially for women), inadequate education and high infant mortality, contribute to high fertility rates and thus to rapid population growth. Nationally, higher fertility negatively affects educational funding and labour market absorption rates. At a household level, high fertility poses a danger to the health of both mother and child. Closely spaced pregnancies, harm mothers, and subsequently affect the child's health at birth and in critical years.

In many countries the rural poor depend heavily on common property natural resources. Safe drinking water, fuel wood, grasslands for cattle, wetlands for fish, are essential for subsistence and cash income. According to Narayan, *et al.* (2000a: 46) a large number of the world's poorest people face challenges native to life in environmentally fragile areas such as arid and tropical lands with limited soil fertility. Without access to other lands, increasing numbers of poor people have moved onto steep hillsides and low-lying coastal areas. Without major investments in erosion and flood control, these lands are often not suitable for farming or housing. In an increasing number of these fragile sites, mounting population pressures and the concomitant stresses on the environment create a downward spiral of impoverishment and resource degradation that includes erosion, reduced soil fertility, depleted marine and forestry resources, and

declining availability of fresh water. The “Voices of the Poor” study (Narayan, *et al.*, 2000a: 46) reported that in Ghana the poorest rural communities are those where the natural resource base has become extremely depleted as a result of high population densities. Narayan, *et al.* (2000a: 46) indicated that many traditional coping strategies such as gathering wood, hunting “bush meat”, fishing, and harvesting herbs, fruits, or nuts rely on common resources. Pressure on these resources is intensifying, however, and several reports documented that these resources are disappearing. Shrinking tree coverage in large portions of Benin has meant that poor people can no longer gather wild food and hunt during periods of food shortage. (Compare Narayan, *et al.*, 2000a: 46.)

Resource degradation is a fact of life for many of the people interviewed in the “Voices of the Poor” study (Narayan, *et al.*, 2000a: 47). Resource degradation not only erodes the assets and productivity of individual households, but it can also impoverish entire communities. The urban poor are also vulnerable to other kinds of environmental risks. Poor people are often forced by circumstances beyond their control to build shelters on steep hillsides and marshes that can be easily swept away by mudslides and floods. According to the “Voices of the Poor”, South Africa, 1998 study, in urban areas, where the poor live in closely built shack settlements, fire is a real hazard due to widespread use of paraffin and use of cardboard and wood as building materials. Extreme weather conditions such as droughts and floods can devastate communities worldwide, but it is often the poor people residing in marginal areas and precarious housing who are most exposed to such shocks. In 1998, heavy rains, landslides, flooding, hailstorms, cyclones, thunder squalls, and drought buffeted more than 60,000 villages in India. The intense weather patterns exacted a massive financial toll that exceeded the previous combined five years of relief funds. Poor people were the worst affected (Narayan, *et al.*, 2000a: 47). Disasters can also exacerbate other sources of vulnerability and overwhelm traditional coping mechanisms. Poor people in Swaziland and Zambia, see drought as among their most severe problems. Similarly, residents of the Bolangir district in India reported that it was

impossible to recover from the five-year cycles of drought due to extreme losses of crops, indebtedness, starvation, land-alienation, the sale of assets, and irreparable damage to nearby forest resources. During droughts, household consumption falls by at least one-half (Narayan, *et al.*, 2000a: 48).

3.2.6 Assets and vulnerability

According to the Poverty and Inequality Report (1998: 3) poverty is not a static condition; individuals, households or communities may be vulnerable to poverty as a result of shocks and crises (uncontrollable events which harm livelihoods and food security) and long-term trends (such as racial and gender discrimination, environmental degradation and macroeconomic trends). Vulnerability to poverty is therefore characterized by an inability to devise an appropriate coping or management strategy in times of crisis. Poverty may also involve social exclusion in either an economic dimension (exclusion from the labour market and opportunities to earn income) or a purely social dimension (exclusion from decision-making, social services, and access to community and family support).

Although poverty and vulnerability are often related, they are not synonymous. Some groups may be at risk of becoming poor because of inherent vulnerabilities (i.e., different types of discrimination based on class, gender, ethnicity, or factors such as disability, region of residence and family configuration. Furthermore, certain combinations of vulnerability may be strongly correlated with poverty, such as female-headed households or families living in remote and isolated mountainous regions. But not all members of a particular vulnerable group are invariably poor – hence the need to distinguish between the two when dealing with indicators. In short, poverty relates to deprivation, while vulnerability is a function of external risks, shocks, stresses and internal defencelessness (Human Development Report, 1997: 13). According to Hulme, *et al.* (2001: 7), it can be argued that what poor people are concerned about is not that their level of

income, consumption or capabilities are low, but that they are likely to experience highly stressful declines in these levels, to the point of premature death.

According to May, *et al.* (1997: 29) vulnerability refers to having (or not having) secured and sustainable access to essential commodities, services and other conditions for an acceptable life (e.g. physical safety of the person). These authors were of the opinion that seasonal stress is an important dimension of vulnerability and has long been recognised as a feature of the livelihoods of the poor in many contexts. May, *et al.* (1997: 29) offered the example of poor woman in KwaZulu-Natal, where it is indicated that the months when they “struggled the most” were September, October, August and July (in that order). The components of this recurring crisis were lack of home produced food, especially maize, which is exhausted in this season, combined with low levels of income from casual work, and high levels of expenditure required for buying seeds, fertilizer and obtaining tractor ploughing services. The implications are that cash resources have to be spilt between the purchase of food, and investment into the forthcoming season. At the beginning of the year, in January/February school fees are due and income is low. In the Northern Province, a similar cycle was reported with the “lean season” in the winter months with malnutrition rising to a peak in July and August.

The “Voices of the Poor” study (Narayan, *et al.*, 2000a: 48) revealed that poor people’s fears pertain to lack of assets and anxiety about their ability to survive in increasingly unpredictable and insecure environments. This includes economic, social and environmental uncertainty. Narayan, *et al.* (2000a: 48) was of the opinion that vulnerability is best understood as a lack of key assets, exposing individuals, households, and communities to increased or disproportionate risk of impoverishment. It is always the conjunction of many factors that causes vulnerability. A participant from Swaziland (in Narayan, *et al.*, 2000a: 48) that had suffered from drought and cattle rustling explained: “A lot of people were sending their children to school by using the cattle. Come plowing time, the oxen could be

used. Come planting time they would sell the cattle to buy seed and fertilizer. Come drought, a few cattle would be sold to tide the family over till the next harvest. Now with so many kraals empty (due to theft), the kids will drop out of school, people will have a problem with farm inputs, and we will be more vulnerable to hunger during the drought". From the "Voices of the Poor" study, (Narayan, *et al.*, 2000a: 51) it is evident that assets used by the poor to mediate social, economic, and environmental adversity are multidimensional in nature and are constituted by a broad array of tangible and intangible physical, human, social and environmental resources. Families that lack certain key assets may not necessarily be poor, but nonetheless may be extremely vulnerable in times of need or crisis. Assets available to the poor are very often scarce. Ability to draw upon assets in times of need is directly dependent upon the power relations governing these resources at a number of levels from the household to the regional/formal institutional level.

There are often strong gender differences. The mobilization of assets involves a negotiation of power and control over resources. The "Voices of the Poor" study (Narayan, *et al.*, 2000a: 51) concluded that the poor tend to mention income only infrequently relative to assets such as membership within kinship and social networks, health, labour power, land, and other resources that make self-provisioning possible. The Ghana report mentioned that a secure livelihood is frequently more important than the incentive to maximize income. The data from the abovementioned study provided compelling evidence that for many of the world's poor, monetary income is only a part of a much broader array of potential assets. Social relations are assets, and because the poor have weak bargaining power, the organizational capacity of poor people and the quality of processes of intervention are important (Narayan, *et al.*, 2000a: 51). According to Klugman (2001: 12) insecurity can be understood as vulnerability to a decline in well-being. The shock triggering the decline can occur at the micro or household level (e.g. illness, death); at the meso or community level (pollution, riots); and/or at the national or international level (national calamities or macroeconomic shocks).

From the above, the aspect of vulnerability appears to be extremely important in assessing the economic, social and environmental sustainability of poor communities.

3.3 THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The concepts of poverty emerging from the perspective of sociological deprivations are rooted in underlying structural inequities and inherent disadvantages. They are based on observations that even when resources are flowing into sectors dominated by the poor, the latter may not be able to take full advantage of them because of structural impediments. These constraints hamper access by the poor to “external” assets, such as credit, land, infrastructure and common property (i.e. the natural environment), and “internal” assets, such as health, nutrition and education. The fundamental causal factors lie in power structures and governance issues, as well as in the inequities imbedded in macropolicy frameworks and distributional systems. In this regard a valuable statement was made by the Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, 1975, cited in Saunders (1998: 6): “If poverty is seen as a result of structural inequality within society, any serious attempt to eliminate poverty must seek to change those conditions which produce it. Although individual members of society are reluctant to accept responsibility for the existence of poverty, its continuance is a judgment on the society which condones the conditions causing poverty”.

Specialized government departments such as social welfare and the services provided by civil society play an invaluable role in developing policies to relieve poverty and prevent the suffering of so many poor people. The root causes of poverty, however, are so complex that it is necessary to look beyond specialized responses and poor communities themselves to find them. They lie in the structure of society itself, and the general public’s tacit willingness to support this structure.

