

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

“To me the future looks like it is fading away because I live unhealthily sometimes and sometimes I live in hope that if I can complete school, I can have a nice life”
Research Subject No. 1.

5.1. AIM OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter serves to illustrate explicitly the second part of this study, which is the empirical research. Since research conducted by the HSRC and the MRC in South Africa have drawn attention to the gravity of the HIV/AIDS situation in the Province of Kwa-Zulu Natal, this region of the province was deemed a suitable choice as a site. The chapter aims to do a qualitative study involving four adolescents in child-headed households affected by AIDS. The study involves various steps, procedures and comments that will be described fully in this chapter.

5.2. INTRODUCTION

The research was conducted in the rural area of Willowfontein, which is just west of Pietermaritzburg. Initially, ten households were visited with the intention of procuring a suitable sample. Subsequently, only four of these were selected, as these were the only ones that fitted the requirements of the definitions as stipulated in Chapter 1 of this study. The heads of these child-headed households ranged from 15 to 18 years of age and included three females and one male. Data collection was conducted by means of

informal interviews as well as semi-structured interviews, observation and the *Sack's Sentence Completion Technique*. The Appendices are illustrative of each and have been submitted herewith. Analysis of the *Sack's Sentence Completion Technique* was carried out categorically as explained in Chapter 1 and indicated in the Appendices.

After the necessary permission was sought and forms signed consenting to the study, the research process began. The initial visits allowed for identification of the appropriate samples and the introduction of these adolescents to the research process. Later visits involved the interviews, observations and the administration of the *Sack's Sentence Completion Technique*.

The following results also include the researcher's analysis of the relevant social, educational and psychological effects of HIV/AIDS upon the subjects individually. A discussion of the effects of poverty upon the research subjects and the effect of HIV/AIDS upon the education of the subjects follows these results and analysis.

It must be emphasized that this is a qualitative study on a small sample. Although the results are pertinent to the social group in question, it may not be generalized to the wider population.

5.3. HOUSEHOLD NO. 1 - SUBJECT: Thembelihle

5.3.1. The Interview

5.3.1.1. Biographic Particulars

General

Name: Thembelihle
Date of Birth 02/11/86
Age: 17 year-old
Sex: Female
Grade: 9
School: Willowfontein Intermediate School
Place of residence: Willowfontein
Race: Black
Language Spoken: IsiZulu

- **Family composition and Background**

Thembelihle is one of the girls in a set of female twins. In comparison to those homes around them, the wattle and daub home their parents have left them is fairly big (3 rooms and a kitchen). The subject and her twin sister lost their parents within one month of each other during the latter part of 2002 and this proved particularly stressful for them, as they have no other siblings. They revealed that they do not have an extended family support system but are popular in their neighbourhood and seem to have kind friends who socialize with them and share their problems. Regardless of their exacting circumstances, they are quite proficient at keeping themselves alive from donations, but do become utterly emotional in troubled times.

- **Food Intake**

Thembelihle states that she and her sister do not have any money to purchase food and rely on what is given to them by others. According to the subject, they are able to ensure that the food that The Thandanani Children's Foundation provides for them lasts them through the month and that they are able to have three very small meals a day. Their basic diet consists of rice and potato chips. They even have the same for breakfast, substituting the rice with bread at times and prefer this to beans and porridge. They are able to have tea regularly due to the kindness of their neighbours. Since there is no feeding scheme at

school, they carry bread and potato chips to school if they have sufficient to carry them through the day. This shortage of food and an imbalanced diet result in poor concentration at school and has a negative effect upon the subject's performance at school. Discussion with the subject has revealed that this is accurate as they are often tired and find it difficult to focus at school.

- **Background information and traumatic experiences regarding the Father**

Thembehle's father had not been ill for a very long period but he became progressively worse with time. The subject was first aware of her father's illness in April 2002 and he passed on in October of the same year. She was not aware of what caused his death, as he never told her what the illness was and no one else did either. Since the subject and her sister felt more helpless and afraid, they cried a lot but were nevertheless attentive to his needs during his illness. Her grades at school deteriorated and she was compelled to leave school for a while as she and her sister had to take on unfamiliar adult responsibilities. She was extremely distraught on the demise of her father since she experienced a mixture of emotions such as sadness, apprehension, fear and loneliness. Since their father's illness there is a shortage of food, no income at all, no adult support or supervision, no money to pay school fees or purchase other necessities and she has just the clothes that she had when her parents were alive. It is quite apparent that the subject had been closer to her father and that she longs for the comfort and protection that he had afforded her.

- **Background information and traumatic experiences regarding the Mother**

According to the subject, her mother had been ill for much longer than her father but her mother passed away in November 2002. She attributes her mother's death to a prolonged severe bout of pneumonia since nobody - least of all her mother - discussed her mother's ill health with the child. With both her parents critically ill at the same time, Thembelihle and her sister were prone to bouts of extreme sorrow and despair but were obliged to assist their parents at all times. By the time her mother passed on, she was utterly panic-stricken and looked to her friends for solace through the process of mourning both her parents. The subject had to share household chores with her twin sister, missing her devoted mother's cooking and devotion.

5.3.1.2 HIV/AIDS and household relationships

Although it has been verified that the subject's parents had died of AIDS-related illnesses, she does not refer to the virus at any stage. However, she does concede that all parents ought to discuss their illnesses openly with their children so that the latter may prepare themselves emotionally as well as practically for the deaths. Children will also know how and why their parents have passed on. Thembelihle recognized the importance of parents selecting a guardian who will take proper care of the children later. She was of the view that it was not shameful for parents to suffer or die from AIDS.

The subject and her twin sister have always lived in this family home and have no other siblings. The decision to live in their family home was made jointly by the two sisters as they grew up in their parent's home. She is comparatively composed regarding this and prefers living in this home despite not having adult or sibling support. For the first time she refers to some family who lives in Dalton and where she would otherwise choose to live.

Thembelihle is still perturbed by the fact that she does not know how or why her parents passed away and that they are left without money and there is no one to assist them in their times of need. She has photographs of her parents but they do not look at these often as these reminders of their parents, distress them.

5.3.1.3 Social Life

Thembelihle and her sister spend free time playing with friends, listening to music or attending church programmes and services. Regardless of the time she spends with others the major part of each day is spent with her sister whom she confides in. She confesses that even at school they are treated well by their friends and classmates and are not victims of stigma or discrimination. Should there be a problem she would like to discuss with an adult, Thembelihle goes to Nestor, the Thandanani Children's Foundation volunteer who accompanied us since the lady takes an interest in them. The subject stated emphatically that she found certain adults objectionable since they borrowed stuff from them and took advantage of them by not returning these. She was aware that these adults treated them despicably since there were no adults to stand up for them.

5.3.1.4 Emotional well-being

The subject does admit that there are times when she has found it necessary to defend her sister or herself against discrimination and insults from neighbours or the other children. She does not enjoy being alone and if she is not with her sister she spends time with her friend Mpume. Thembelihle does feel pangs of anguish when she considers their basic needs – her basic physiological needs as well as the security needs are unfulfilled in her case (Chapter 2 – 5.1). She admits that she never contemplates running away from home and is really happy everyday when she spends time with her sister and their friends. When she is reminded of her parents, she finds that it affects her performance at school since she becomes extremely emotional.

5.3.1.5 Schooling

The teachers at Thembelihle's school are at most times kind and teach them well but are also sometimes discriminatory towards them ever since they lost their parents. This invariably leads to a negative self-concept as her "esteem or I-needs" are unfulfilled (Daniels 2001:4). Although she is attentive during the lessons, she finds that teachers can lack the compassion and thoughtfulness that she would prefer they have especially under these circumstances. The subject chooses to go to school and will be happy if her teachers will assist them in those subjects that they find difficult. At one time Thembelihle and her sister had to absent themselves frequently to take care of their critically ill parents but they now attend school conscientiously.

The Thandanani Children's Foundation pays their school fees timeously and helps to purchase their books and pens in order to guarantee that the sisters are able to go to school without having to worry about these expenses. Their school uniforms had been purchased by their mother prior to her illness.

The children in Thembelihle's class are more considerate than the teachers since they are neither rude nor insulting towards them and they have many kind friends, both at home and at school. The subject admits that they do not encounter any situations involving learners at school who deliberately isolate them and they are readily welcomed into group activities. However, it seems as if the children whom the subject encounters are far more tolerant than the adults.

5.3.1.6 Future perspectives and ideals

By the subject's own admission, she is determined to overcome this abject poverty and deprivation that appears to hold her down and actualize her potential to uplift herself (Pretorius 1994:20-21). Her dreams appear in the form of securing suitable employment and living a comfortable life thereafter. The lack of ambition with reference to a tertiary education results from the fact that she is not being guided in that direction and is

certainly not aware of any opportunities that may be available to her. For this reason, her physical and safety needs take precedence over the need to achieve since she lacks the necessary adult guidance and financial support to realize her full potential (Chapter 2 - 5.1).

5. 3.2. SACKS SENTENCE COMPLETION TECHNIQUE

3.2.1. Category I: Family

- **Mother**

14. My mother *was not a person who liked to talk too much. She only taught us respect.*

29. My mother and I *cared about each other so much but Mama would get very angry when we were naughty or if we did not listen to her.*

44. I think that most mothers *(no response).*

59. I like my mother but *when she punished me for doing wrong, I felt like I was being abused.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of the mother**

Despite the authoritative manner in which Thembelihle's mother had reared her, the child acknowledges that she had been very fond of her mother and had respected her. She does confess, however that the punishment was sometimes akin to abuse.

- **Father**

1. I feel that my father *if he were still alive, he would have bought me everything I needed and when our school visited somewhere I would not miss a trip.*

16. If my father would only *have told us that all that he had was ours.*

31. I wish my father *wherever he is can bring us good luck in our efforts.*

46. I feel that my father is *(no response)*.

○ **Elucidation of the subject's perception of the father**

Thembelihle saw her father as a provider who made certain that his children's needs were met. The implication in the child's response to question 16 is that the father had omitted to make known the legal inheritance of the children. This situation might have encouraged male members of the paternal family to lay claim to the father's property on his death. According to Zulu culture, the vulnerable children would not have had any recourse to protect their own interests.

● **Family**

12. Compared with most families, mine *I picture a bit differently because of the financial problems we are facing.*

27. My family treats me like *(no response)*.

42. Most families I know *they are rich and living a high life.*

57. When I was a child, my family *used to be a happy family and lived happily.*

○ **Elucidation of the subject's perception of the family**

It is somewhat improbable that other families in the area are in actuality far better off (financially) than Thembelihle's humble family of two. Although all the families in the area appear to be poverty-stricken, the subject's responses are indicative of her perception of their plight. She recalls pensively the happy times spent with her complete and contented family in the past.

5.3.2.2. Category II: Sexual

- **Being a woman**

10. My idea of a perfect woman *is that she should pull herself together and not be found anywhere at anytime.*

25. I think most girls *they get boyfriends and practice sex and get AIDS and HIV and die.*

40. I believe most women *they are in a tough situation.*

55. What I like least about women *(no response).*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of being a woman**

Thembelihle focuses on the issue of promiscuity and HIV/AIDS in her responses regarding women indicating that she is fully aware of the disastrous effects of the pandemic. She also acknowledges that women are generally in vulnerable positions that do not allow them wide-ranging choices. She is also indirectly condemning the abuse of women in her community.

- **Heterosexual perceptions**

11. When I see a man and a woman together *I think of my mother and father.*

26. My feeling about married life is *that it is difficult sometimes and nice at other times because you have to look after a big family.*

41. If I had a love affair *(no response).*

56. My love life - *I have no love life because boys are destroying girls.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of heterosexual relationships**

Although Thembelihle is reminded of her parents when she sees another man and woman, she communicates a disapproving approach towards young males in her responses. She might react in this manner because of her intense fear of being attacked as they are without adult protection or because they feel threatened by some of the discrimination directed at them. This stance will probably require therapy in order to permit her to develop a positive mind-set towards the opposite sex.