Poverty eradication requires a holistic approach to overcome the attitudes, policies and structural obstacles that engender exclusion. Only by taking into account the existence, the voice and the hidden potential of the poorest people in all spheres of life (political, economic, social, cultural) will society create the conditions necessary to eradicate extreme poverty. Father Joseph Wresinski, founder of the “Aide à Toute Détresse” (ATD) [aid for all in distress] association made a valuable contribution when he stated that: “Extreme poverty is the work of human beings, and only human beings can destroy it” (International Movement ATD Fourth World, 2002: 3).

Inequality and poverty affect each other directly and indirectly through their link with economic growth and progress. Whereas poverty refers to different forms of deprivation that can be expressed in a variety of terms (i.e., income, basic needs, human capabilities), equity is concerned with distribution within a population group. Despite the clear distinction between the two concepts, analysis of poverty often employs indicators of equity because of inherent linkages between the two.

According to May, *et al.* (1997: 4) the term “equality” can be regarded as referring to a state of social organization that enables or gives equal access to resources and opportunities to all members of a society. It would therefore appear to be extremely important for a society to be structured in such a way that equal access to all spheres of daily existence are available to all citizens. Within the economic dimension this would mean that the individual would have the ability to earn an income, to consume, to have assets and access to food and shelter, and to productive physical and financial resources and to maintain a sustainable livelihood. With regard to the human dimension or human development, the individual would have access to education (the ability to read, write and communicate), and be free from disease and health-related handicaps – these capabilities derive from access to health, education, clean water and shelter. Within the political dimension the individual should have the ability to understand

and have a voice in public policies and priorities. The individual should enjoy basic human and political rights and freedoms and not be subjected to abuse by state officials. Within the socio-cultural dimension equality would imply that the individual would have the ability to enjoy dignity and be considered a valued member of wider society, as well as the ability to practice own cultural traditions. (Compare United Nations Capital Development Fund, 2002.)

According to May, *et al.* (1997: 4-5) ensuring equal access to education, employment opportunities, political power and decision making forums, can contribute to reducing inequality. These authors (1997: 5) stated that when measuring concepts of poverty and inequality, objective social indicators, such as income levels, consumption expenditure, life expectancy and housing standards, as well as subjective indicators, which are based upon attitudes, needs and aspirations gathered directly from people, come into play.

The Poverty and Inequality in South Africa Summary Report (1998), made it clear that effective governance can only take place if state institutions function properly and are responsive to the needs of individuals, especially the poor and marginalized. Other processes are equally important, such as a culture of human rights, the rule of law, gender equality and open electoral processes. The Poverty and Inequality Report (PIR) emphasized that democratic reforms do not necessarily help the poor unless the institutions of government are improved in terms of being mechanisms for popular participation, the administration of justice, and bureaucracies stimulated by incentives and held accountable by performance measures. Institutional failure can undermine attempts to address poverty and inequality through the rules and structures of the institutions themselves, through the non-delivery of the services the institutions are meant to provide, and through the behaviour and attitude of the people within the institutions. The success of development initiatives thus largely depends on the strengths and weaknesses of the underlying institutional environment. Institutions can be assessed against four criteria: efficiency (i.e., cost-effective delivery);

equity (development must reach the poor); adaptability (as society changes, institutions must be able to recognize the need to reorganize and restructure priorities); and accountability (institutions and their officials must be held responsible for their actions).

The United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report, (Summary, 2002: 59) reported that around the world, discussions on development are placing more emphasis on institutions and governance. These debates have focused on the effectiveness of public institutions, and the procedures in place for making markets function properly and promoting growth. Debates have focused on a variety of issues; namely, professionalism, transparency of tax systems, the capacity of the judicial systems and enforcing commercial contracts. The Human Development Report (2002: 59) stated that these issues are important for human development. When institutions function badly, poor and vulnerable people tend to suffer most. Human development requires more than raising incomes. Governance for human development requires more than having effective public institutions. Good governance also requires fostering fair, accountable institutions that protect human rights and basic freedoms. It is not only about whether judges are trained, but whether they observe due process and are blind to differences of race and class. It is not only about whether schools are built, but whether students in poor district are as well equipped as students in affluent areas. The Human Development Report (2002: 59) contributed the following statement: “Advancing human development requires governance that is democratic in both form and substance – for the people and by the people”.

Democratic governance is valuable in its own right, and can advance human development. The reasons are threefold: The first being, enjoying political freedom, and participating in the decisions that shape one’s life are fundamental human rights – they are part of human development in their own right. In Brunei, Dar es Salaam, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab

Emirates women's right to vote has never been recognised. Regardless of their income, this significantly restricts their choices in life. Democracy is the only political regime that guarantees political and civil freedoms and the right to participate. The second reason is that democracy helps protect people from economic and political catastrophes such as famines and descents into chaos. It can mean the difference between life and death. The Human Development Report (2002: 60) stated that since 1995, an estimated 2 million people, 10% of the population, have died of famine in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In 1958-61 nearly 30 million people died of famine in China. Since achieving independence in 1947, India has not had a single famine, even in the face of severe crop failures. Food production was hard hit during the 1973 drought in Maharashtra. Elected politicians responded with public works programmes for 5 million people and averted a famine. The third reason is that democratic governance can trigger a virtuous cycle of development – as political freedom empowers people to campaign for policies that expand social and economic opportunities. Open debates help communities shape their priorities. From Indonesia to Mexico to Poland, moves towards democratization and political expression have helped produce this kind of virtuous cycle. A free press and civil society activism gave people new ways to participate in policy decisions and debates (Compare Human Development Report, 2002: 60.)

3.3.1 Poverty and exclusion

According to Lok-Dessallien (1999: 5) there is no broad consensus on the definition of social exclusion, or its relationship to poverty. This author stated in this regard that at one end of the spectrum there are those who define social exclusion within the concept of poverty, focusing on those aspects of social deprivation that impede people from participating fully in their society and its development. Lok-Dessallien (1999: 6) further explained that at the other end of the spectrum, there are those whose notion of social exclusion encompasses a much broader range of issues, including poverty itself. Lok-Dessallien made it

clear that if the definition of poverty were narrow, expressed in terms of a lack of material possessions and income, then the definition of social exclusion would be considered in broad terms, including material deprivation. If the definition of poverty is multidimensional, then it is likely that social exclusion would refer more specifically to issues of participation, empowerment and social rights.

3.3.2 Characteristics of chronic poverty

According to Hulme, *et al.* (2001: 8) the defining feature of “chronic poverty” is its extended duration. Poverty that is both severe and multi-dimensional but does not last a “long” time, is by its nature not chronic. However, it is hypothesized that duration, multi-dimensionality and severity of poverty build upon each other. Thus, while those in severe income poverty at any given time are not necessarily chronically poor, the chronically poor are likely to be experiencing severe and multi-dimensional poverty. The abovementioned authors (2001: 9) were of the opinion that it is important to emphasize that these relationships are empirical, and need to be discovered; it is likely that the degree of chronic poverty varies substantially from one society to another as well as over time. In assessing chronic poverty the intangible elements of ill-being, such as isolation, disempowerment, helplessness and hopelessness, are important.

Voicelessness and powerlessness are closely linked with material deprivation. The following profound statement by a woman from Kibaale, Uganda (in Brock, 1999: 64) is a stark reminder of the pain and suffering of poor people all around the world: “Poverty has always been with us in our communities. It was there in the past, long before Europeans came, and it affected many – perhaps all of us. But it was a different type of poverty. People were not helpless. They acted together and never allowed it to “squeeze” any member of the community ... But now things have changed. Each person is on their own. A few people who have acquired material wealth are very scared of sliding back into poverty. They do not want to look like us ... we are left to fight this poverty ourselves. And yet we only

understand a little of it. It is only its effects that we can see. The causes we cannot grasp. The forces of poverty and impoverishment are so powerful today. They can only be managed by Governments, or the big churches. So now we feel somewhat hopeless: it is this feeling of helplessness that is so painful, more painful than poverty itself”.

From the above discussion it is evident that poverty has wide-ranging implications for individuals and communities.

3.4 UNDERDEVELOPMENT

According to Todaro (1997: 725), underdevelopment can be defined as an economic situation in which there are persistent low levels of living in conjunction with absolute poverty, low income per capita, low rates of economic growth, low consumption levels, poor health services, high death rates, high birth-rates, dependence on foreign economies, and limited freedom to choose among activities that satisfy human wants. Todaro (1997: 685) was of the opinion that development is the process of improving the quality of all human lives. Three equally important aspects of development are:

- Raising people’s living levels – their incomes and consumption levels of food, medical services, and education, through relevant economic growth processes;
- Creating conditions conducive to the growth of people’s self-esteem through the establishment of social, political, and economic systems and institutions that promote human dignity and respect; and
- Increasing people’s freedom by enlarging the range of their choice variables, as by increasing varieties of consumer goods and services.

Bhola (2001: 7) provided a comprehensive definition of “development” that is important to consider in an effort to conceptualise “underdevelopment”. He commented as follows: “Development, defined as a set of systematic and

strategic actions of economic, political, and socio-cultural nature undertaken by the state and the civil society to improve and enrich the lives of individuals and collectivities on a sustainable basis, has been on the agendas of nations for more than a half century”.