5.3.2.3. Category III: Interpersonal relationships

- **Friends and acquaintances**

- 8. I feel that a real friend *is someone whom I can trust with my confidential secrets.*
- 23. I don't like people *who are naughty like males.*
- 38. The people I like best *are my friends and people who help me.*
- 53. When I'm not around my friend's, *I used to be alone.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of friends and acquaintances**

It is evident that the subject places absolute faith in friendships and finds comfort in her own trustworthy friends. Any form of assistance that she can obtain also engenders feelings of warmth within her. However, she reiterates her misgiving about boys and their intentions. As a result of her having to share the home with just her sister she feels vulnerable and fearful of being assaulted or abused.

- **Superiors**

6. The male teachers at our school *they treat us very well and treat us very well as if we were their own children.*
21. In school my teachers *teach us well, we listen to them when they teach us. They don't scold us for nothing.*
36. When I see the teacher coming *I get worried when I have not done my homework that he had given me.*
51. People whom I consider my superiors *are the SANDF as the National Servicemen and I admire them and would like to be one of them.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of superiors**

While Thembelihle respects the authority of the teachers at her school, she also acknowledges that they are very good at their work and seem to treat all children fairly. She appears to be satisfied with the school she attends and does not mention any form of bigotry. It appears unusual that she thinks highly of the SANDF, which probably stems from her association with someone close to her who is in the SANDF or the work that might have been done by the organization in that area.

- **People in charge**

4. If I were in charge *I will be very happy and can help people who are looking forward to reaching their destiny (goals?).*
19. If people work for me *I can treat them well and pay them good salaries.*
34. The people (children) who do things for me – *I am so happy because they help me with lots of things that I want.*
48. In giving orders to others, *I do so in a peaceful manner because I do not want to do so loudly and scold them.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of people in charge**

To Thembelihle, it is more important to create peace, happiness and satisfaction among those one is in charge of rather than to wield fierce authority. An assertion of power is not a priority in her mind since she has never been in such a position and does not conceive that control is necessary for successful leadership. She is assisted by others in her community who are compassionate and therefore considers it her duty to reciprocate when she may be able to, later. She also wants to be helpful to others so that they can be successful when she is in charge. Her responses are moreover indicative of her awareness that money and a constant income are important in any individual's life.

- **Peers**

13. At school I get along best with – *subjects such as isiZulu, English, HSS and N.S.*
(confused about question?).

28. Those at school with me *we treat each other very well we all do not fight.*

43. I like working with people *because I can get a lot of information from them.*

58. Other children in my class *we treat each other well.*

- **Elucidation with reference to peers**

The responses to these questions are indicative that Thembelihle has many friends and is not a victim of discrimination or isolation as far as her peers are concerned. It is important to note that this amicability is mutual since she also appreciates all the benefits of noble friendships.

5.3.2.4. Category IV: Self-concept

- **Fears**

7. I know it is silly but I am afraid of *(no response)*.

22. Most of my friends don't know that I am afraid of *(no response)*.

37. I wish I could lose the fear of *(no response)*.

52. My fears sometimes force me to *lose hope and say I am ready for anything that might happen to me.*

- **Elucidation of fears**

Thembelihle fails to respond to any of the questions that will expose her fears and anxieties. She seems to see the need to remain resilient in the face of their adversity by not exposing those aspects of her character that others will see as helplessness and defenselessness. She finally relents, stating that from time to time, when times are exceptionally demanding, this unknown fear compels her to become despondent and give in.

- **Guilt feelings**

15. I would do anything to forget the time *(no response)*.

30. My greatest mistake was *(no response)*.

45. When I was younger, I felt guilty about *(no response)*.

60. The worst thing I ever did *(no response)*.

- **Elucidation of guilt feelings**

Thembelihle's lack of response to these questions is indicative of her resolve to be secretive about her personal guilt and actions that she might be ashamed of.

- **Personal strengths**

2. When everything seems to be against me *I ignore them and keep my mouth closed because I don't want to talk.*

17. I believe that I have the ability to *complete school and see what I can do afterwards.*

32. My greatest weakness is *(no response).*

47. When luck turns against me *I used to say that only God knows because people say they do not care.*

- **Elucidation of personal strengths**

According to Thembelihle, the most appropriate manner in which she chooses to deal with her traumatic experiences is by pushing these out of her mind and ignoring them. This myopic approach permits her the false comfort to contend with her daily life by dealing with just what she prefers to. The subject displays an unyielding resolve to see herself through her schooling so as to be able to contend with the tribulations of the future. Perhaps she does not mention anything about tertiary education because of a lack of guidance or a sense of responsibility towards her sister.

- **The Past**

9. When I was a child *I used to love to play and eat food.*

24. Before I was at school *(no response).*

39. If I were a little child again *I would like to remain little and not grow older anymore.*
54. The thing I remember most about my childhood *is to play.*

○ **Elucidation with reference to the past**

Thembelihle yearns for the blind faith and self-indulgence of her childhood when the lack of responsibilities allowed her to concentrate just on childish pastimes. At this stage of her young life she is suddenly faced with the ordeal of tackling adult responsibilities because she is an orphan of AIDS.

● **The future**

5. To me the future looks *frightening because I live in unhealthy conditions but sometimes I live in hope that I can complete school and have a nice life.*
20. I look forward to *my schoolwork and to pass and go on to work.*
35. Some day I *(no response).*
50. When I am older *I would like to be alone and enjoy my money when I am working.*

○ **Elucidation with reference to the future**

Each of these responses underscores the child's optimism despite her predicament. Within the context of accepting her currently deplorable living conditions, she is able to see herself labouring through school and finally in securing a job that will lead to a more promising future.

- **Goals and Ambitions**

2. I always wanted to *have a big house and lots of money and be a rich woman.*
18. I could be perfectly happy if *I can complete school and find myself work.*
33. My secret ambition in life *(no response).*
49. What I want most out of life *is to work when I am finished with my studies.*

- **Elucidation of goals and ambitions**

Thembelihle is completely selfish in her personal ambitions since her goals revolve around individual improvement with no recognition or acknowledgement of others who might be assisting her at this point in time. It is ironic that although she is one of a twin with no other sibling, she does not include her sister in her plans for the future. The desire to improve academically reiterates her strong determination, while knowing full well that she may not have the means to finish school if it isn't for the generous sponsorship she obtains from the Thandanani Children's Foundation.

5.3.2.5. Three wishes

1. *I wish to finish school and to get work.*
2. *I wish to be famous and live a high life.*
3. *I wish to live with my family forever and give them everything they want when I am working.*

- **Summary of the three wishes**

This is the only time when Thembelihle includes her family in her plans for the future and an expression of her sincere desire to provide them with whatever they want when she has achieved financial security. Under the present miserable conditions she hangs on to her dreams somewhat unrealistically in order to achieve the financial and

emotional security that she believes she can. However, it is unlikely that under the present circumstances, where there is a total lack of any moral, parental and financial support structures, that she will be able to finish school. Hence, all her other aspirations may also not be realized since she may not be able to fulfill her desires because of the lack of support and her disadvantaged circumstances (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 1998:19-20).

5.3.3. Interpretation of Thembelihle's development as an adolescent

The procedure followed below will conform to the developmental levels of adolescence as defined in chapter 4.1 to 4.6 of chapter 2 of this study.

5.3. 3.1. Cognitive Development

Thembelihle displays signs of being an effective facet in the decision-making process of this humble child-headed household in which the twins share responsibilities and make decisions for their mutual benefit. The subject is able to conceptualize specifics regarding their predicament and the somewhat bleak future that they are compelled to face. She is fully aware of the consequences of her actions as an orphan and how the community's actions affect their lives. She often displays a resolve whereby she is able to deal with their underprivileged social conditions although she appears weighed down by the problems. She does, however believe that her situation is completely unlike those living around her – but this is not true since the locals are all in a similar economic situation.

5.3.3.2 Physical Development

The subject displays an advanced state of physical maturity. She appears to be extremely aware of her body and displays a heightened self-consciousness, especially regarding her clothes that she feels are now too small for her. The adolescent's mother

had passed on during a critical period in her life when she was in need of guidance to be able to accept the confusing physical changes and thus develop self-confidence.

5.3.3.3 Emotional Development

As a consequence of the lack of parental guidance, the subject is often exposed to emotional turmoil culminating in utter despair. During the course of the interview, she broke down completely when she had to respond to questions relating to the deaths of her parents. Furthermore, the subject admits that she prefers not to be exposed to any reminders of her parents' as she is unable to handle this. She is unable to employ the necessary coping strategies that adolescents in other circumstance are equipped with in order to be able to handle such stresses. The sheer vulnerability of the subject, within the context of the HIV/AIDS scenario, is even more pronounced by damaging social and emotional upheavals leading to feelings of inferiority.

5.3.3.4 Moral Development

Thembelihle and her twin sister are obliged to decide on the rights and wrongs of everyday situations. She has internalized a set of norms and values, which allow her to make her own decisions and adopt a responsible approach to moral issues. This is apparent in the manner in which she views relationships with members of the opposite sex, her philanthropic spirit, the fact that she is disdainful of ill-disciplined and disrespectful children and her view of an ideal woman. The subject is fully aware of the need to be morally upright and aware of the dangers that lurk from being a part of a parentless home. Kind friends visit the sisters regularly and together they have developed a spirit of sharing.

5.3.3.5 Social Development

Acceptance by her peers is all important in the subject's life at this stage as the absence of her parents makes it possible for her to obtain some degree of guidance. Such interaction with her peers allows for the formation of a positive self-identity. The adolescent's friends facilitate companionship, co-operation and mutual understanding. There is also the same spirit of camaraderie at school where the subject is accepted unconditionally.

5.3.3.6 Connotative Development

There is an underlying impassioned plea to become self-sufficient but there is no support system or extended family to lend a hand. In the absence of her parents to guide the adolescent towards a meaningful goal and with no guidance towards tertiary studies from her teachers, she lacks proper direction to achieve her personal goals and aspirations. Thembelihle requires adult guidance and the necessary finance to finish school and secure appropriate employment. Her three wishes emphasize that she is like any other adolescent who is desirous of the better life free of financial burdens - but her aspiration to strive on towards a tertiary level is curbed by poverty as well as the lack of suitable adult role models. She is left to her own devices in how she ought to help make sensible choices in the unusual events she faces as a decision-maker in a child-headed household.

5.3.4. Conclusion

5.3.4.1. Education

Thembelihle's education had been affected most during the period when she had to assist her sister to nurse their exceptionally ill parents just before they passed away. It was during this period that she was compelled to absent herself from school for long periods of time in order to perform household tasks and to take care of her parents since there was no one else to do so. These stresses together with her obvious inability to cope with the sudden and inexplicable deaths of both her parents within such a short period of time resulted in her academic failure during that year.

However, the subject has since been able to settle into a routine despite the fact that she is still coming to terms with her parents' absence. She is determined to continue with her education at all costs as she sees this as the ticket to a better life ahead and she therefore strives towards emancipation by eagerly learning and trying to understand (Pretorius 1994:20). The Thandanani Children's Foundation helps by ensuring that her school fees are paid and by providing some books and stationery.

Thembelihle's only cause for concern is the fact that her teachers' attitudes have changed towards her sister and her since their parents' deaths. She feels that they ought to pay more attention to their personal needs and problems. The twin sisters support each other through troubled times at school and look forward to a brighter future. She is influenced emotionally, cognitively and connotatively by the attitudes of her teachers, her fears of boys, some of the peers who treat them unfairly and the novel responsibilities at home which may lead to a lack of concentration at school. Her fears and anxieties impact negatively upon her hope to finish school and to improve her situation.

5.3.4.2. Social Life

The subject displays a general satisfaction with her friends and most of her neighbours who are kind and generous. Whenever the research team visited the modest home, there were children of the same age group visiting, sharing the simple meals with the twins. Thembelihle admits that these friends are always a tower of support to them and they are able to share their problems with them. She is also reliant upon the emotional support afforded by Nestor, the volunteer who visited the home with the research team. The two sisters are particularly distressed by the form of discrimination that they experience sometimes from the teachers at school who are not at all helpful to them. A few of their neighbours take advantage of their parentless state by borrowing their possessions and denying having done so. The subject and her sister are too afraid to demand the return of these items and simply do without so as not to cause a problem since they fear any form of violence or abuse. This is indicative of the fact that the subject's desire to be safe and protected are not being met (Pretorius 1994:30-31) as a result of being a part of a child-headed household affected by AIDS.

The church group that she belongs to provides spiritual support but there are far too many destitute families to cater for and the church is unable to provide any material assistance. They have no income to purchase any food or clothes and do not appear to have any adult relatives who take an interest in their well-being. Thembelihle displays sound moral and social principles that are evident in her views concerning the ideal woman and what she considers inappropriate behaviour with boys.

5.4 HOUSEHOLD NO. 2 - Ntombifuthi

5.4.1 The Interview

5.4.1.1. Biographic Particulars

- **General**

Name: Ntombifuthi
Date of Birth 22/7/88
Age: 15 year-old
Sex: Female
Grade: Not at school (last - grade 7)
School: Willowfontein Primary School
Place of residence: Willowfontein
Race: Black
Language Spoken: IsiZulu

- **Family composition and background**

The father of this subject has passed on but little mention is made of him as she declares that she and her sister do not remember him. Ntombifuthi's mother is said to have abandoned her and her sisters when they were very young and vulnerable and when they needed her most. They have no idea whether she is still alive as she was quite ill at the time she left them.

Ntombifuthi was compelled to abandon her schooling since she fell pregnant and had to take care of her baby, as there are no adults in this home. The father of the subject's baby is in prison and cannot provide any financial support to Ntombifuthi. The paternal grandparents of the baby do have some contact with the child but it is not clear whether they offer any form of assistance at all. This is an extraordinary situation as she

(Ntombifuthi) is now the head of this household as her sixteen-year-old sister who lives with her, is still at school. In addition to her own baby and her sixteen-year old sister, Ntombifuthi has to also take care of her three-year-old nephew who is the son of her twenty-two-year-old sister who has also disappeared.

The family lives in a wattle and daub house that is approximately 8 square meters. Like many others around them living in abject poverty, the parents of these sisters too had built this home on a piece of vacant property. The house consists of only one bed and two pieces of a very old lounge suite. The house has electricity but no running water.

- **Food Intake**

This family (the two sisters, nephew and the baby) lives mainly on the rice and beans that Thandanani Children's Foundation provides and makes the ration last as long as they can. Whenever they are fortunate enough to obtain food from elsewhere they are able to eat three meals a day. Ntombifuthi had not eaten the previous morning but had eaten rice and beans for lunch and supper on that day. Apart from water she did not have anything else to drink.

The sisters make use of a paraffin-stove to prepare their meals. They obtain what little food they can from kind neighbours who have any to spare as well as from the Thandanani Children's Foundation. The Thandanani Children's Foundation does not provide food on a regular basis as they rely primarily on sponsorships.

- **Background information and traumatic experiences regarding the Father**

Ntombifuthi's father had abandoned them before his death when she was a little girl. She cannot remember when he left them or when they were informed that he had passed on. All she remembers is that they did not have any shelter when he abandoned them. She is

quite indifferent in all her responses concerning her father stating that she was too young to have any meaningful recollection of their relationship.

- **Background information on the Mother**

Ntombifuthi's mother had abandoned the family when she became very ill and found the task of supporting her family a formidable one. She has never made any contact with this family since. The subject does not know if her mother is still very ill or if she is still alive but declares that the latter had remarried once she moved away. Ntombifuthi is critical of her mother in that she has lots more chores to perform in her mother's absence. She also maintains that from the time their mother left, they have had insufficient food, money and clothes. She misses her mother's cooking and the love and care that she feels her mother would have provided.

5.4.1.2. HIV/AIDS and household relationships

When their father passed on as a result of AIDS-related illnesses, it had been their mother's (who was also HIV+) decision that they live in this particular home. Initially there were four sisters in this household but now there are just Ntombifuthi and her sister. No mention is made of the one sister at all while the other has apparently walked out on her son and disappeared. Neither the subject nor the sister who lives with her has any idea where their two elder siblings are. They appear to be quite content living in their rather humble home on their own and are fully aware of the consequences of becoming HIV-positive. Despite being the younger of the two remaining sisters, Ntombifuthi is the more assertive and responsible of the two sisters. She is the one who makes all the major decisions and takes control in this child-headed household. Apart from the clothes that were left behind by their mother, the sisters do not have any other items of special significance. The scholar (Ntombifuthi's sister who is attending school) obtained her school uniform from a child at school who had outgrown these.

5.4.1.3. Social life

In her spare time Ntombifuthi reads when she does not have to look after her baby. She also attends church services regularly. Ntombifuthi is particularly close to her remaining sister and is able to confide in her whenever she has a problem. She and her sister do not have anyone else whom they can confide in. They nevertheless do not feel that other adults or their peers treat them unfairly or discriminate against them in any way. They have friends who visit regularly. The girls appeared to be quite popular in the local community in a positive sense and both girls and boys visited to check on either the baby or the nephew.

Despite not having the necessary adult-presence in their home, the sisters feel safe and are satisfied that their need for security has not been violated (Pretorius 1994:30-31). The subject is apparently not socializing, as she had been accustomed to in the past when she had a boyfriend. Having a responsibility towards her child, she is unable to behave as another 15-year-old would. She is also committed to caring for her nephew as well as her sister who is at school and to see to their daily needs.

5.4.1.4. Emotional well-being

Despite their challenging circumstances, Ntombifuthi and her sister do not express any unhappiness. During the study there was a relaxed, cordial atmosphere in which both the researcher and the interpreter were comfortable. Ntombifuthi was emphatic that they did not get into fights with others or become cross or frustrated at any time. It is most unusual that Ntombifuthi gave the impression that she did not experience any stigma or discrimination, isolation or fear in her life.

She became sad at the question concerning their greatest cause for concern and this was indicative of a yearning for her absent mother. They would have been more contented had their entire family remained as a unit and would have been more competent at

handling the difficulties that they experience. Regardless of these tribulations the subject herself had never entertained the idea of deserting her family or her responsibilities. It is apparent that her sister is her greatest source of inspiration and Ntombifuthi ensures that her sister is still able to attend school despite their financial deprivation.

5.4.1.5. Schooling

Since Ntombifuthi parents were absent there was no control or guidance with respect to norms and values. She was inexperienced and free to do as she wanted – hence she fell pregnant and had to leave school. Consequently, Ntombifuthi had to leave school in order to survive and to support her sister, her nephew and her baby financially. There is no support from the school or the community as this is a poor neighborhood. Ntombifuthi sees education as the only means by which children like her will be able to shed the burden of their destitution. By her own admission, she realizes that her irresponsibility when she fell pregnant prevented her from attending school. She regrets this and is now aware that had this not occurred she would have been able to realize the dreams that seem beyond her reach now. If there is any way in which she can realize this dream to return to school, she will.

5.4.1.6. Future perspectives and ideals

Ntombifuthi is realistic about the fact that without a proper education she cannot look forward to achieving any highly paid job. All she can hope for is that some kind foster family will take the entire family in, take care of her nephew and baby and allow her to go back to school. Without this she will have to find any suitable employment and try to support her “family” adequately.

5.4.2. SACKS SENTENCE COMPLETION TECHNIQUE

5.4.2.1. Category I: Family

- **Mother**

14. My mother *she made me feel so sad for going away with another man and left us in poverty.*
29. My mother and I – *I feel that she left us because she did not care about us and she never came back.*
44. I think that most mothers *should get together in their spare time and talk about their children's future and their lives.*
59. I like my mother but *she disappointed me for leaving us and going away from home.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of the mother**

Ntombifuthi exhibits a profound sense of anguish, disillusionment and dejection at her mother's abandonment and neglect of them. It is apparent that the subject is of the view that their lives would have been less stressful and different had their mother been more caring of them and had not gone away. She blames their impoverishment upon their mother's absence and considers that they would not have been poverty-stricken had they enjoyed maternal support. Her mother's presence would have also allowed Ntombifuthi to still attend school and the education would have helped to alleviate them from this destitution. She is also critical of her mother's lack of interaction with other mothers and considers that such interaction would have deterred her from such drastic action as leaving her children to marry someone else.

- **Father**

1. I feel that my father *(no response)*.
16. If my father would *(no response)*.
31. I wish my father *were still alive. I wouldn't have to live this life of poverty that I am living now.*
46. I feel that my father is *(no response)*.

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of the father**

Ntombifuthi is less eager to discuss her father than her mother. This could be attributed to the fact that she did not know her father well enough as he left them when they were too young to recall much detail about him. The subject nevertheless expresses the view that she is aware that his presence would have ensured a superior life for the family. This could have also influenced their school attendance and social life.

- **Family**

12. Compared with most families, mine *I see a very big difference because they are always happy compared to ours. And I don't have parents.*
27. My family treats me like – *every member of the family - sometimes there would be a misunderstanding among us, but it soon goes away.*
42. Most families I know *have parents who are working but they are also needy like we are.*
57. When I was a child, my family *(no response)*.

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of the family**

Ntombifuthi is fully aware of the manner in which her family differs from others in their constitution. However, she concedes that there is little or no financial difference between them and these families, as poverty is a factor common to all people living in this area

whether they are employed or not. Furthermore, the subject conveys the belief that families where the parents are still alive are much more contented than those where the parents are absent. She also confesses that there is friction between her and her sister at times but that they are able to resolve these issues in time.

5.4.2.2. Category II: Sexual

- **Being a woman**

10. My idea of a perfect woman (*no response*).

25. I think most girls (*no response*).

40. I believe most women (*no response*).

55. What I like least about women – *they spend most of their time with their children.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of being a woman**

The subject's lack of response to any of the questions based on women is indicative of the absence of a suitable role model in her life. Ntombifuthi is unable to offer a considered opinion regarding females in general. The only opinion she presents is in her misinterpretation of the last question where she expresses the view that it is imperative that women spend quality time with their children.

- **Heterosexual perceptions**

11. When I see a man and a woman together (*no response*).

26. My feeling about married life is *when two people love each other and treat each other like their parents did and are faithful to each other.*

41. If I had a love affair (*no response*).

56. My love life – *I fell in love hoping that my boyfriend will help me and my sisters financially.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of heterosexual relationships**

Ntombifuthi, like any typical adolescent believes in the ideal love relationship within a stable home. She presumes that her parents had enjoyed such a relationship even though she has declared in other questions that she did not know her father well enough to provide an opinion of him. Despite being the younger of the two remaining sisters, the subject considered her pregnancy as a means to a better life. Perhaps she had not anticipated her boyfriend's imprisonment or the possibility that he will not be able to provide for them at all. At this stage she seems to enjoy her baby but is remorseful of her behaviour since her problems have merely intensified.

5.4.2.3. Category III: Interpersonal Relationships

- **Friends and acquaintances**

8. I feel that a real friend - *are my parents, my sister. But, unfortunately I do not have parents and I am very worried and angry.*
23. I don't like people *use drugs, those who sell their bodies in order to get money and those who abuse others.*
38. The people I like best *are my sister's, my child, my sister's child and those who support us.*
53. When I'm not around, my friends *I am with my sisters.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of friends and acquaintances**

Although friendships are an important facet of Ntombifuthi's life, she prefers to associate with the family members who are close to her - such as her sisters. Her relationships with her sisters and the two children (her nephew and her own baby) are considered unconditional since they are most important people in her life. Despite her own indiscretion in falling pregnant, Ntombifuthi is vociferous in her criticism of those who are promiscuous. Although she does not mention them, there were always friends at her home. She also states unequivocally that they do not have problems with any of their neighbours and acquaintances.

- **Superiors**

6. The male teachers at our school *treat us well. They teach us well and never treat us badly.*

21. In school my teachers *take care of me as my parents.*

36. When I see the teacher coming *(no response).*

51. People whom I consider my superiors *are my President Thabo Mbeki and many more leaders.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of superiors**

Even though Ntombifuthi is not at school any more she still has positive recollections of school and her teachers. She also idealized the school situation since she saw her teachers as parental figures. People she considers as being superior are political figures. But from the interview it is clear that she had no support from the school or the society they live in, not to drop out of school.

- **People in charge**

4. If I were in charge *I would be very happy because I could help those people who need help.*
19. If people work for me *I can be very happy because I can recognize myself as a human being among people.*
34. The people (children) who do things for me – *I would like to thank my older sister because she is the one who helped me a lot.*
48. In giving orders to others, *I order them not to leave me alone for a long time and go far from home.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of people in charge**

It is understandable that as a fifteen-year-old adolescent, Ntombifuthi has no idea about the way in which people in positions of authority ought to operate and this is most apparent in her response to question 48. Her greatest concern is to be a humanitarian and assist others who are basically in the same needy situation that she is in. She stresses the need for people to display gratitude for what others do for them just as she bestows appreciation upon her sister for her help. Ntombifuthi does not fit into an authoritarian profile but she does lean towards being a fitting leader – hence her ability to take control in her home situation despite being the younger of the two sisters living in this home. She is socially dependant and expresses a fear of loneliness and isolation when she says that she does not want to be left alone. She nevertheless has an innate desire to appear as a dignified human being with a healthy self-esteem, respect, recognition and a sense of self-importance.