According to Lok-Dessallien (1999: 6), the distinction between poverty and underdevelopment is dependent on how each is defined. When the definition is in broad human deprivation terms, poverty is often viewed as a form of underdevelopment. The Human Development Report (1997: 15) distinguished between the two concepts by associating the former with individuals and the latter with an aggregate perspective. The Report stated in this regard: “ The contrast between human development and human poverty reflects two different ways of evaluating development. One way, the “conglomerate perspective”, focuses on the advances made by all groups in each community, from the rich to the poor. This contrasts with an alternative viewpoint, the “deprivational perspective”, in which development is judged by the way the poor and the deprived fare in each community. Lack of progress in reducing the disadvantages of the deprived cannot be “washed away” by large advances – no matter how large – made by better-off people.” The Report stated clearly that interest in the process of development concerns both perspectives. For the purpose of this study, the emphasis is on the deprivations in human development, therefore a deprivational perspective.

A state of underdevelopment can be recognized when people are not in control of their own lives, i.e. when a state of dependency exists. The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2000: 3) stated that child labour could be considered as one of the phenomena caused by underdevelopment and poverty, and that it is not the problem, but a symptom of the problem of poverty and inequality. A vicious circle persists between underdevelopment and child labour. According to the ILO (2000: 3) child labour is a product of low living standards of the population resulting from the low level of income, illiteracy and increasingly lack of means of

subsistence – food, shelter, and clothing and inadequate basic schooling or education system. The ILO further emphasized that the result of such poor conditions is, that the practice of child labour is considered an effective means of augmenting the current level of income among poor families so as to enhance, by and large, their economic well-being.

UNICEF (in ILO, 2000: 3) reported that a lack of investment in basic services and labour-saving technologies in underdeveloped economies made large numbers of children necessary, even essential as a source of help in fields and homes. Unfortunately the practice of child labour prevents children from going to school resulting in low school attendance rates and a low level of general and vocational education among children. The consequence of child labour therefore has an adverse impact on the productive capacity of children themselves. This has negative implications for when they reach adulthood. The ILO emphasized that children are underpaid which makes them unable to meet the requirement of housing and purchasing food. It is therefore not difficult to understand that the vicious cycle between underdevelopment and child labour is self-perpetuating.

There is a close relationship between the two concepts, poverty and underdevelopment, and for that reason many poverty indicators are the same as those used to measure underdevelopment. It is clear from the above discussion that sustainable development requires an understanding of development, but more importantly of underdevelopment and the complex intricacies of the processes underlying them. The Human Capability concept is an important component of understanding underdevelopment and will be discussed in the following section.

3.4.1 The human capability concept

The human capability concept of poverty focuses on expanding people's opportunities and spans both the physiological and sociological realms of

deprivation. It would therefore appear to be that poverty is not merely the impoverished state in which the person actually lives, but the fact that the person does not have real opportunities – due to social constraints as well as personal circumstances, to be able to live a valuable life. Emphasis on empowering the poor, facilitating their participation in society and enabling them to move upward on the socioeconomic ladder, are central to the human capability approach to poverty reduction. Investment in human resources and the creation of human capital by means of formal schooling, vocational, on-the-job training programs, and adult education, could be extremely effective in augmenting human skills and resources. Direct investments in buildings, educational materials, vocational tools, science equipment and information technology could be as effective in expanding people's opportunities.

Todaro (1997:15) was of the opinion that the phenomenon of development or the existence of a chronic state of underdevelopment is not only a question of economics or even one of quantitative measurement of incomes, employment, and inequality. Underdevelopment is a way of life for more than 3 billion people in the world. Goulet (in Todaro, 1997: 15) made a passionate argument with reference to underdevelopment and poverty when he forcefully portrayed it as follows: "Underdevelopment is shocking: the squalor, disease, unnecessary deaths, and hopelessness of it all! No man understands if underdevelopment remains for him a mere statistic reflecting low income, poor housing, premature mortality or underemployment. The most empathetic observer can speak objectively about underdevelopment only after undergoing, personally or vicariously, the "shock of underdevelopment." This unique culture shock comes to one as he is initiated to the emotions, which prevail in the "culture of poverty." Those living in destitution when a new self-understanding reveals to them that their life is neither human nor inevitable... feel the reverse shock. The prevalent emotion of under-development is a sense of personal and societal impotence in the face of disease and death, of confusion and ignorance as one gropes to understand change, of servility toward men whose decisions govern the course

of events, of hopelessness before hunger and natural catastrophe. Chronic poverty is a cruel kind of hell, and one cannot understand how cruel that hell is merely by gazing upon poverty as an object.”

The importance of seeking and finding a more sustainable solution to poverty was revealed in the 1991 World Development Report (in Todaro, 1997: 15), when it stated the following: “The challenge of development is to improve the quality of life. Especially in the world’s poor countries, a better quality of life generally calls for higher incomes – but it involves much more. It encompasses as ends in themselves better education, higher standards of health and nutrition, less poverty, a cleaner environment, more equality of opportunity, greater individual freedom, and a richer cultural life”. Todaro (1997: 16) reiterated that development must therefore be conceived of as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of poverty. Streeten’s (in Todaro, 1997: 69) viewpoint is in similar vein and stressed that development must be redefined as an attack on the evils of the world today, namely, malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, slums, unemployment and inequality. In his opinion when development is measured in terms of aggregate growth rates, development has been a great success. Unfortunately when it is measured in terms of jobs, justice and the elimination of poverty, it has been a failure or only a partial success.

To have a clear understanding of underdevelopment it is important to explore the concept “development”. Todaro’s (1997: 16) contribution is that at least three core values should serve as a conceptual basis and practical guideline for understanding development. These core values – sustenance, self-esteem and freedom – represent common goals sought by all individuals and societies. It is related to fundamental human needs that find expression in almost all societies and cultures at all times. These are now explained.

▪ **Sustenance: the ability to meet basic needs**

According to Todaro (1997: 16) all people have certain basic needs without which life would be impossible. Life-sustaining basic human needs include food, shelter, health, and protection. When any of these is absent or in short supply, a condition of “absolute underdevelopment” exists. A basic function of all economic activity is to provide as many people as possible with the means of overcoming the helplessness and misery arising from a lack of food, shelter, health, and protection. It is therefore claimed that economic development is a necessary condition for the improvement in the quality of life and overall development. Without sustained and continuous economic progress at the individual as well as the societal level, the realization of the human potential would not be possible. It is necessary to “have enough in order to be more.” Raising per capita income, the elimination of absolute poverty, greater employment opportunities, and lessening income inequalities therefore constitute the necessary but not sufficient conditions for development.

▪ **Self-esteem: to be a person**

Todaro (1997: 17) was of the opinion that a second universal component of the good life is self-esteem – a sense of worth and self-respect. All people and societies seek some basic form of self-esteem. It may be called authenticity, identity, dignity, respect, honor, or recognition. The nature and form of this self-esteem may vary from society to society and from culture to culture.

▪ **Freedom from servitude: to be able to choose**

According to Todaro (1997: 17) a third universal value is freedom. The author stated that freedom is to be understood in the sense of emancipation from alienating material conditions of life and from social servitude to nature, ignorance, other people, misery, institutions, and dogmatic beliefs. Freedom involves an expanded range of choices for societies and their members together with a minimization of external constraints, to achieve development. Lewis (in Todaro, 1997: 17) emphasized the relationship between economic growth and

freedom from servitude when he concluded that “the advantage of economic growth is not that wealth increases happiness, but that it increases the range of human choice.” Wealth can enable people to gain greater control over nature and the physical environment (e.g., through the production of food, clothing, and shelter) than they would have if they remained poor. When people have insufficient savings and investments, lack education and skills and have barriers to opportunities, these factors become responsible for underdevelopment.

It would therefore appear to be that the “better life” enables people to have the freedom to choose whatever they decide are their priorities and ultimate goals in life. The phenomenon of underdevelopment is thus a state of existence where people lack all or most of the goods, services and opportunities to have a decent standard of living and a fulfilling life. Problems of poverty, inequality, low productivity, population growth and unemployment would require economic and social rethinking of strategies in order to make it more responsive to the development of all people. Pope John Paul II (in Todaro, 1997: 137) contributed a profound statement in Brazil in 1980 when he stated the following: “A society that is not socially just and does not intend to be puts its own future in danger”. It would therefore appear to be that the perpetuation of underdevelopment would inevitably inhibit the quality of life and advancement of the wider population in any society.

Todaro (1997: 18) concluded that development is both a physical reality and a state of mind in which society has, through some combination of social, economic and institutional processes, secured the means for obtaining a better life. According to Todaro (1997: 18) development in all societies must have at least the following three objectives:

- To increase the availability and widen the distribution of basic life-sustaining goods such as food, shelter, health and protection.
- To raise levels of living including, in addition to higher incomes, the provision of more jobs, better education, and greater attention to cultural and

humanistic values, all of which serve not only to enhance material well-being but also to generate greater individual and national self-esteem.

- To expand the range of economic and social choices available to individuals and nations by freeing them from servitude and dependence not only in relation to other people and nation-states but also to the forces of ignorance and human misery.