- **Peers**

13. At school I get along best with *(no response)*.
28. Those at school with me *(no response)*.
43. I like working with people *because they look after each other as family members.*

58. Other children in my class (*no response*).

○ **Elucidation with reference to peers**

It stands to reason that Ntombifuthi will not be able to respond to questions about school as she is at present not at school. However, she does see the need to respond to question 43 in which she reiterates the idea of philanthropy. It appears as if Ntombifuthi experiences socio-affective needs (Pretorius 2000:27) in that she displays a need for a better social relationship that includes acceptance and belonging, love and care.

5.4.2.4. Category IV: Self-concept

• **Fears**

7. I know it is silly but I am afraid of (*no response*).

22. Most of my friends don't know that I am afraid of (*no response*).

37. I wish I could lose the fear of (*no response*).

52. My fears sometimes force me to *be close to my sisters and if they are not around it will be my friends*.

○ **Elucidation of fears**

Even though the subject does not wish to state exactly what her fears are, she does succumb to some extent in question 52. Without revealing the exact nature of the fear, she reveals that she finds solace in her sisters or her friends being close at hand at all times. It seems that her biggest fear is loneliness or isolation. It is one of the rare occasions when Ntombifuthi mentions her friends.

- **Guilt feelings**

15. I would do anything to forget the time *only if I can have everything I need.*
30. My greatest mistake was *to get pregnant while I was at school, which caused me to drop out of school.*
45. When I was younger, I felt guilty about *dropping out of school because of the baby.*
60. The worst thing I ever did *was to have a baby before I was ready.*

- **Elucidation of guilt feelings**

As she has revealed in another section of this questionnaire, Ntombifuthi's reason for "falling in love and becoming pregnant" was that she thought that it was the best way for her to get financial support for her sister, her nephew and herself. Since her boyfriend has now been imprisoned and she has to take care of the baby by herself, she experiences pangs of guilt at what she has been reduced to. Her pregnancy and motherhood inhibit her socially and educationally.

- **Personal strengths**

2. When everything seems to be against me *(no response).*
17. I believe that I have the ability to *do anything that is good and right.*
32. My greatest weakness is *to have an unnecessary baby at my age.*
47. When luck turns against me *I talk to my older sister because she is the one who understands me.*

- **Elucidation of personal strengths**

Ntombifuthi displays strength of character and sheer determination in her response to question 17, which underlines her courage in taking control of the affairs of this

household despite her sister being the elder. She nonetheless is comforted by her sister's constant presence and support. Although there is this inherent strength to handle daily life, there is also a limitation in her capacity to deal with the presence of the baby whom she now sees as an encumbrance and a barrier to her personal ambitions and her social life.

- **The Past**

9. When I was a child (younger) *I should play a lot.*
24. Before I was at school *I used to see my future as being bright but when I had to stop going to school everything changed.*
39. If I were a little child again *I would like to be together with my parents and go back to school.*
54. The thing I remember most about my childhood *is to be around my father, my mother and my sisters.*

- **Elucidation with reference to the past**

In this summation of the past, Ntombifuthi reveals her confidence at the stage when she had the full support of her parents and sisters. During that phase she envisioned positive prospects ahead as she was still attending school and considered education as a key to progress and success in her life. The comfort of her past has been shattered by her pregnancy and the sudden loss of those who were dear to her. She has been thrust into a bizarre position of responsibility where she has to drop out of school and act as mother and head of a child-headed household.

- **The future**

6. To me the future looks *(no response).*
20. I look forward to *doing my schoolwork.*

35. Some day I *wish to go back to school but before I go back to school I wish to find work so that I can support my child and the rest of my family.*
50. When I am older I *would like to help and look after my family, as we are orphans.*

○ **Elucidation with reference to the future**

Ntombifuthi experiences great difficulty in accepting the reality of her situation in that she cannot realize her future aspirations. Although she resolves to take care of her family in a responsible manner, she also contemplates, almost idealistically, her return to school.

● **Goals and Ambitions**

3. I always wanted to *live a happy life.*
18. I could be perfectly happy if *I can get an education until I become a normal person like other people in life and have everything I need.*
33. My secret ambition in life *is to get work and to go back to school.*
49. What I want most out of life *is education and work so that I can look after my family.*

○ **Elucidation of goals and ambitions**

The subject's pitiable personal circumstances cannot provide her with the happiness and success that she deems education and employment could have brought her. She considers her life as being totally 'abnormal' wherein her concept of 'normality' encompasses the attainment of the highest education levels and subsequently, everything that a person may need in life. She has no peace of mind as they lack the necessary protection that children of their age group ought to enjoy. Her physical needs in the form of food, shelter, proper sanitation, etc. are also not satisfied. She would prefer to satisfy these needs by having a job and what she considers a proper education.

5.4.2.5. Three wishes

1. *If I can be adopted by people who can look after me like my parents treated me when they were still with me, I can be very happy.*
2. *I wish to finish school and get myself work so that I can be able to look after my family like my sisters and do lots of things for them.*
3. *I wish to own a nice home and be a future wife like all the other women.*

- **Summary of the three wishes**

The subject acknowledges that under the present circumstances, it appears quite improbable that she will achieve her desire to complete her schooling, have a decent family life and cater for the needs of her family. Her acceptance of the restrictions of those who live around her and who cannot assist her to alleviate the sufferings of her family, encourage her to consider the option of a foster home as a source of liberation. Perhaps, in her case this would be unrealistic as she has the added burden of a baby, her sister and a nephew.

5.4.3. Interpretation of Ntombifuthi's personality

The procedure followed below will conform to the developmental levels of adolescence as defined in chapter 4.1 to 4.6 of chapter 2 of this study.

5.4.3.1. Cognitive Development

Despite possessing maturity beyond her years, the subject is fully aware that she is unable to solve all the difficulties that life directs at her. She considers the future critically and stresses the importance of education, which she has been deprived of her own indiscretion. The subject is totally self-conscious and is of the view that others are always concerned about her family and what they are doing.

5.4.3.2 Physical Development

Ntombifuthi is short but displays a full figure since she is still breast-feeding her baby. It would appear that her advanced physical development has influenced the way in which she thinks very much like a mother would. The sister, who is older than she is, verifies this by stating that the subject is very strict about her following rules set by the latter and is the head of that household. Ntombifuthi accepts her physical appearance and the “adult” role she is required to play in her home.

5.4.3.3. Emotional Development

The period of “storm and stress” typical of the period of adolescence is evidently exacerbated by this adolescent’s lack of experience in having to deal with “adult” responsibilities that have been thrust upon her. The subject’s premature physical transformation has a direct bearing upon her social development. She experiences negative emotional trauma from her state of parentlessness, her fear of being alone, her guilt feelings about falling pregnant and having to drop out of school. As part of her strange adult responsibilities, she has to play a maternal role and lacks gratification of her personal socio-affective needs. This results in turmoil and mood swings that lead to anxiety, guilt and shame.

5.4.3.4 Moral Development

The reasoning behind Ntomifuthi's falling pregnant was that the father of her child would help her to look after her family. Unfortunately for her, the father of her baby was charged and convicted for a crime and is presently serving sentence. Hence her pathetic predicament – she has to take responsibility for her actions and look after her sister and her nephew as well as give up her education. The presence of her mother could have helped preclude such misguided reasoning and trauma for the young, single parent. It is quite obvious that she is now even more determined to be morally upright and insists on her sister's being so. From her own experience it seems that she has developed a personal value system. She emphasizes the importance of loyalty and faithfulness in relationships and she does not like people who indulge in anti-social and immoral behaviour.

5.4.3.5. Social Development

The reason for Ntombifuthi's pregnancy could be attributed to her obvious lack of parental guidance and supervision. Her justification for her pregnancy was that she considered this as a way whereby her family could be relieved of their financial burdens and who would be able to guide them. On the contrary, the pregnancy had merely intensified the situation since the family was now worse off than before. The subject's social group appears to be as close as they had previously been, for although she does not mention her friends all the time, the home was always full of Ntombifuthi's and her sister's friends. This may be attributed to the presence of the baby. The subject had not experienced any rejection on account of the baby's presence. Rather, the local society had displayed a sense of discrimination against them because of the subject's own domestic crisis prior to the baby's birth. It is obvious from her responses and the interview that Ntombifuthi is inhibited in her social development as she is unable to go out with her friends as she used to prior to the birth of the baby. As head of this child-headed household, she is compelled to take her household tasks seriously and act in an adult-like manner rather than the way an adolescent of her age normally would. Hence, her social

development as a 15-year-old has been ruined and accelerated to a point well beyond her years.

5.4.3.6. Connotative Development

The subject has freedom of choice to make major decisions but it may not be the choices that she would have really wanted to have to make since she does not find the task pleasurable. As head of this household, Ntombifuthi has to decide on level-headed choices and ensure that there is always a warm and democratic atmosphere in their home. Although she regards education as being of ultimate importance and wishes to some day complete her schooling, she knows it is not probable that she would. Her objective is to obtain a decent job and to take care of her family but the chances are slim because of the lack of suitable qualifications.

5.4.4. Conclusion

5.4.4.1 Education

Ntombifuthi's education was interrupted by her pregnancy. When she realized that her family was left without financial assistance, she decided to take the matter into her own hands and considered the option of ensnaring a suitable male into a relationship where he would be obliged to support them. At the time her failure to complete school appeared to be of far less concern than the fact that she was incapable of feeding her family. Unfortunately for the subject, the plan did not resolve their problems but created additional financial burdens and the loss of educational opportunities for her.

It was observed during the course of the research that the subject was particularly hard upon her older (16 year-old) sister thus emphasizing her attitude towards the importance of education in their lives. She ensures that her sister's school fees are paid by the Thandanani Children's Foundation and that her sister has all the stationery and books via the same means. To her, education can lead to the alleviation of all of their problems and

yield a far superior life. She is adamant that she will find a way to complete her education and hopes that a foster home can take them all in – a statement which accentuates her need to actualize her full potential (Chapter 2 – 5.1; Pretorius 1994:20-21). However, she obviously lacks the appropriate support and circumstances that would have allowed her to explore life under the guidance of her parents or another suitable adult (Pretorius 1994:28-29).

5.4.4.2. Social life

There exists a positive interaction between the subject and the peer group milieu (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 1998:20), which is evident in the fact that numerous friends visit their home regularly to share both their problems as well as their food with them. Even though she does not seem to take advantage of this, the subject is certainly not short of helpers to watch over her baby! Her social life has been stymied by the fact that she considers her role as head of the household as being of utmost importance. Ntombifuthi does not want to neglect any aspect of her foreign adult responsibilities by going out with her friends while she has responsibilities at home. However, she has to allow her older school-going sister to go on with her own life and to socialize with her friends. This fact does not impact negatively on her relationship with her sister since they are very close. Neither the personal circumstances of the family, nor the teenage pregnancy have created any form of discrimination from friends and neighbours, who are kind and helpful at all times despite their own deprivation and destitution.

Despite her fifteen years, Ntombifuthi is able to head and control this child-headed household most effectively. There is no income to purchase food, clothes and pay for the baby's needs. The prison sentence imposed upon the baby's father has not helped alleviate the situation. However, the family is able to make do with the donations they receive from the Thandanani Children's Foundation and their generous neighbours.

5.5. HOUSEHOLD NO. 3 - SUBJECT: Brenda

5.5.1. The Interview

5.5.1.1. Biographic Particulars

- **General**

Name: Brenda
Date of Birth 13/9/85
Age: 18 year-old
Sex: Female
Grade: 10
School: Kwamthiyane Secondary School
Place of residence: Willowfontein
Race: Black
Language Spoken: IsiZulu

- **Family composition and background**

Brenda lives with her younger sister (who is also at school) in their parental home, which is made of wattle and daub. The house appears to be large in comparison to others that were visited but is in very poor condition. The two sisters mutually decided to live in their family home after the deaths of their parents and their younger brother. They have taken the initiative to try to renovate the house with the help of an uncle who visits them occasionally. The girls do not want to discuss the other smaller, more solid structure built with the same materials on the same property and would not say who lived there. It would appear, though, that the girls were occupying that smaller structure while they renovated the other. An unusual observation bearing in mind the underprivileged environment is that the late father's motor vehicle is parked in the driveway and the sisters insist on keeping the car as they look forward to driving it in future. Of all the

subjects visited, these two sisters seem to be the best of in terms of property that their father appeared to have left behind for them.

- **Food Intake**

Brenda admits to having three small meals a day. Her basic diet is *phuthu* (cooked mealie meal) and potatoes. The day prior to the interview her breakfast and lunch consisted of rice and potatoes and supper was *phuthu* (cooked mealie meal) and potatoes. It is apparent that the girls do not enjoy a varied and balanced diet. They never drink anything other than water. The aunt who sometimes checks on them is able to provide some of their food while the Thandanani Children's Foundation assists with beans and rice. The child admits that the food is insufficient for the two of them and they often go to bed hungry. The subject admits that none of their neighbours helps them in this regard since they are discriminatory towards them since the deaths of their parents.

- **Background information and traumatic experiences regarding the Father**

Brenda's father who had not been ill for a very long time passed away in 2001. She believes that the cause of his death was TB but he had never discussed his illness with them. Even though her aunt discussed the illness with them, she did not provide any details. During the father's illness, Brenda cried a lot since she felt helpless and did not have her mother's support. Nevertheless, she was very attentive to her father's needs. She was particularly distraught once he passed on and found consolation in talking to her sister. Brenda reveals that her school attendance suffered as a result of her father's illness and even more so after his death. This eventually culminated in her losing a year at school. The subject was then compelled to take care of their extremely ill brother who passed away in 2002 soon after their father's death. Brenda and her sister have been in dire straits ever since because there is little or no food and no money as neither of the sisters are working. They also have no clothes other than those that they had when their parents were alive. Generally, the subject expresses feelings of sadness, anxiety and fear

since she longs for her late family, is unsure of their future and is always afraid of their being attacked. The subject misses her father's mere presence and the protection he afforded them.

- **Background information and traumatic experiences regarding the Mother**

The subject lost her mother in 1998 after a short bout of what she believes was pneumonia. This appears to have been a particularly trying time for her, as she had to help her ailing mother while she tried to deal with the trauma of her mother's illness – the illness appears to have been severe. Brenda's sister was her source of comfort during the illness and her mother's death. It was then that the subject found that she could not even cry any more. The father informed the girls that their mother had pneumonia. Even though the subject had to take care of her mother, she did not miss school or allow her schoolwork to suffer. This situation appears to have been far worse during the father's illness and after his death. The mother's demise also affected the subject's sense of well-being and security and the sadness she experiences is as a result of her longing for the love and care her mother constantly gave her. Her mother's death came at a critical time in the subject's life as she had just reached puberty and required all the guidance that a mother normally gives her daughter.

5.5.1.2. HIV/AIDS and Household Relationships

Brenda is of the view that parents or guardians ought to talk about their health conditions to their children in order that the latter will know why their parents died and what to do thereafter. The subject also expresses the need for suitable guardians to be appointed by the dying parents. There is some reluctance to discuss the possibility of AIDS being the cause of the parents' deaths. However, it is apparent that the neighbours stay away from the sisters and do not offer any form of assistance either because they themselves are poor or that they are biased.

The household had once been made up of the parents, 2 boys and 3 girls prior to the parents' passing on. However, prior to the parents' illness, it appears as if the other two older siblings (23 years & 24 years) had moved on with their lives. The implication is that the elder sister is now residing with the aunt who watches over the girls occasionally. The subject and the sister who lives with her do visit the aunt's home occasionally. This creates much sadness and anger within the subject since she feels forsaken and vulnerable. She nevertheless declares that all the siblings get on well but that they do not visit the two sisters as often as they ought to.

Although the subject states that nothing about her parents' demise bothers her, this does not appear so from her reaction to the question. It is apparent from the body language and the fearful manner in which she steals a glance at her elder sister that she does not reveal her true feelings. Her eyes fill with tears and she suddenly crosses her legs and folds her arms tightly. She refuses to look up at us and does not respond for a long time. The interpreter also mentions that her reaction was indicative of certain unresolved issues as well as the deep sorrow she tries to hide. Brenda and her sister have photographs of their late parents and look at these rarely since these make them exceptionally depressed.

5.5.1.3. Social Life

Most of Brenda's free time is spent with her sister whom she lives with and she is able to discuss any problem with her. Should her sister not be available to help her at any given time, Brenda seeks out her cousin who lives nearby. There are no adults they can turn to other than the rare contact with their aunt, their sister who lived elsewhere and the Thandanani volunteer. Contact with other adults is minimal but she makes it known that they do not treat them tactlessly. There was no evidence of other adolescents who were their friends or visited the home at any time. Brenda admits that she has sincere friends at school who treat her well but there were no visitors or friends at any time when the researchers visited the subject's home.

5.5.1.4. Emotional well-being

The subject's constant furtive looks in her sister's direction whenever she is asked a question is indicative of the fact that she is probably afraid of her sister's concern about what she may reveal. Although she has good friends at school, she is totally reliant upon her sister for emotional comfort and support. Brenda admits that her sister is the one person she admires most.

She is quite explicit regarding her feelings of sadness and longing for her parents. Her fear of being alone and unprotected creates a longing for the warmth and security that her father's presence had afforded them. Brenda's socio-affective needs are not satisfied as a result of her parent's absence. Her unhappiness and apprehension stem from the fact that there is a constant need for food and other basic necessities. There is no income as neither of them works and they rely on whatever they are given by others. Brenda appeared to be rather ill during the first interview and the researcher put this down to her poor diet. It has been established that she is pregnant and had not revealed this to us. This might explain her furtive glances in her sister's direction whenever she answered questions. She might have been pregnant at the time -therefore having guilt feelings.

5.5.1.5. Schooling

The subject looks forward to going to school and never entertains any notion of leaving school. She makes friends easily at school and there is hardly any friction amongst them. Her class- and schoolmates are most agreeable and never tease her about her orphan-status or her parents' illness. Her one wish is that they try to assist her more in her studies. Brenda does admit that often she does not finish her homework but refuses to say why.

Questions relating to teachers demonstrated that Brenda's teachers are not rude in any way but they do not pay any special attention to her scholastic needs. She feels that she will benefit from extra attention in subjects such as Accounting. Brenda's teachers are aware of her being an orphan and appreciated the many problems she is experiencing, but they do not discriminate against her in any way. She prefers that they treat her as they do all the other children.

Brenda declared that there are many items that she needs for school but has to do without since she cannot afford them. They are unable to afford school fees or purchase books and pens since there is no income. The volunteer from the Thandanani Children's Foundation stated that the NGO assists in the payment of these children's school fees annually. A second-hand uniform was given to the child by an aunt and she washes and wears this daily. She believes that her progress at school will be better if she were able to afford the appropriate stationery and is able to eat proper meals so that she can concentrate.

5.5.1.6 Future perspectives and ideals

Brenda was hesitant to discuss any of her future plans and desires during the interview. However, she did express a desire to complete her schooling successfully and become a professional. She did not appear to have any idea on how or at which tertiary education institution she would be able to continue with her learning as there was apparently no guidance forthcoming from the school or the family.

5.5.2. SACKS SENTENCE COMPLETION TECHNIQUE

5.5.2.1. Category I: Family

- **Mother**

14. My mother *was always with me to care for me.*

29. My mother and I – *were always with me.*

44. I think that most mothers *care for their families.*

59. I like my mother but *I feel miserable because I will never see her again.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of the mother**

Brenda misses her mother dearly in the absence of the love and constant attention she had received from her. Her misery and depression at this stage obviously emanates from her being deprived of this relationship so early in her life.

- **Father**

1. I feel that my father *died and my feelings are so bad because I can't get everything that I want.*

16. If my father would only – support me with school *until I had finished and I could have gone to college or the Technikon.*

31. I wish my father *was alive.*

46. I feel that my father is *dead.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of the father**

Brenda's view of her father was that he provided benevolently for the family. Hence, his absence affects her life dramatically in that she is deprived of the very things she considers important such as her education. She evidently yearns for that financial backing that would have allowed her to improve her own life.

- **Family**

12. Compared with most families, mine *is very bad because I've got no-one to talk about my secrets.*
27. My family treats me like – *like as if I've got my parents.*
42. Most families I know *are my relatives.*
57. When I was a child, my family *used to take us out visiting.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of the family**

A negative perception of families in general is apparent especially from questions 12 and 27. It is evident that Brenda takes the word “family” to mean the “relatives” or the “extended family”, that have distanced themselves from her. Her response to question 27 amplifies her perception that there is none who really cares about them and their needs. The last response is indicative of the close bond between the family and relatives that had existed prior to the parents' death. There is an underlying sense of bitterness from being isolated from all those who were so close to the family prior to their parents' absence.

5.5.2.2. Category II: Sexual

- **Being a woman**

10. My idea of a perfect woman *is a woman who always takes care of her family and respects others.*
25. I think most girls *like me.*
40. I believe most women *are suffering because they are not working.*
55. What I like least about women – *is respect.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of being a woman**

Brenda seems to place great store by the sense of independence workingwomen can experience and the high esteem that **all** woman can command. The poverty and suffering around her clearly generates within her a tenacious standpoint that women who are financially independent do not experience any hardship. Her response to question 25 is indicative of the fact that it is important that others find her likable and respect her.

- **Heterosexual perceptions**

- 11. When I see a man and a woman together *I always think of my parents being together.*
- 26. My feeling about married life is *to have a good man, home and a good life.*
- 41. If I had a love affair *(no response).*
- 56. My love life – *respect myself.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of heterosexual relationships**

It is obvious from Brenda's response to question 11 that her parents had enjoyed a loving marriage. She looks back at her parents' relationship in order to work towards a similar union in her own life - one of understanding and respect. Her response to question 56 reiterates the importance of respect and self-respect in her life and that she believes that relationships can succeed if respect is present. Her lack of response in question 41 might reveal that she is as yet unattached or that she is embarrassed to discuss a love affair or that she might feel guilty about being pregnant and keeping it a secret.

5.5.2.3. Category III: Interpersonal Relationships

- **Friends and acquaintances**

8. I feel that a real friend *is a person who is always with me through thick and thin.*
23. I don't like people *talk about me.*
38. The people I like best *are my family.*
53. When I'm not around, my friends *I feel unhappy.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of friends and acquaintances**

Friendships play a crucial role in Brenda's life and she believes that these associations ought to be categorically sincere since they must endure enjoyable and unpleasant times. These friends of hers are all important and their absence leads to a sense of melancholy in her life. Ironically, she now includes "family" in this category and could possibly be referring to her "immediate" rather than her "extended" family. Brenda is also aware of the criticism leveled at them by critical people and dislikes people who do this. This is indicative of the discrimination that they experience from neighbours as a result of the parents' deaths.

- **Superiors**

6. The male teachers at our school *treat me well.*
21. In school my teachers *treat me well.*
36. When I see the teacher coming *I feel scared.*
51. People whom I consider my superiors *are my relatives.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of superiors**

The theme of “respect” pervades, above all, Brenda’s school life where she is able to command the respect that she so dearly craves in all spheres of her life. Her notion is that the positive assessment of her superiors, in this case, her teachers, incorporates the integrity with which they view her. If one considers previous statements concerning her relatives, it would stand to reason that Brenda considers her relatives (question 51) in a more arrogant light in that they are inaccessible to her.

- **People in charge**

4. If I were in charge *it seems I should feel guilty.*

19. If people work for me *I can be much happier.*

34. The people (children) who do things for me – *I do appreciate them.*

48. In giving orders to others, *(no response).*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of people in charge**

Brenda creates the impression that she deems power to be a source of manipulation and exploitation perhaps because she has never occupied such a position of authority. Her response to question 48 does convey the message that she cannot see herself in such a position of authority. She nevertheless acknowledges that it is imperative for people in command to appreciate that, which is done for them.