Todaro (1997: 19) wrote that economic development strategies have often failed in the past. Different strategies tried to raise agricultural output, create employment, and eradicate poverty. It failed because economists and other policy advisers neglected to view the economy as an interdependent social system in which economic and non-economic forces are continually interacting in ways that are at times self-reinforcing and at other times contradictory. Goulet (in Todaro, 1997: 69) made the following valuable contribution: “It matters little how much information we possess about development if we have not grasped its inner meaning”. Lewis Preston, a former President of the World Bank, (in Todaro, 1997: 69) shared this view and stated in this regard: “Development theory by itself has little value unless it is applied, unless it translates into results, and unless it improves people’s lives”. As far back as 1776, Adam Smith (in Todaro, 1997: 137) delivered a profound statement when he proclaimed the following: “No society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which by far the greater part of the numbers are poor and miserable”.

According to Todaro (1997: 341) seven basic issues define the environment of development, namely, the concept of sustainable development and linkages between the environment and population and resources; poverty; economic growth; rural development; urbanization, and the global economy.

Development and poverty are dynamic phenomena. Households can move in and out of poverty or shift in their relative status of well-being, depending on changes in household characteristics, such as sudden unemployment of a

household member, and external circumstances, such as failure of crops or increase in food prices.

Table 4 is a summary of the different dimensions of sustainable human development and the important characteristics within each of these dimensions necessary to sustain a holistic process of human development.

TABLE 4: Poverty as multiple deprivation

(Adapted from the United Nations Capital Development Fund, 2002: 7)

Capabilities	Characteristics
ECONOMIC	Ability to earn income, to consume, to have assets and access to food and shelter, and to productive physical and financial resources and to maintain a sustainable livelihood.
HUMAN	Ability to read, write and communicate with other members of society, and to be free from disease and other health-related handicaps; these capabilities derive from access to health, education, clean water, shelter.
POLITICAL	Ability to understand and have voice in public policies and priorities, to enjoy basic human and political rights and freedoms, and to be free from abuse and arbitrary violence by state officials.
SOCIO-CULTURAL	Ability to enjoy dignity and be considered a valued member of wider society, as well as ability to practice own cultural traditions.
PROTECTIVE	Ability to withstand economic and external shocks, from livelihood vulnerabilities, illness, war and destitution.
CROSS-CUTTING	Gender and the environment.

Hasegawa (2001:6) entered the debate with regard to sustainable human development and made a significant contribution at the United Nations Global Seminar, “Global Issues and the United Nations”; by emphasizing that Sustainable Human Development requires seven “freedoms”, namely:

- Freedom from discrimination, with regard to gender, race, ethnicity, national origin and religion
- Freedom from want, meaning to be able to enjoy a decent standard of living and well-being

- Freedom to develop and realize one's human potential
- Freedom from fear of threats to personal security, torture, arbitrary arrest and other violent acts
- Freedom from injustice and violations of the rule of law
- Freedom of thought and opinion and to participate in decision-making and form associations
- Freedom for decent work without exploitation.

All of the above mentioned “freedoms” or rights are closely related to and associated with poverty, underdevelopment and unemployment. Social workers have a key role to play in advocating on behalf of the client population for greater social inclusion and access to economic resources. As Dominelli (2002: 83) accurately indicated: “Poverty alleviation measures are issues of concern to all peoples and constitute part of the global struggle against oppression”. For the purpose of this research study, the implications of poverty and unemployment within the South African context are of particular importance and are explored in the following section.

3.5 “THE STATE OF THE NATION”: POVERTY, UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Parnell and Mosdell (2003: 1) made a valuable contribution when they summarized the changing appearance of poverty in South Africa: “If there is a typical “face of poverty” in South Africa then this picture is no longer only a rural woman engaged in subsistence agricultural production. It is an HIV positive child living in an environmentally degraded informal settlement in a rapidly growing city – without services and subjected to organized and household violence and vulnerable to global economic and political regime changes”.

Venter (2001: 135) was equally pessimistic in his assessment of life in South Africa and emphasized the following: “Keep in mind, however, that this land is

facing Aids, the greatest pandemic known in modern time; is being crippled by poverty of staggering proportions; is being undermined by crisis-level unemployment; is assailed by one of the highest murder, assault and rape rates in the world". According to Liebenberg (2002: 32) poverty and inequality are among the most serious challenges facing South Africa today. Makgetla (2003: 24) added to this discussion and reported that unemployment now stands officially at 30,5% - far higher than in any other middle-income country, and almost double the rate eight years ago. In Makgetla's opinion the result of this unacceptable high unemployment rate is, deepening inequality, poverty and social conflict. Between 36 and 53% of South Africans are estimated to live below the poverty line. Liebenberg (2002: 32) stated that it is estimated that 18 million people in South Africa, representing 45 percent of the population, live below the poverty line using an absolute measure of poverty, pegged at an income per adult of R 353 per month. Of these, 10 million people live in "ultra-poor" households earning less than R 193 per month, per adult.

Adato and Haddad (2001:1) shared this viewpoint and stated that unemployment stands out among the persistent development problems that have confronted the South African government since the transition to democracy in 1994. Adato and Haddad (2001: 1) referred to a study done in 1993 when 9000 households were asked, "What in your opinion, could government do to most help this household improve its living conditions?" From a list of 18 items, the top selection was "jobs". This survey revealed that job creation was the number one issue in all three regions: rural, urban, and metropolitan. From the information gathered from the most recent literature, it is fair to state that the situation with regard to unemployment has remained the same. Webb and Tossell (1999: 190) emphasized the negative effect of unemployment on the daily existence of so many people. They commented in this regard: "Unemployment is debilitating. Apart from debt and other financial difficulties, it can create the obvious day-to-day inability to provide a decent material quality of life".

Poverty in South Africa has strong racial, gender, age and spatial (rural/provincial) dimensions. The employment growth is not keeping pace with the number of new entrants in the labour market. Unemployment statistics obscure significant aspects of the nature of employment in South Africa. This includes the related phenomena of the “working poor” earning very low wages, the decline in formal sector employment, and the growth of so-called “a-typical” forms of employment characterized by low wages, minimal benefits and no security. If no drastic measures are taken, the poverty situation in South Africa will substantially deteriorate as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. (Compare Fourie and Schönsteich, 2002: 3.) An analysis of the impact of HIV/AIDS on the overall economic well-being of South Africa in the years to come has not been fully examined as yet. The following section briefly explored the impact of HIV/AIDS on the social and economic functioning of communities.

3.5.1 The scourge of HIV/AIDS

Lahiff and Rugege (2002: 67) suggested that two key factors are likely to increase the level of poverty and underdevelopment in the years ahead. These authors were of the opinion that the first factor is the continuing fall in formal sector employment, itself a result of changes in the global economy and economic policies pursued by government. The other factor is the scourge of HIV/AIDS that is cutting through the rural areas like a scythe, decimating the ranks of young adults to whom entire communities look for their future. (Compare Beresford, 2001 and World Bank Group, 2003.) Fourie and Schönsteich (2002: 3) contributed extensively to this debate and stated the following: “As the Worldwatch Institute points out, HIV epidemic raging across Sub-Saharan Africa is a tragedy of epic proportions; one that is altering the region’s demographic future. It is reducing life expectancy, raising mortality, lowering fertility, creating an excess of men over women, and leaving millions of orphans in its wake”. It is difficult to predict what the impact of the pandemic will be on the demand for land, or on the ability of households to use land in order to obtain a livelihood.

What is certain, however, is that rural poverty and vulnerability are set to increase greatly in the years ahead. The key issue is that without healthy, productive people, sustainable development is not possible, and without sustainable development, the health and productivity of people is a severe problem.

Walters (2001: 1) also added a contribution to this debate and was of the opinion that the devastating HIV/AIDS pandemic should be regarded as one of the greatest educational challenges facing Southern Africa today. Southern Africa has the highest incidence in the world. Thousands of people are dying of the disease. There are substantial effects on the economy, the health sector, and the education sector. A complicating factor is that it is the working population that is most vulnerable. There were about 12 million AIDS orphans in Africa in 2000 and estimates are that currently the Higher Education population in South Africa is 22% HIV/AIDS positive and will be 33% positive by 2005. In Walters (2001: 2) own words: “The HIV/AIDS pandemic is one, which jolts us into understanding “sustainable development” in very stark terms – to sustain development we must sustain life. It also reminds us why it is so important to have a holistic understanding of education and training within a lifelong learning framework”. Walters (2001: 3) further stated that the responses to HIV/AIDS provide excellent contemporary examples of adult education for survival which involve most sectors of society and which draw on multiple pedagogical, organizational and developmental frameworks simultaneously. It is without doubt an issue that demands attention at all ages and stages, and at all possible sites of learning. HIV/AIDS demands a lifelong learning approach.