- **Peers**

13. At school I get along best with *my friend.*

28. Those at school with me *are undermining me.*

43. I like working with people *because I like to communicate with people.*

58. Other children in my class *undermine me*.

○ **Elucidation with reference to peers**

The subject does acknowledge the presence of friends and that communication is of paramount importance in her life in order that all the people she knows get on well with one another. It is difficult to pinpoint the subject's exact interpretation of the word "undermine". Should one consider the true meaning of the word then it would appear as if Brenda feels a lack of respect from her friends at school – a point that contradicts what she said previously.

5.5.2.4. Category IV: Self-concept

● **Fears**

7. I know it is silly but I am afraid of *being proposed by them*.

22. Most of my friends don't know that I am afraid of *snakes*.

37. I wish I could lose the fear of *teachers*.

52. My fears sometimes force me to *cry*.

○ **Elucidation of fears**

These responses are indicative of the many fears that plague Brenda's life in the form of predominantly boys, teachers and snakes. She could also be displaying a fear as a result of the lack of a protective, authoritative figure in her life. Although she has previously pointed out that she prefers to find a good person to marry, she seems afraid that the ones who come forward may not be the ones she will choose. Her apprehension where teachers are concerned reiterates the idea that they are symbols of authority and are generally approached with some trepidation but she fervently wishes to get rid of this fear. When any of her fears becomes unbearable, she deals with them by crying because

she feels unprotected and lacks the comfort of parental security. She may also have had a secret fear of falling pregnant.

- **Guilt feelings**

15. I would do anything to forget the time *when my mother passed away*.

30. My greatest mistake was *I could not remember*.

45. When I was younger, I felt guilty about *my life*.

60. The worst thing I ever did (*no response*).

- **Elucidation of guilt feelings**

Although it is acceptable that Brenda has not recovered from her mother's death, it is obvious that she has problems coping with her guilt feelings. Her answer to question 45 affirms that she experiences remorsefulness about life in general but she does not wish to specify what it is that she is actually guilty about (might have been the pregnancy). She is evasive in her responses to questions that inquire about her worst error and her most appalling action/s. It seems as if Brenda's most terrible action is something that she genuinely prefers to forget. However, she does not seem to be coping with her life in general as a result of her determination to obliterate this "evil" and she does not have the professional assistance to be able to confront it.

- **Personal strengths**

2. When everything seems to be against me *I remember my parents*.

17. I believe that I have the ability to *sing*.

32. My greatest weakness is *laziness*.

47. When luck turns against me *I will buy a beautiful house and go to tertiary school when I'm finished with school*.

- **Elucidation of personal strengths**

Brenda's sense of hopelessness in the previous set of questions does not filter through this set. She conveys a strong sense of determination to succeed and considers the memory of her late parents to be a source of inspiration to her. The absence of logical thinking might be responsible for her misinterpretation of question 47, but the response nevertheless exemplifies her fervent desire to succeed.

- **The Past**

- 9. When I was a child (younger) *my desire was to finish school and get a nice job.*
- 24. Before I was at school *it was very nice to be at home.*
- 39. If I were a little child again *I wouldn't know what's happening in this world.*
- 54. The thing I remember most about my childhood *is that I had a quarrel with my sister.*

- **Elucidation with reference to the past**

Regret and guilt feelings infiltrate Brenda's submissions here. It is apparent that her relationship with the only sibling who cares about her is of utmost importance to Brenda in that a once-off quarrel with her sister still bothers her and she mentions this. The use of the past tense in question 9 is a notion that goals are assumed to be inaccessible at this stage because of the change in the child's social and financial circumstances. Here again is the implication that the home had been a source of happiness.

- **The future**

- 5. To me the future looks *dark*.
- 20. I look forward to *finish school*.
- 35. Some day I *feel miserable*.
- 50. When I am older (*no response*).

- **Elucidation with reference to the future**

Despite the bleak reality that she faces the subject displays a determination to succeed in her studies at school. However, there is this sporadic misery that reminds her of the reality of her situation. There is a positive correlation between the answer to question 5 and the lack of response to question 50 in that realistically the “darkness” is indicative of the fact that the subject cannot imagine what her life would be like when she is older as there is no guidance in respect of her life after school.

- **Goals and Ambitions**

- 3. I always wanted to *respect other people and always to love the young people and adults*.
- 18. I could be perfectly happy if *I can get a job*.
- 33. My secret ambition in life (*no response*).
- 49. What I want most out of life *is a good job*.

- **Elucidation of goals and ambitions**

The resolve that Brenda has demonstrated in other sections is noticeable here again. To the subject, happiness goes hand-in-hand with love, respect and personal job satisfaction. The extreme poverty she experiences has created within her that a job is the only way to alleviate them from their indigent state. The independence that a job will provide

encourages her to pursue this dream relentlessly but there is still no perspective of life once she completes her schooling.

5.5.2.5. Three wishes

1. *I wish to finish school.*
2. *I wish to get a professional job.*
3. *I wish to buy a beautiful house.*

- **Summary of the three wishes**

All three of Brenda's wishes denote her heartfelt yearning to uplift herself from the impoverishment that pervades her life at present. Her initial wish verifies that she is cognizant of the fact that the following two will be fulfilled only if the first is accomplished. Obtaining a professional qualification entails having access to funds to study, which is somewhat debatable in her case unless she is able to obtain a bursary or donation. The final wish accentuates the initial assertion that Brenda is determined to distance herself from the indigence and unattractiveness around her. She is left without any guidance regarding her ability to work towards a university or college education. All of these characteristics contribute to her yen for complete financial independence, enhancement and what she sees as the appropriate way of life.

5.5.3. Interpretation of Brenda's personality

The procedure followed below will conform to the developmental levels of adolescence as defined in chapter 4.1 to 4.6 of chapter 2 of this study.

5.5.3.1. Cognitive Development

Brenda displays a concise interpretation of characteristics that highlight her realization of Piaget's formal operational phase in her recognition and acceptance of death and love. She is also capable of rational and realistic thinking – her academic progress will substantiate this. Nonetheless, she suffers a deep sense of guilt and remorse, which in variably results in a low self-esteem. The sudden death of both her parents has destroyed the only source of encouragement that she had. She is also highly aware of the prejudices of others and is often subjected to unfair bigotry.

5.5.3.2. Physical Development

Although Brenda was unusually willowy, She was tall and displayed normal pubescent development of an adolescent in her age-group. She was sexually aware and mentioned a fear of boys and teachers during the *Sack's Sentence Completion Technique*. It was later discovered that the subject had been in the early stages of pregnancy during the initial visit and had to abandon her schooling closer to the birth of the baby.

5.5.3.3. Emotional Development

It is clear that the subject is finding immense difficulty in dealing with the deaths of her parents. They have been abandoned by the extended family and are discriminated against by their local society perhaps because of the stigma people have placed upon the pandemic of HIV/AIDS. Brenda's coping strategies are unproductive which give rise to damaging social and emotional upheavals. Her despair is obvious in her extended periods of sullen silences. The fact that she experiences anxiety from being unprotected, results in a negative impact upon her schoolwork.

5.5.3.4. Moral Development

It can be argued that, without her parents, Brenda has been ineffective in developing proper moral reasoning and behaviour – hence her pregnancy. On the other hand, the question of abuse cannot be discounted in that she seems to display an obsessive fear of being hurt.

5.5.3.5. Social Development

The subject and her sister were fortunate in that they had the benefit of parental guidance until recently. Contrary to their previous family life, Brenda and her sister are leading extremely lonely lives at the moment. They seem never to be visited by friends and are not too friendly with their neighbours either. An effective support system is non-existent and their only visitors are an uncle and aunt who sometimes check on the two sisters. Within the context of the extended family, she has been neglected and isolated in the sense that nobody cares about her. The neglect could also arise from the fact that the extended family is in the same indigent situation and cannot support the sisters. However, she does have friends at school who treat her well.

5.5.3.6. Connotative Development

Brenda displays a strong character at times and the willpower to strive towards a better life for herself and her sister. This is suggested in her responses when she declares that she is determined to finish school and have a decent job. However, her endeavour towards a better life is doomed by the fact that she is pregnant and would have had to leave school. This could perhaps be the reason why she always guiltily glanced at her sister before she responded to queries.

5.5.4. Conclusion

5.5.4.1. Education

Brenda's mother's illness and death in 1998 had not been as disruptive to her schooling as was her father's illness and demise in 2001. She had been unable to cope with the loss of her parents and the loss of a younger brother soon after so much so that she lost a year of school as a result. It is ironic that even though Brenda displayed an eagerness to pursue her schooling, it was brought to our notice some time later that she was pregnant at the time of the interview. Invariably she would have had to abandon her studies in order to have the baby and this will result in her academic career coming to a halt if she is unable to find someone to care for the baby. Brenda obviously lacked the proper guidance regarding abuse or knowledge about contraceptives that would have assisted her in averting such a situation.

She is a quiet yet popular pupil and has many friends at school. She places great emphasis upon the importance of her friends and her appreciation of their support. Some of her responses do indicate that there are certain pupils at her school who are insolent towards them. Her concern at school is that teachers at her school do not pay attention to their individual needs and she is unable to cope with subjects such as Accounting. However, despite their personal circumstances, the teachers are not discriminatory in any way.

Brenda and her sister relied on the Thandanani Children's Foundation for the payment of their school fees and provision of most of their stationery and books. There is absolutely no income in this household and the girls are also reliant upon this NGO for their food supplies. An aunt has kindly provided second-hand uniforms and the subject makes sure that hers is washed daily. Brenda is emphatic that should she be able to afford the correct stationery and books and eat wholesome meals, she will be more successful at school.

5.5.4.2. Social life

The subject and her assertive sister are determined to continue relentlessly towards their prior goals. Although the subject admits to having some friends, the two were always alone at home when the researchers visited. Brenda is totally submissive and reliant upon the direction provided by her sister within the context of their particularly private lives. The subject and her sister appear to be victims of stigma and discrimination since their neighbours do not communicate with them. Brenda and her sister yearn for the close relationship that had existed preceding their parents' passing away. Apart from the fact that they do not have too many friends around, they feel isolated from their relatives as a result of the circumstances surrounding the loss of their parents. Besides, it might be that Brenda's extended family is just as destitute and poverty-stricken as the girls are and cannot offer any assistance to them.

There is no one to provide any income since both the girls are at school. Hence, the clothes they have are mainly those that were purchased by their parents. Food is made available by the Thandanani Children's Foundation and they ensure that the rations last the period for which they are provided. Brenda admits that an uncle checks on them from time-to-time but does not say whether he assists them financially.

Brenda was found to have been far more honest and forthright in her responses in the *Sack's Sentence Completion* section than in the interview where she depended on her sister's reaction to each question.

The community (Pretorius 1994:32) does not fulfill the important function of supporting in the Brenda's development. In this case Brenda and her sister are weak, isolated individuals within an unfriendly world and cannot therefore graduate beyond the need to survive, the need for safety and the desperate desire to be loved and cared for (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 1998:18-20). It is therefore hardly likely that Brenda will be able to attain the satisfaction of her need to be recognized and valued or even to actualize her potentials (Pretorius 1994:30-31).

5.6. HOUSEHOLD NO. 4 - SUBJECT: Jeffrey

5.6.1. The Interview

5.6.1.1. Biographic Particulars

- **General**

Name: Jeffrey
Date of Birth 21/12/85
Age: 17 year-old
Sex: Male
Grade: 10
School: Ikusaselihle Secondary School
Place of residence: Willowfontein
Race: Black
Language Spoken: IsiZulu

- **Family composition and background**

Jeffrey, his younger brother and younger sister had always lived with their mother in their home. After she passed on in 1999, the boys decided to continue living in the modest abode that they were familiar with since they had a benevolent neighbour who had lent a hand during their mother's illness and promised the boys' mother that she would watch over them after her death. Their sister was taken to an aunt's home as the latter felt the need to protect her young niece. The small house is similar in structure to all the others visited in that they are built of wattle and daub. The structure does not appear to be very solid and bits of the walls began to fall during the course of one interview as it was raining quite heavily. Jeffrey and his brother have a small vegetable patch that provides

them with food for themselves as well as an income since they are able to sell produce to people in the neighbouring township where they obtained better prices.

- **Food Intake**

The subject stated that they were generally able to have three meals a day. Their basic diet consists of beans, spinach and rice. For some reason the boys declared that they had not eaten anything the day prior to the first visit. Their neighbour provides some of their food whenever she can and the Thandanani Children's Foundation supplies rice and beans regularly. The boys, unlike their female counterparts were unable to ensure that the rations provided lasted the month it was meant to.