Batschari (2002:72) supported this view and stated that the HIV/AIDS pandemic can no longer be ignored. It is a threat to humanity with wide-ranging and devastating demographic and economic impacts. Batschari (2002: 72) emphasized that HIV/AIDS is one of the biggest challenges to sustainable development, for communities and for all stakeholders involved in development work. (Compare Barnett and Whiteside, 2002: 3.) HIV/AIDS affects sustainable

development and especially the position of women. In many countries, the human capacity for development is threatened, children are orphaned and women must assume an enormous care-taking role (South African Women's National Coalition, 2002: 82). (Compare White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997: 123.) In terms of sustainable development, the expected impact of HIV/AIDS will be as follows:

- The demographic impact is marked by lives lost, especially of young people between the ages of 15 and 49. There are increasing childhood deaths, and a growing number of orphans. AIDS will have a significant impact on population size.
- The economic impact on companies, households, communities and enterprises will be severe (Barnett and Whiteside, 2002: 5).
- A severe impact on agriculture and rural economy can be expected. Commercial agriculture will be affected by decreasing the supply of skilled and unskilled labour and by driving down the productivity of those who are working.
- The macroeconomic impact of AIDS result in part from the medical expenses associated with HIV/AIDS treatment; absenteeism, declining labour productivity, increasing training costs for new recruits, increasing labour turnover costs, and the cost of mortality.

Anarfi (2003:33) emphasized that since the first clinical evidence of HIV/AIDS was reported in 1981, the epidemic has escalated at an alarming rate. It has now become a full-blown developmental crisis in the world, especially in Africa, the most affected continent. Fourie and Schönsteich (2002: 3) supported this finding and emphasized that the global HIV/AIDS epidemic is far more extensive than initially anticipated. These authors pointed to the alarming fact that the number of people living with HIV/AIDS at the end of the last century was more than 50 percent higher than had been predicted in 1991 by the World Health Organisation. According to Anarfi (2003: 33) at the end of 2001, an estimated 40 million people globally were living with HIV. An estimated 28.1 million of these

people were living in Africa at the end of 2001. Since the beginning of the epidemic and by the end of 2001 a cumulative 19 million Africans had already died of AIDS – over three times the number of AIDS deaths in the rest of the world. In terms of gender two million more women than men carry HIV and some 13 million children have lost their mother or both parents to the epidemic. In other words, the sub-continent accounts for 70 percent of people living with HIV worldwide, 83 percent of the deaths due to AIDS, and 95 percent of the orphans due to AIDS, while it only represents 10 percent of the world's population. (Compare Beresford, 2001; Mbere, 2002 and Natrass, 2003.)

It is estimated that by the year 2011 over half of the population, in South Africa, will live in households that will be affected by at least one HIV infection, someone who has developed AIDS or an AIDS-related death. The poverty implications include increased health-costs, a fall in productivity due to the demands on household members caring for ill members, the illness and death of bread-winners, and an increase in the number of AIDS orphans. Children and working age adults are the groups who will be most affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. (Compare Fourie and Schönsteich, 2002: 12-16; Barnett and Whiteside, 2002: 17 and Cassiem, Perry, Sadan and Streak, 2000: 23.) According to Dr. Claudia Haarman (in Liebenberg, 2002: 33) the situation is already dire and all indications are that it will deteriorate further. She predicted the following situation: "HIV/AIDS is likely to lead to a situation, where many households who otherwise would live close to but above the poverty line, are pushed under the basic subsistence level. They will be faced by destitution, if not assisted by the state".

Anarfi (2003: 35) stated that assessing and predicting the social and economic impact of HIV/AIDS is difficult, but it is likely that the premature death of so many adults will lead to shortages of labour and to new needs for public welfare. As more adults die of AIDS, younger adults would become responsible for managing government, including key services such as civil security, the courts, education and health care. It is fair to say that AIDS disrupts social roles, rights and

obligations. Children are forced into adulthood. Looking after an ill parent, dealing with the daily agony of caring for younger siblings and trying to scrape together food to put on the table, can have serious implications for the emotional well-being of a child (Barnett and Whiteside, 2002: 15-16; Cassiem, *et al.*, 2000: 2). Fourie and Schönsteich (2002: 7) concluded by emphasizing that HIV/AIDS in Africa is not exclusively a health problem because of the sexual behaviour of people. These authors stated that HIV/AIDS is the cause and result of human insecurity, coupled with socio-political variables on a systemic, regional level and should be addressed through a more circumspect developmental approach.

From the above discussion it is evident that HIV/AIDS is a development crisis, which deepens poverty and therefore extends the suffering of millions of people, particularly in Southern Africa. There is little doubt that the pandemic has a detrimental effect on achieving national and international sustainable development objectives.

3.5.2 The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

Deane (2003: 38) defined the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a pledge by African leaders, based on a common vision and a shared conviction, that they have a duty to eradicate poverty and place their countries on a path of sustainable growth and development, and participate actively in the world economy. NEPAD has among its goals, an annual growth rate of 7 percent for fifteen years; cutting poverty in half by the year 2015; reducing infant mortality rates by two-thirds; reducing maternal mortality rates to two-quarters of what they were before; having every child enter school who is eligible, thereby re-enforcing the principle of gender equality. But the document acknowledges that: "One of the major impediments facing African Development efforts is widespread incidence of communicable diseases, in particular HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Unless these epidemics are brought under

control, real gains in human development will remain an impossible hope” (Anarfi, 2003: 45). (Compare Robinson, 2003: 39.)

Mara (2002: 19) contributed to this debate and stated in this regard that HIV/AIDS like other communicable diseases impedes national and individual development and burdens economies with a huge cost of treatment and control. It is obvious that it impedes sustainable development. Very often statistics mask the qualitative experience of poverty for millions of South Africans: the daily struggle for survival, hungry children, exhaustion, humiliation, lost opportunities, and the violence and stress associated with extreme insecurity. The immediate needs of these groups are urgent. The meeting of these needs should be taken seriously to prevent irreparable harm to the individuals and families concerned and the wider community. The consequences of severe poverty include malnutrition, physical and mental health problems and death. It is clear from the available literature that poverty includes all aspects of human deprivation.

3.5.3 The legacy of apartheid

Liebenberg (2002: 33) was of the opinion that the depth of poverty and inequality in South Africa are attributable to a history of colonialism and apartheid. An integrated and co-coordinated development strategy is clearly indispensable to redressing conditions as a result of underdevelopment. However, given the depth of poverty and inequality in South Africa, far-reaching measures are needed to provide immediate relief to the large numbers of people in desperate need.

According to May, *et al.* (1997: 2), despite the relative wealth of South Africa in terms of the country’s per capita Gross Domestic Product, the experience of the majority of South African households is either one of outright poverty, or of continued vulnerability to becoming poor (wealth represents the total assets of an individual or household, minus liabilities or debts). In common with many countries, the inability to satisfy essential needs stems from many sources; the

specificity of poverty in South Africa has been the impact of apartheid. One aspect of this system was a process of active dispossession whereby assets, such as land and livestock, were stripped from the black majority, while simultaneously, opportunities to develop these assets, such as markets; infrastructure and education were not accessible to them. May, *et al.* (1997: 2) stated that apartheid, and the legislation through which this ideology was implemented, operated to produce poverty and to compress social and economic class. Hercules, Andersson and Dangor (1997: 6), supported the view of Liebenberg and stated that poverty in the South African context is a direct product of colonialism and the historic path of capitalist economic growth. These authors stated the following: “The economic and social arrangements (including the apartheid years) which today act as the structural foundations of the new South Africa, lie at the roots of how poverty came to be as widespread and have a predominantly black face that it has today”. Education is an important determinant of labour force participation, occupation and income.

3.5.4 The state of the economy

According to Head (2000: 5) South Africa is facing a job crisis. It is the product of structural changes in the economy, namely, the decline of the main primary product sector, gold mining, key manufacturing industries such as textiles and clothing, and the mechanisation of commercial agriculture. The pressure of globalisation, which is tending to reproduce the phenomenon of jobless growth, is exacerbating it. Its consequence is a huge reserve army of labour for whom formal sector jobs simply do not exist and are unlikely to exist for the foreseeable future. In Head’s opinion (2000: 5) economic growth alone will not necessarily create opportunities for people. She referred to studies of the South African labour market that have shown that those losing jobs are unskilled black people with low education levels working in primary sectors. The new jobs being created (in insufficient numbers) are for people with some level of post-secondary school education. Informal sector work absorbs a small proportion of the unemployed,

on a casual, intermittent and irregular basis. These workers remain trapped in abject poverty even though technically they are employed. Agriculture, in the form of smallholder farming, is not an option for the majority. In Head's opinion people have a deep attachment to the land, but for most, under prevailing conditions, the land can only provide a supplement to their livelihood and not a livelihood in itself.

Jacobs and Faull (2003: 17) stated the following facts pertaining to poverty, unemployment and inequality in South Africa:

- In 2002 unemployment was at more than 40% and the economy has lost more than one million jobs since 1995.
- About 45% of South Africans live in poor households, with adults earning R 352.53 a month on average. In rural provinces the poverty figure rises above 50%.
- Sixty-one percent of Africans are poor.
- Three million households are without houses.
- 7.5 Million people lack access to running water
- 21 Million households are without sanitation
- Five million South Africans have HIV/AIDS.

The abovementioned facts (compare IDASA, 2003: 2) are substantiated by numerous organizations. One such organization is "Proudly South African" (2003: 1), which stated that South Africa's unemployment rate was at 41,8% in 2003. The official rate was given at 30,5% from Statistics SA. Statistics SA referred to the 41,8% as the expanded rate. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) calls it the broader rate. The major difference according to "Proudly South African", between the expanded or broader rate and the official rate is that the broader one (LFS) includes discouraged job seekers (those who said they were unemployed but had not taken active steps to find work in the four weeks prior to the interview). Pandor (2003: 38) contributed to this debate and emphasized the following:

“Economists agree, if they agree on anything, that there is no single blueprint a government can use to achieve growth and reduce poverty and inequality at the same time”.

As far as Africa is concerned, according to Abdelmadjid (2002: 1) there are three main areas of concern, namely: The first area of concern is the different types of conflict, i.e. violence, tension and civil wars. The second area of concern pertained to phenomena such as poverty, underdevelopment and illiteracy. Thirdly, there are difficulties of establishing and applying democracy, for example, via the rule of law and respect for human rights. The issues of good governance and the havoc wreaked by corruption should be considered in relation to governance. Abdelmadjid (2002: 1-2) supplied some alarming statistics associated with poverty, namely:

- Some 340 million people, i.e. 50% of the population of Africa, live on less than one dollar a day;
- The mortality rate for children under five years of age is 140 deaths in every 1 000 infants;
- Life expectancy is just 54 years;
- 50% of the population of Africa live without drinking water;
- The rate of illiteracy amongst children under 15 years of age is 41%;
- For every 1000 inhabitants there are just under 18 telephone lines, compared with 567 lines in industrialised countries;
- For every 100,000 inhabitants there are only 16 doctors, compared with 253 doctors in industrialised countries.

According to Abdelmadjid (2002: 2) this small section of figures still does not truly reflect just how critical the situation in Africa is. Abdelmadjid (2001: 2) emphasized that as well as issues of conflict and poverty, Africa is also experiencing equally serious problems with regard to democracy, such as the delay in introducing democratic governments and as previously stated, failure to

apply human rights, establishing the rule of law and a lack of control over the implementation of democratic measures. (Compare Bhola, 2001: 20.)

3.5.5 The informal economy

According to Narayan, et al. (2000a: 30) with reference to a study of South Africa (1998), the poor are characterized as “those who do not have secure jobs, and poor communities are characterized by widespread absence of formal employment”. Instead the poor have “numerous small, often dangerous jobs rather than one job”.

According to Horn (2002: 87) and Rogerson (2002: 41) the informal economy is difficult to measure. These authors emphasized that during the apartheid years in South Africa very little accurate statistics pertaining to the number of people involved in the informal sector were kept. According to Horn (2002: 87) a detailed study of South Africa's informal economy was conducted in 2002 in preparation for the ILO Conference by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry and Statistics South Africa, using the results of the 2000 labour force survey as well as a time-use study. The study showed that the informal economy was at 25,6 percent of the labour force or 34 percent if domestic workers were included. Rogerson (2002: 41) stated that the small, medium and micro-enterprise economy (SMME) has been viewed as a critical element for achieving several of the objectives for post-apartheid reconstruction and development. Rogerson (2002: 41) emphasized that the promotion and support of the SMME economy is seen as an important vehicle for job creation and job retainment, particularly in the context of the slow growth of new employment opportunities taking place in large formal enterprises. Linders (2001: 3) contributed to this debate and added that the value of creating job opportunities cannot be overestimated and wrote in this regard: “A job is the first step out of poverty. A job is the key to creating wealth and distributing it equitably. Meaningful work can mean a positive social identity, a means to acceptance into the life of a community. A job can mean

independence, enhanced self-esteem, and stronger families. Disabled people – often branded as “different” therefore, ostracized – know better than most the extraordinary “value” of a job”.

The SMME economy is highly diverse and encompasses a range of different enterprises and ownership across a range of sectors, with the largest number in retailing and trade (Rogerson, 2002: 41). A distinction can be drawn between two categories of informal enterprise. In the first category are those survivalist enterprises undertaken by people unable to secure regular wage employment. The second category is that of micro-enterprises, which are very small businesses. Micro-enterprises often involve only the owner, his or her family members, and a few paid employees. These enterprises usually lack the trappings of formality, (business licenses, formal premises, operating permits and accounting procedures), and most have only a limited capital base. Their operators typically have only rudimentary business skills. Nonetheless, many micro-enterprises have the potential to develop into larger and more formal enterprises. According to Kassim and Hendriks (2002: 33) the success of micro-enterprises in South Africa is impaired by a number of constraining factors rooted in the South African context. These constraining factors include: restrictive legal and regulatory frameworks; problems with access to markets; too much competition; too few customers; poor infrastructure; lack of access to finance and the high cost of credit; low technical skills; lack of business and marketing skills; lack of access to minimum and appropriate technology; low incomes and low educational levels. Kassim and Hendriks (2002: 34) emphasized that this is exacerbated by owners lacking the basics of good business: enterprises are characterised by poor management, inadequate planning, insufficient capital, low turn over, lack of marketing, and inferior quality goods and services.

3.5.6 Changing post-apartheid South Africa

According to Elbadawi and Hartzenberg, (2000:1) after the democratic transformation in the country, the South African government made an explicit commitment to a long-term development strategy for generating rapid and widely shared growth, while firmly stressing basic macroeconomic stability in the short to medium term. The Government's strategy was based on at least two highly publicized programmes: South African Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), and especially its successor programme for Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR). These almost ideal initial conditions led many observers to predict that South Africa was poised for a sustained economic takeoff, where the strength and sophistication of its financial market, its strong civil society, and transparent and democratic governance were seen as its clear comparative advantage. Recent history of the economic performance has shown that the task of managing the economic transition and laying the structural foundations for a coherent long-term development strategy remains a challenge and extremely difficult to obtain.

The transition from apartheid to democracy was accompanied by significant changes in all social policies. South African social policy during the twentieth century was so closely related to the political economy of apartheid that it cannot easily be classified according to any of the conventional welfare regimes. Nevertheless, even as a "special case", it has much of interest in the comparative study of welfare systems. The urgency of getting rid of the racially discriminatory policies of the former regime has meant that key elements and stages of the policy process have been telescoped into a short period. Thus, during the 1990s, policy formulation and then its translation into legislation, budgetary reallocations, the reorientation of staff and the development of new or different administrative capacities, and the adjustment of information and communication systems, all happened rapidly. Tensions always inherent in the policy process were forced to

the surface, and are more visible than they would be in societies where the pace of change is slower.

Today, South Africa is still characterized by pervasive inequality, and extremes of wealth and poverty. Millions of people live without basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity and access to transport. There is thus a juxtaposition of “First and Third Worlds”, or development and underdevelopment, within one country. (Compare Lund in Alcock and Craig, 2001:221.) Mulholland (2002: 42) wrote in this regard: “There is no quick fix to the damage apartheid did to the fabric of our society”. The first democratic elections of 1994 ushered in a new era. The biggest and most complex socioeconomic transformation the country has ever experienced now waits. Safety and security, health, education, housing, jobs and growth are all urgent tasks and cannot be left undone for the next generation.

According to Roberts (2001:18) the eradication of poverty and inequality are primary concerns of the democratic government in South Africa, at least in the arena of political rhetoric. In his opinion, translating these tasks into appropriate policy interventions is a formidable challenge, given the extent of impoverishment and the limited public resources available. In this context, the design of well-targeted poverty alleviation strategies is of utmost importance. Woolard and Barberton (1998:37) supported this view and in their opinion the most important challenge in South Africa at the present time is to achieve a reduction in poverty and inequality. Although agreeing that poverty is the main issue which confronts South African social work practitioners in their efforts to facilitate the social functioning of individuals, families, groups and communities, Potgieter (1998:66-68) identified five other interrelated concerns, namely:

- Unemployment
- Malnutrition, infant mortality and teenage pregnancy: poverty; lack of education; unemployment; overcrowding and insufficient shelter, sanitation and protection; nutritional and weaning practices; and reliance on

traditional medicine all contribute to unacceptably high figures for the incidence of malnutrition

- Housing and public health: South Africa is confronted with the daunting task of addressing backlogs in the provision of housing, safe water, adequate sanitation and non-polluting energy supplies in both rural and urban areas of the country
- Literacy and education: estimates suggest that 10-15 million adults in South Africa are functionally illiterate. (Compare Valley *et al.*, 1998:6.)
- Violence, abuse and neglect: the incidence of reported violent crimes in and outside the home, of abuse and neglect of minor children, and of children living on the streets has increased markedly since the beginning of the 1990s.

According to Mulholland (2002: 73) the enormous disparities created in South African society represent the depredations of a National Party rule that was not only immoral, but which refused to face economic realities. Mulholland (2002:73) contributed the following observation with regard to the previous Nationalist government: “Its policies denied South Africa the advantages of gradual urbanization and left it a legacy of poverty-stricken, uneducated and unskilled masses and the social evils that follow from it”.