- **Background information and traumatic experiences regarding the Father**

Jeffrey has been informed that his father passed on in 2000 but he has no recollection of him because this parent had never lived with the boys and their mother. He is not aware of how his father died and is totally indifferent in his responses to questions regarding the latter.

- **Background information and traumatic experiences regarding the Mother**

According to the subject, his mother had been ailing for a long time prior to her death in December 1999. He confirmed that his mother was being treated for tuberculosis at the local clinic for the period when she was ill but the treatment did not help her recover. The mother never discussed any other illness that she might have been suffering from with the subject. Nobody else discussed their mother's illness with them either.

Jeffrey and his brother had to eventually put their sorrow aside and assisted their mother with household tasks while taking care of her all the time she was gravely ill. Had he not been exposed to such training during this period he would have found this very difficult since his cultural background did not encourage male participation in such activities.

Consequently, his grades suffered and he lost a year at school, as he had to do more domestic chores, take care of his younger brother and sister and create means whereby they would be able to survive. There was no income at all to pay for the food and clothes that the boys and their sister needed.

The subject displays indisputable melancholy when he is reminded of his late mother. He is apprehensive about the future and becomes exasperated when he questions why this had to be their fate. Jeffrey is cognizant of the inadequacies and the shortcomings of his being from this particular social-milieu. Despite his desperate need to be respected and recognized, this aspect creates a disadvantage in his pursuance of self-actualization (Pretorius 1994:30-31; Prinsloo & Du Plessis 1998:16-18).

5.6.1.2. HIV/AIDS and Household Relationships

The subject is insistent that children ought to be informed by their parents what their health status was at the time of their death. He is of the viewpoint that children will react realistically and be prepared psychologically. Children will also be fully aware of the reasons for their parents' deaths and not have to rely on the various rumours that they are exposed to after their parents are deceased. He is grateful that his mother had arranged with their neighbour to take care of them after her death. He would have preferred it if his mother had told him what was wrong with her since he is of the view that he might have been able to have helped her recover.

Jeffrey verbalized his unhappiness and annoyance at having his sister live elsewhere but accepted that she was out of harm's way there with his aunt. He suspects that his sister is unhappy about this arrangement therefore he and his brother visit her at least once a month whenever finances allow them. The caregiver appointed by the boys' mother is a thoughtful, generous and philanthropic person. However, the subject and his brother

prefer to live at their mother's home rather than with this childless neighbour although they have an amicable relationship with her.

5.6.1.3. Social life

During their free time the brothers played soccer or enjoyed music and dancing with their friends or girlfriends. The boy spent most of his time with his friends but consulted the caregiver if he encountered problems. He just wished that his caregiver had been in a position to assist them to improve their shelter. Apart from prejudice displayed by some of the learners at school, Jeffrey does not appear to be exposed to any form of stigma and discrimination from the people around him. They do not feel isolated since there is a constant flow of friends in and out of their home and their caregiver is exceptionally attentive to their needs.

5.6.1.4. Emotional well-being

Occasionally, Jeffrey feels exceptionally heartbroken and he often becomes anxious about their state of affairs especially when they have to go to bed without food. He admits to becoming frustrated when he realizes how fragile their home is and that they do not possess the wherewithal to repair it properly. The thought of running away does sometimes cross his mind since this will allow him to go into the city to find a good job and take proper care of his brother and sister. He is happiest when he is playing with his friends and is a big fan of David Beckham.

5.6.1.5. Schooling

Jeffrey's teachers are aware of their pitiable situation and he will prefer a little more thoughtfulness on their part. On the other hand, the children in his class are definitely not prejudiced but are particularly supportive and considerate.

The Thandanani Children's Foundation has helped Jeffrey and his brother by paying their school fees and purchasing their stationery. A generous member of the community gave the boys second-hand school uniforms. Their major problem seems to be the lack of food at most times and the need for proper casual clothes and shoes at the moment. Jeffrey is focused and performs well at school, standing out as a leader. In his free time he is occupied both at school and at home with the task of assisting other learners who are struggling with their academic work.

5.6.1.6. Future perspectives and ideals

Jeffrey is an ambitious person and does not hide the fact that he wishes to become a social worker or a teacher in order that he will be able to give back to his community in some way. However, he lacks academic or professional guidance as to how he ought to go about applying himself towards this achievement.

5.6.2. SACKS SENTENCE COMPLETION TECHNIQUE

5.6.2.1. Category I: Family

- **Mother**

14. My mother *was very respectful to others because she was not interested in anyone.*

29. My mother and I – *was respectful to all who were older than her.*

44. I think that most mothers *do not like children because they are having abortions.*
 59. I like my mother but *I would have done something if I had the money to help her.*

○ **Elucidation of the subject's perception of the mother**

Jeffrey's responses to these questions concerning his mother are indicative of the importance of respect in her life and that this was instilled in the children as well. It is obvious that Jeffrey loved and respected his mother in a manner that she was proud of. During the course of the interviews, the subject also displayed this kind of respect towards the researcher. In his response to question 44, Jeffrey condemns the immoral sexual behaviour of certain children in the area and the helplessness of their mothers in this matter. He is also condemning of his mother's secrecy regarding her illness since he is of the opinion that he could have helped her recover had he known more.

● **Father**

1. I feel that my father – *I cannot comment about my father because I did not know him and he passed away when I was little.*
 16. If my father would only – *he left us when I was young.*
 31. I wish my father - *was a popular man because some people told me that.*
 46. I feel that my father *was not fair because he left us when we were young.*

○ **Elucidation of the subject's perception of the father**

Jeffrey has a fairly objective perception of his father. Although he condemns his father for abandoning them when they were young and vulnerable, he does concede that his father had been a well-liked individual in this community. He avoids being critical where his father is concerned because he believes that he is not qualified to do so.

- **Family**

12. Compared with most families, mine *was a poor family because I could do nothing.*

27. My family treats me like – *well because they did everything that I needed.*

42. Most families I know *are poor because they do not have a lot of things.*

57. When I was a child, my family *used to hold me like a baby.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of the family**

Jeffrey accepts that his family is as poverty-stricken as many others in Willowfontein, if not more so. In his opinion, he was never deprived of anything that he desired. At the present time, the subject acknowledges the love, warmth and respect with which he was nurtured regardless of their lack of resources. The spirit of decency obviously filters down from the manner in which his mother had carried herself.

5.6.2.2. Category II: Sexual

- **Being a man**

10. My idea of a perfect man *(no response).*

25. I think most girls *are clever girls because their teachers told them about AIDS.*

40. I believe most women *have no future because they become pregnant when they are too young.*

55. What I like least about women – *is I respect them but not all but some of them.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of being a woman**

There is an unmistakable distinction between the way in which Jeffrey looks at those women (females) who are licentious and those he considers worthy of praise. It is important to him that the school is educating pupils about HIV and AIDS. Jeffrey

admires those girls who are intelligent enough to take heed of the advice given by the teachers. He also discusses those women who knowingly fall pregnant and therefore face poverty and bleak futures. The subject is of the view that such wanton behaviour will not allow women to uplift themselves from the impoverished lives that people in this area appear to be condemned to.

- **Heterosexual perceptions**

11. When I see a man and a woman together *I feel very bad because I think of the days when my mother and father must have been together.*

26. My feeling about married life is *to go to Durban and play music like Kwaito, Rib and Rage.*

41. If I had a love affair *I will build a house and buy my girl a cow and all the things she needs.*

56. My love life – *is to love my life and to build my future in my life.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of heterosexual relationships**

Jeffrey would prefer to believe that his parents had once enjoyed a loving, happy marriage. He bases his personal dreams of heterosexual relationships on this belief but he is determined to pay the proper *lobola* (payment made to bride's father or elder) and provide completely for his loved one's needs. His love for music, his obsession with security, and devotion towards others who are close to him and the security of a successful, content future all blend into his concept of goals and aspirations.

5.6.2.3. Category III: Interpersonal Relationships

- **Friends and acquaintances**

8. I feel that a real friend *yes because they are real true friends.*
23. I do not like people - *who are those people who smoke ganja or cigarette and drink alcohol.*
38. The people I like best *are those who do something for me like give me food.*
53. When I'm not around, my friends *I read my books and newspapers.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of friends and acquaintances**

Friendships play a major role in the subject's life and he values his friends dearly. This was apparent by the fact that on each visit to this home, there were always other boys around who are obviously loyal friends of the subject and his brother. Jeffrey condemns immoral, unhealthy social habits and adamantly dissociates himself from people who indulge in such behaviour. He also displays an appreciation for those who are responsible for his survival by providing him with food. The subject emphasizes the need to improve intellectually in order to be able to accomplish his ambitions.

- **Superiors**

6. The male teachers at our school treat us well and respect us very well.
21. In school my teacher(s) *was a very respectable man who taught all the children who liked him.*
36. When I see the teacher coming *I feel well because I was not afraid of some teachers.*
51. People whom I consider my superiors *is a teacher because she teachers me well.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of superiors**

Teachers play a significant role in Jeffrey's life since he affords them the respect that his mother had inculcated in him. Even though he considers them to be his superiors, he does not fear them. The attitude of Jeffrey's teachers also appears to be positive towards him. They do not treat him differently from the other children.

- **People in charge**

4. If I were in charge *I will be very happy because I will always think about food.*
19. If people work for me *I will have a future to do something like helping people to teach them something good for the future.*
34. The people (children) who do things for me – *are the people that are good because they are big in life.*
48. In giving orders to others, *I will not.*

- **Elucidation of the subject's perception of people in charge**

Jeffrey is of the opinion that the people in charge ought to be able to provide for the upliftment of his community. He looks up to those who assist him and who give unconditionally. Within the realm of his dreams, he looks forward to a future when he will reciprocate by assisting others in need. Although he displays an optimistic attitude towards his capacity to be able to assist others to remove themselves from poverty and need in the future, he is at the same time adamant that he will not order people around. He lacks experience in these matters.

- **Peers**

13. At school I get along best with *a subject like history and agriculture because I like these subjects.*

28. Those at school with me *are bad because they laugh at everything we do.*

43. I like working with people *because I like to help those people who have HIV and AIDS.*

58. Other children in my class *are those who are not respectful to others.*

- **Elucidation with reference to peers**

In response to these questions involving his peers, Jeffrey reveals that there are those children who look down upon him and jeer at him because of his personal circumstances. The stigma and discrimination that he experiences stem from the other children's lack of respect and tolerance. His own interpretation of question 13 merely displays his choice of favourite subjects. It becomes apparent that Jeffrey considers HIV/AIDS as the source of the other children's discrimination and reiterates his desire to assist those who are affected by the pandemic. He considers it important that people are aware of the seriousness and the implications of HIV/AIDS.

5.6.2.4. Category IV: Self-concept

- **Fears**

7. I know it is silly but I am afraid of *(no response).*

22. Most of my friends don't know that I am afraid of *exposing that I am an orphan.*

37. I wish I could lose the fear of *the existence of ghosts.*

52. My fears sometimes force me to *(no response).*

- **Elucidation of fears**

The subject's lack of response to questions 7 and 52 indicate that he does not wish to expose his weaknesses as well as the manner in which he reacts when he feels threatened or afraid. Nevertheless, he does concede that it bothers him that he is an orphan and feels that this is why others are derogatory towards him. He therefore expresses a desire to suppress this fact. He displays a sense of inadequacy in his fear of ghosts and he has no suitable adult to discuss this issue with.

- **Guilt feelings**

15. I would do anything to forget the time *like reading newspaper and going to school.*

30. My greatest mistake was *to go to town without permission.*

45. When I was younger, I felt guilty about *going out to play with my friends and leaving my mother alone when she was ill.*

60. The worst thing I ever did was *to block a goal when we were playing soccer.*

- **Elucidation of guilt feelings**

The subject's response to question 15 could have a bearing on his feeling guilty about wanting to abandon his learning and seek employment in order to provide for his brother and sister. Question 45 highlights a childish response to go out and play rather than remain at home with an ailing mother. On hindsight he condemns his selfishness to choose recreation. This sense of guilt is indicative that he had never considered the severity of his mother's illness nor the fact that she would pass on so quickly. He even considers simple actions such as his inability to perform well in a game of soccer as a betrayal to his friends.