Cohen and Kennedy (2000: 156) supported this view and in their opinion the massive divisions that result from urban social inequalities create a lethal cocktail of fear among those who have money, property and employment combined with resentment among those who are without such goods and resources. They stated the following: “A siege mentality results, which has implications both for public and private responses to anticipated and actual crime.” Barberton, *et al.* (1998: 117) also shared this point of view and contributed to the debate when these authors put their argument as follows: “Although bad enough, when social inequalities are overlaid with the prism of “race”, the cocktail becomes even more explosive. In post-apartheid South Africa, for example, property crimes involving

violence have now reached endemic proportions. Rural-urban migrants who were previously excluded from the cities under the notorious pass law system have now joined immigrants from even poorer countries in the formerly “white cities”. With little change in white economic power, about 40 per cent black unemployment and the growth of shantytowns, it is hardly surprising that many have turned to crime.” Green ([sa]: 15) commented on precisely these social inequalities and stated in this regard: “Poverty is not a “thing” to be attacked, but the outcome of social inequalities. Only an emphasis on how the rich and powerful came to be so can fully bring to light how this process works. The poor are poor not because of “poverty”, but are poor because of other people”.

Poverty and unmet expectations continue to pose a threat to political and social stability. There is a huge backlog in service delivery and lack of infrastructure in disadvantaged areas. Community participation will place increasing pressure on the government to deliver the required services. Swarts (1998: 2) commented as follows: “It seems whatever reconstruction and development South Africa undertakes, needs to be with the realities of sustainability and therefore the big picture, in mind. This is probably one of the greatest challenges facing us, now and in the new millennium”. The focus of sustainable development is how well a community is able to balance social, political, economic and environmental objectives or needs.

Mngoma (1997: 74) stated that development in post-apartheid South Africa requires restructuring of society and empowering the deprived majority so that new resources are provided, not handouts, but real allocations. Turok (in Mngoma, 1997: 74-75) indicated different approaches to overcome problems:

- Sustainable human-centered development is needed – aimed at structural transformation and welfare satisfaction
- Tackle poverty directly – not trickle down mechanisms
- There is a need to invest in people and focus on where people live – emphasize broad-based economic measures – not narrow tax incentives

- Empower the community

Whether the focus is on the street vendor selling vegetables, or the subsistence farmer eking out a living on a tiny patch of land, it seems quite clear that a new approach towards economic development is needed in South Africa today. The development of entrepreneurs and small business, the encouragement of the informal trade and the adoption of those principles that enhances the chances of success, should be the first priority of anyone concerned with development in South Africa. It is clear from the reviewed literature that true empowerment, community participation, and decision-making at grassroots level are the key ingredients and prerequisites to sustainable community development.

Porritt (in Warburton, 1998: xiii) referred to basically the same dilemma as far as the United Kingdom is concerned. “This may seem harsh, but I can’t quite persuade myself that our politicians have fully understood this sustainable development business. The U.K. government focuses on jobs, training, economic development and so: it’s all about the macro economy, equipping people with old-fashioned skills to get ever-scarcer full-time jobs in the formal economy to enhance our international competitiveness. Fine, as far as it goes, but what about the local economy? What about the skills that more and more people now need to be self-reliant, social entrepreneurs in their own communities?”

From the above discussion it is clear that the necessity of creating a new generation of creative entrepreneurs in South Africa, who in turn offer job opportunities to others, cannot be over emphasized. The informal economy has the potential to make a significant impact on unemployment. Expanding the opportunities within the informal economy to accommodate a new generation of entrepreneurs has to be part of the economic transformation process in the coming years in South Africa.

3.5.7 Transition but not transformation, yet

It is clear from reports on daily life in South Africa that the transition has happened but real transformation of the South African society, of the way services and care have been provided in the past, has not changed sufficiently to make a difference in the lives of ordinary people, the unemployed, homeless and destitute. Many people are of the opinion that South Africa has been and is experiencing a deep social crisis. According to Mulholland (2002: 130) there is an obligation on society to provide resources for the welfare of those that are unable to provide for themselves. Mulholland (2002: 130) emphasized that this provision of resources cannot be unlimited, and wrote in this regard: “Nothing men do is. And, of course, society has to produce the resources that are to be redistributed. These do not come from the tooth fairy, but from the market in goods and services. The more vigorous and efficient the market is allowed to be, the more resources will be generated for redistribution”.

According to Annecke (2002:11) the most difficult challenge for South Africa is the proposition of economic growth around poverty alleviation. Annecke (2002: 12) wrote in this regard: “If we look only at the 40 million people in South Africa, not the rest of Africa, we should begin with the knowledge that about 50 percent are poor (May, 1998), at a conservative estimate 35 percent are unemployed, and depending on which survey or headcount you believe, some 25 percent are HIV –positive. Then, imagine a substantial increase in the annual growth rate to, say, 10 percent. Bearing in mind that South Africa has trouble maintaining a 2,5 percent growth rate, how many of the poor can be lifted out of sub-standard living conditions by such extraordinary growth and how realistic is the possibility of achieving this?”

Isobel Frye, National Advocacy Manager of the Black Sash Organisation (2002: 25) entered the debate and contributed the following: “In South Africa more than 22-million (more than half the population) live below the poverty line, surviving on

an average income of R144 a month. Formal unemployment obstinately refuses to be deterred from its progression towards 40%, a figure that has steadily risen with the adoption of the growth, employment and redistribution policy. Poverty is endemic, and yet we are not a poor country.... If this country is to move towards a state of real freedom, we need to arrest the vicious cycle of poverty before it destroys any potential for real turnaround and development.” The South African unemployment rate is one of the highest in the world. Between 36 and 53% of South Africans are estimated to live below the poverty line.

Osei-Hwedie (1995:135) was in agreement with authors like Venter (2001), Mulholland (2002) and Sunter (1997) in their assessment that unemployment is a serious problem. Far too many people are looking for jobs and cannot find them. Many jobseekers have become so despondent that they have given up the search altogether. Millions of people are employed part time while they prefer to work full time. Associated with these conditions are economic deprivation, social strain, psychological stress and physical health problems. Osei-Hwedie (1995: 135) stated that in some countries, especially on the African continent, very few or no services at all exist to care for the unemployed. According to Osei-Hwedie (1995: 136) unemployment is caused by several factors including:

- Inflation, reflected by high prices and wages;
- Efforts to slow inflation including high interest rates, and slow growth in the supply of money in circulation;
- Globalization of world economy, capital flight, cheap imports, and tax breaks for multinationals
- Mechanization/automation; and
- Racism and discrimination.

Osei-Hwedie (1995:141) stressed the fact that employment has both social and economic roles and for that reason the alleviation of unemployment is as much a social issue as an economic one. It is important that both dimensions are present in all unemployment services and programmes. Social workers have a key role to

play in promoting efforts to extend and expand all job creation schemes and projects.

Persistent and increasing levels of poverty, violence, social inequality and unfulfilled expectations place an enormous burden on the existent social welfare services. (Compare Linders, 2001: 1 and White Paper For Social Welfare, 1997: 82.) All of these threaten the gains made since the “New South Africa” came into being. Many people in South Africa have experienced the horrific evidence of the disintegration of the social fabric of South African society. Economic stress leads to domestic tension and the temptation to break the law. Family violence, alienation, despair and overall frustration are part of South African society everyday. The costs of delinquency, drug abuse, crime, legal and correctional actions eventually have to be paid. Crime and violence breed mistrust, turn neighbours and communities against one another, and engender feelings of powerlessness and dependency (Nuwagaba, 2001: 3). Lack of freedom or powerlessness confronts poor people with agonizingly constrained choices. It would therefore appear to be that anti-social behaviour is often fuelled by wider problems of social exclusion such as poverty, unemployment, family breakdown, truancy and exclusion from school, drug dependency and community disorganisation (White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997: 83).

Quirk (in Webb and Tossell, 1999: 210) contributed to the debate regarding the social ills that result from unemployment. He stated in this regard the following: “Unemployment creates problems like drug addiction, alcoholism, solvent abuse, prostitution, begging and homelessness.... Unemployed people are the army of the forgotten, unwanted and abandoned”. As unemployment is analyzed, it is critical to be reminded of the multiple ways in which potentially dangerous conditions such as poverty, low educational status, ineffective caregivers, joblessness, inadequate housing and lack of resources and opportunities, promote vulnerability for substance abuse. Overcrowded conditions in deprived neighbourhoods are fertile ground for people to become involved in crime. Sunter

(1997: 83) made reference to the extremely valuable contribution of the economist Jeremy Rifkin. Sunter wrote as follows: “Whatever the route out of the current jobless trap, Rifkin has the final word: “People forced out of the market place will take by force what they can’t earn”. Webb and Tossell (1999: 190) added to this sentiment and in their opinion argued that there are strong reasons why unemployment may lead to crime. Unemployment brings a raft of negative features with the potential to lead to criminal activities: loss of status, boredom, alienation from the community, and the erosion of social values, and, loss of income. These factors all contribute to erosion of the values and norms of a well-functioning community. Very often dysfunctional families lack support structures. It becomes attractive for people of all ages to be lured into criminal activities.

Mulholland (2002: 128) contributed to the debate, and referring to the book written by the South African business expert, Raymond Parsons, namely *The Mbeki Inheritance*, stated the following: “Parsons frequently emphasizes the reality that without sustainable economic growth we simply cannot make headway against the problems of crime, poverty, poor health and education services”. Venter (2001: 84) concurred with this statement and emphasized the resources that are really important in any society, namely: money, job opportunities, education, recreational and health facilities, peace and personal safety. In the words of Venter (2001: 84): “When there are shortages of any or all of these, singly or in various combinations, the social edifice begins to crack”.

The flight of skills (the “brain-drain”) and emigration of established entrepreneurs from South Africa because they cannot see a future for themselves and their families compound the problems South Africa is experiencing. People with entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and experience are a much-needed source to stimulate growth and development. Expansion of their operations would have led to job creation and re-investment in society. Mulholland, (2002: 123) wrote in this regard: “Emigration from South Africa has been a tragedy for the country, incurring the loss of untold billions in the value of human capital. The contribution

these former South Africans could have made in terms of employment, economic growth, technological advance, medical treatment and so on is beyond measure. Perhaps a student of economic history will try to quantify it some day. Aside from the human capital we lost, it is usually precisely the sort of people all societies need. They are brave, willing to take a risk, often possessed of skills and qualifications, and prepared to work hard”.

Venter (2001:19) entered the debate and was particularly concerned about the increasing population numbers coupled with unemployment and insufficient growth in the economy. He wrote in this regard as follows: “If you put together a swelling population, a lagging economy and galloping unemployment you don’t need to be political scientist to figure you’ve got poverty, and that it’s growing”. While about a quarter of the rich in South Africa are a post-1994 black elite, the lowest 40% bracket on the socio-economic scale has taken about a 20% drop in income over the period. Taken together these sad realities mean that more than 70% of the country’s children have insufficient resources for proper development”. This painted a rather bleak picture and Venter (2001:205) emphasized the fact that in order to address poverty and homelessness, all people, including politicians, economists, entrepreneurs and ordinary citizens need to work together in a joint effort. Venter (2001: 205) further made a valuable contribution by pointing out that each and every citizen needed to contribute towards a better life. He wrote: “Truths that have to find their way into the South African mind, in some form at some time, are that: the government can never build a house for everyone who needs one; the government can never provide a job for everyone who doesn’t have one; and the better life that all seek has to be created by all, not by some”. (Compare Linders, 2001: 4.)

According to Venter, (2001: 18) unemployment in South Africa has reached catastrophic proportions. He stated in this regard: “The truly frightening spectre of two out of every five workers without jobs looms portentously. It is not far off. Prospects for reversal are slashed by a double cross cut: population growth is

creating growing numbers of job seekers (making the problem worst among the young) while the economy continues to prune away jobs. The statistics of job losses have themselves, predictably, become subjects of a potential tussle with claims and counter-claims, but you are safe reckoning that the economy is shedding about 100 000 jobs a year, and the rate of losses is growing at about 3%. *When Mandela Goes* predicted that unemployment would grow unchecked in the years that followed. This has been and remains the case". In Venter's (2001:148) opinion, life has become progressively more difficult for many people in South Africa. He wrote in this regard: "Instead, their circumstances have demonstrably worsened. There are fewer jobs for them, there is greater homelessness, and there is greater poverty. They are freer, but less secure than they have ever been. They have greater freedom of choice, but less to choose". (Compare Seepe, 2002: 23; Jackson, [sa]: 4.)

The logical conclusion that can be drawn from this is that in South Africa too many people are struggling for survival. The staggering high rate of unemployment has made even primary needs such as food, shelter and clothing hard to come by. Wendy Lucas-Bull (in Hunt and Lascaris, 1998) was of the opinion that the organized corporate sector will not be able to provide the number of jobs required to address unemployment. Downsizing and rationalization are trends throughout the world. Timperley (2000:151) supported this view and stated the following: "Organizations are downsizing, delayering and decentralizing. They're outsourcing, globalizing and consolidating". (Compare Head, 2000: 6.) Grant (2002: 112) contributed to the debate and in his opinion globalization refers to the increasing level of human interaction across both national borders and the world. The result is a new arrangement of economic, political, technological, intellectual and cultural developments. Sunter (1997:8) described a rather negative scenario of job opportunities for those that desperately want to work. He contributed the following in this regard: "In the Western Cape, graduates are getting a zero response to applications for employment and hawkers are being forced to hawk in places where they are unpopular because of a global

phenomenon: joblessness. It is a pity that the RDP laid greater emphasis on housing than on jobs. If a person has a job, he can get a house, but the same does not apply the other way round. Joblessness is more fundamental than homelessness. Solve the former and automatically you're on your way to solving the latter".

Osei-Hwedie (1995:143) stressed the extremely important psychological dimension of unemployment. It is important to accept that unemployment is more than the absence of jobs. It is associated with several social problems and therefore is increasingly viewed as social injustice. Jackson ([sa]: 3) contributed a valuable point of view when he emphasised that unemployment over long periods of time, tends to diminish the human capital; and technology may have advanced and outpaced the unemployed individual. It does not only affect social, economic and psychological functioning but also life expectation and well-being. It has become a question of fundamental human rights, and a central social work issue because of its effects such as lack of income, loss of self-esteem, and feelings of depression and despair.

From the above descriptions of the effects of unemployment, it is clear that unemployment brings uncertainty and depression. It can have severe destructive effects on the individual and the household. It reduces the quality of life, not only for the unemployed individual, but also for the community and greater society of which s/he is part. The message appears to be that unemployment is one of the most serious ills that characterize modern society.

Social workers, with their extensive experience of working with unemployed people within their communities, have a crucial role to play in facilitating the creation of employment opportunities at all levels of the labour market.

3.6 THE VALUE OF WORK

Oppenheim (in Webb and Tossell, 1999: 213) stated that work is the most effective solution to poverty and the key to achieving social inclusion. Poor social and economic circumstances affect health and overall functioning of people throughout life. Three factors underpin a sense of well-being in individuals: physical vitality; belonging to a community and a sense of meaning and purpose.

These factors are in line with the viewpoint of Macarov (1991: 80). According to Macarov (1991: 80-81) it would be difficult to overstate the influence exerted by work on other aspects of life. The concept of work is one of the most widely spread and deeply embedded elements in individual psyches, the structure of societal institutions, and the value systems of industrial civilizations. It is the measuring rod for individuals, the goal of organizations, and the basis of society. Work is almost as encrusted with value orientations and transcendental meaning, as is religion. Work is seen as both necessary and desirable for the individual and society. Political, social, and economic programs are all based on the assumption that people need and want to work and that society needs all the work that everyone capable of laboring can produce. On an individual basis, people are judged not only by the work they do, but also by the manner in which they perform it. People who do not or cannot work are viewed as somehow outside the mainstream of life. Work structures time, determines attitudes, shapes self- and others' images, and permeates every aspect of life, including education, family, religion, and even the prison system. Despite this emphasis on work by society as a whole, and the efforts of social workers to aid or induce their clients to comply with this insistence, relatively few social workers have been engaged in dealing with the problems that arise in and from the workplace, or from the world of work as such. In the future, however, social workers will have to be much more cognisant of the role of work in people's lives, the changing nature of work, the extent and effects of unemployment, and, in particular, the possibility of permanent unemployment for large numbers of people. Progressive societies

that enable their citizens to participate fully in social and economic life will be healthier than those where people face exclusion and deprivation. The absence of work hinders planning in everyday life, makes life less coherent and can lead to low self-esteem and emotional depression.

Hutton (in Webb and Tossell, 1999: 213) provided an excellent summary of the positive influence of work of the daily life of an individual. He emphasised in this regard: “The most important indicator of individual well-being is to work in ways that allow you to feel that you are acting on the world in the best way that you can. To work is to earn an income, certainly; but it is to acquire skills, to win friends, to gain status, to assert your very existence. Enforced idleness is numbing; it is no coincidence that the highest rates of suicide are among the unemployed”.

Deprivation, poverty and unemployment are linked with exclusion from everyday life. Unemployment is an extremely important facet of poverty. It is evident from the above discussion that very often employment or the lack thereof, is the pivot around which everything else hinges. When people can earn a living within decent working conditions, many aspects of poverty fall dramatically and there is a marked improvement in their overall quality of life.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented an overview of the different concepts of poverty, underdevelopment and unemployment. Poverty is multidimensional, complex and dynamic. It requires holistic, well-integrated and cross-sectoral approaches and methods. Poverty deprives people of the freedom to decide over and shape their own lives. It robs them of the opportunity to choose on matters of fundamental importance to themselves. Lack of power and choice and lack of material resources form the essence of poverty. Poverty, the lack of opportunities and insecurities are closely linked. Poor people living in conditions of destitution and misery are unable to use even the few resources available to them. The

multidimensional nature of poverty means that there cannot be a single-stranded solution for poverty reduction. A multi-faceted approach is necessary, combining complementary, sustainable, and relevant interventions for a specific community or region.

Sustainable development requires an understanding not only of the patterns of development, but also of underdevelopment and the processes underlying them. It is important to address in any discussion on sustainable development, changes in the human and physical environment, through interventions in physical, political, economic and social processes. One of the challenges for sustainable development is to reconcile the ambitions and expectations of various interest groups, and to balance present and future development aspirations.

Understanding the importance of unemployment and its social consequences, as the central challenge to underdevelopment and poverty, will be crucial for all parties involved in addressing these issues in South Africa today. If social unrest, crime and epidemic disease, are to be avoided, it requires substantial investment in infrastructure provision (sanitation, water supply, housing, road building) as well as provision at all levels of education, health services and the creation of job opportunities in all sectors.

The following chapter will focus on social work within the paradigm of sustainable development and the challenges posed by poverty, underdevelopment and unemployment for sustainable social work practice.