- **Personal strengths**

2. When everything seems to be against me *I talk to my friends if I have any problem.*
17. I believe that I have the ability to *do something to help others because of the future and this is the time to do something.*
32. My greatest weakness is *(no response).*
47. When luck turns against me *I talk to my friends.*

- **Elucidation of personal strengths**

Jeffrey's determination to convince his community to free themselves from the depths of depression and poverty is foremost at all times in his responses. He considers his friends to be his greatest source of comfort and he knows that they will assist him always. Again he is hesitant to expose any weaknesses that may be used against him.

- **The Past**

9. When I was a child (younger) *I was very poor.*
24. Before I was at school *I was a man who did know something like draw something that we were drawing.*
39. If I were a little child again *I will be playing with toys like a baby and crying for something that I like.*
54. The thing I remember most about my childhood *is playing soccer and jumping.*

○ **Elucidation with reference to the past**

Although the subject recalls happy, playful days of his childhood, he is fully aware that even then there was poverty, helplessness and hardship. His reference to being ‘a man’ in question 24 could be attributed to the positive association between education and success. Hence, he will be able to extricate himself and his family from their desperate conditions.

● **The future**

5. To me the future looks *so bad because I have no money to do everything.*
20. I look forward to *build my future because I like the community and to talk to them like my future.*
35. Some day I *want to be a teacher or social worker to help other children like me.*
50. When I am older *I will be a teacher because I like teaching children.*

○ **Elucidation with reference to the future**

Realistically, Jeffrey’s view of his future is clouded by doubt and failure since the lack of financial support will not allow for personal improvement. All the same, he does not abandon his determination to become a teacher or a social worker and lend a hand to others. In all his discussions about the future Jeffrey concentrates on enhancing his own situation in order to be able to encourage others to do the same and never just for personal gains.

● **Goals and Ambitions**

2. I always wanted to *have money to buy food and clothes.*
18. I could be perfectly happy if *I can get a job.*
33. My secret ambition in life *doing well in school and at home and to build my big house.*

49. What I want most out of life *is money to do something like buying a car.*

- **Elucidation of goals and ambitions**

The subject is typical of adolescents all over the world in his ambition to get a job, build a house and buy a car. However, his primary goal is to have sufficient money to be able to feed and clothe his family and himself. Obtaining any form of employment is seen as an opportunity to fulfill these targets and provide the basic necessities that they lack at the moment.

5.6.2.5. Three wishes

1. *I wish to buy a nice car and build a big house at home.*
1. *I wish to play for Orlando Pirates.*
2. *I wish to get my driver's license to drive a car.*

- **Summary of three wishes**

These are the desires typical of any male – the middle-class dream that will ensure that he is far removed from the abject poverty of his present living conditions. However, in Jeffrey's case, these are somewhat unrealistic if he is unable to procure the necessary financial support. Living as he does, with his brother, it is hardly likely that he will be able to fulfill these wishes without some form of monetary patronage that so many of the children in this area urgently require. The apparent lack of parental guidance, his lack of exposure to the outside world and his low level of maturity are all to blame for his dreams.

5.6.3. Interpretation of Jeffrey's personality

The procedure followed below will conform to the developmental levels of adolescence as defined in chapter 4.1 to 4.6 of chapter 2 of this study.

5.6.3.1. Cognitive Development

The subject demonstrates a sense of responsibility, reliability and abstract thinking beyond his years. He is emphatic regarding his attitude towards promiscuity and AIDS. His perception allows him the ability to consider each new problem in its entirety and not to become overwhelmed by any. The extraordinary circumstances that he faces require the sagacity of an adult.

5.6.3.2. Physical Development

Jeffrey is sexually sensitive to normal adolescent behaviour of a boy of his age. He admits to having a girlfriend and is not embarrassed to concede this. Considering his awareness of HIV/AIDS and his condemnation of promiscuity, this is a safe relationship. Physically, he is a well-built lad and his brother looks up to him as the head of this household – a role he assumes without question.

5.6.3.3. Emotional Development

It is apparent that Jeffrey is proficient at handling a multitude of emotional levels in his relationships with his peers, teachers and family. The one most outstanding feature of Jeffrey's character was that he did not display an adolescent-like single-mindedness with himself. The profound insight in his responses always indicated a philanthropic spirit in that he cared more about the pathetic plight of others rather than his own. He

even suggests that he feels guilty about leaving his mother alone while he played with his friends and for not having helped more her while she was ill. At the time of her illness and her death Jeffrey was traumatized and feared the consequent reactions from others to his becoming an orphan. He tries to overcome his fears and at one stage even considers the challenging task of leaving home to work in order to support his family.

5.6.3.4. Moral Development

This home is free of any conflict and hostility. The subject displays abstract ideas that are indicative of a superior state of moral development. Jeffrey is empathetic towards all those whom he comes across especially others in his deprived society. He is always mindful of his mother's insistence upon the need for respect towards others, especially his teachers. Regardless of his personal deprivation, he does not lack respect for others, but he openly condemns immoral sexual behaviour particularly from females.

5.6.3.5. Social Development

The subject is considered as a leader by his peers and although he lacks parental guidance, is constantly conscious of his mother's nurturing. He is popular and interacts mainly with his friends rather than his family – hence a strong peer group influence exists. The extended family is almost non-existent apart from the aunt with whom the subject's sister lives. Admittedly, at times there is evidence of some form of discrimination against them at school. Jeffrey is determined to improve himself in order to assist others. He does experience emotional turmoil when he considers his long-term plans, seeing that he is fully aware that he cannot achieve his goals without constructive financial and emotional support.

5.6.3.6. Connotative Development

Jeffrey is determined to accomplish his objective regardless of being fully aware that they are somewhat idealistic. He seeks emancipation and upliftment while he adheres to his moral principles. Regardless of his personal deprivation, he does not lack respect for others, the respect that his mother had instilled in them. He is motivated to complete his studies and become a teacher or a social worker in order to uplift the lot of his indigent community.

5.6.4. Conclusion

5.6.4.1. Education

Jeffrey is disturbed at the fact that he lost a year of his schooling when he had to take over household chores as a result of his mother's sudden illness. He was unaccustomed to these tasks and would often choose to ignore his mother's needs in order to play with his friends – an action he regrets now. However, he has adapted to his role of head of this child-headed household and attends school regularly. Jeffrey's positive self-concept and the support system in the form of The Thandanani Children's Foundation as well as the caregiver selected by his mother will assist him in his pursuit of independence and prosperity (Pretorius 1998:20-21). Despite the impoverished social milieu, his need for security and a sense of belonging are not jeopardized in any way (Pretorius 1998:30-31). This will probably facilitate his desire to become a teacher or a social worker if he is able to obtain financial assistance.

The subject finds that although his classmates are considerate and helpful, other children at school are more biased and tease him because of his domestic situation. According to Jeffrey, education is the key to his being able to assist other victims of HIV/AIDS to overcome the stigma attached to the pandemic. Therefore, he is

determined to proceed towards a tertiary education that will enable him to work with his own disadvantaged community.

The payment of school fees and the purchase of stationery as well as some books are taken care of by the Thandanani Children's Foundation. Jeffrey is well aware that his opportunity to further his education depends on the generosity of sponsors associated with NGO's.

5.6.4.2. Social life

Jeffrey and his brother are fortunate enough to be taken care of by their neighbour who had promised their dying mother to take care of the boys after her demise. Their home is a meeting place for their supportive friends who share their lives and hardships. The subject appears to be a popular boy among his classmates whom he assists with homework regularly.

The Thandanani Children's Foundation provides the subject and his brother with basic foodstuff but they admit that this does not last the time it is meant to. They are unable to purchase any other items such as casual clothes and shoes and rely on generous sponsors for this. Their neighbours are just as destitute as they are and cannot assist the subject with any provisions. However, Jeffrey admits that there is a sense of amicability among the people in this community, which is rare. It is possible that Jeffrey is self-confident since he does not feel threatened or anxious in any way (perhaps because he is a boy) and also that he does not encounter any radical bigotry.

The subject is extremely disturbed that his only sister is in the care of an aunt who resides some distance away but accepts that it is for the good of his sister. They long to see their sister more often but they can do so only when there is sufficient money from the sale of the vegetables that they grow.

5.7. THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY UPON THE RESEARCH SUBJECTS

All four of the subjects are living in the same rural area and under the same social and economic circumstances - hence, the same disadvantaged social milieu both physically and socially (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 1998:19-20). Poverty has played a significant role in further exacerbating their wretched living conditions, making their path towards self-actualization all the more difficult. Moreover, they have all been abandoned by their extended families because these families are probably in the same deprived situation as the children are probably since the extended families are prejudiced towards these orphans of AIDS.

Thembelihle, Brenda and Jeffrey were exposed to “orphanhood” before their parents passed away, since their parents were unable to support these children when they were ill. With no income and a slowly dying parent to care for, the traumatized children were driven further into the state of abject poverty. Ntombifuthi’s situation was even more severe than the other three because she had her baby, a little nephew and her school-going sister to take care of. Hence, it is evident that all the orphans struggle to satisfy even their most basic human need of hunger and thirst as depicted by Maslow (Pretorius 1994:30) since none of them has any constant support system and cannot purchase food, clothes and any other basic necessities.

The adolescents often go to bed without food and do not have hygienic routines as a result of the lack of readily available running water in this rural area. The orphans’ social milieu (Pretorius 1994:32) takes the form of one that is basically poverty-stricken - where the community is in dire need of financial assistance. Despite the fact that the adolescents discussed their church attendance, there is obviously no financial support available from these religious groups.

Jeffrey is the only orphan who has a caregiver who had been chosen by his mother prior to her death. The neighbour provides moral support and cooks meals making use of the foodstuff provided by The Thandanani Children's Foundation. She is unable to provide any financial or material support as she too is unemployed and has no other form of support. It is worthy of note that Jeffrey's support system as well as the fact that he is a male precludes him from the anxieties that the girls experience regarding their need for safety on Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (Pretorius 1994:30-31).

The orphan adolescents' main source of support is the Thandanani Children's Foundation, an NGO in Pietermaritzburg. The Foundation takes care of the school fees and arranges for regular (often monthly) food vouchers. However, the Foundation relies on sponsorship. With other areas and many more children in similar living conditions to take care of, it is impossible for the Foundation to do more than this.

5.8. THE EFFECTS OF HIV/AIDS UPON THE EDUCATION OF THE RESEARCH SUBJECTS

The Thandanani Children's Foundation ensures that Jeffrey, Brenda and Thembelihle are able to attend school by paying their school fees timeously. However none of can be victimized or refused admission National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 (Government Gazette 1999:12) to any of the schools according to the laws relating to education in South Africa. Local schools do not appear to discriminate against any of the research subjects in any way. However, the schools are not active in supporting them to alleviate the inhibiting circumstances at their homes.

Literature has demonstrated that often adolescents living in child-headed households are compelled to abandon their schooling as a result of the further schooling expenses that they incur. However, all of them who are at school display a concern about whether they will be able to complete their schooling. They are fully aware that they will be able to

uplift themselves from their abject conditions only if they are able to obtain suitable employment after completing grade twelve. Within the context of Maslow's hierarchy of human needs the orphans' display (in their responses regarding their three wishes) that they too desire the prestige, status and sense of adequacy that the fourth stage (basic socio-affective needs for example being acknowledged and respected) is generally supposed to fulfil (Pretorius 30-31).

Ntombifuthi, research subject 2, displays a deep desire to be able to continue her schooling where she left of. However, she is unable to do this as long as she has the baby to take care of by herself. Thembelihle and Brenda had to drop out of school when they were compelled to take care of their ailing parents. Moreover, Brenda has to drop out of school when she falls pregnant. It is likely that these two girls were not fortunate enough to have the parental/adult guidance or the appropriate knowledge about sexuality to avert such a situation. The three adolescents at school were also emphatic that they could not afford school accessories in the form of sports kits and study material, lunch or the luxury of participation in any sporting activities. Wherever possible, the school provided books and stationery if generous sponsors were not forthcoming.

Within this underprivileged community schools are unable to create feeding schemes to cater for the needs of orphans of AIDS and children like them. The adolescent orphans are deprived of taking part in regional and provincial activities because they cannot afford the outfits and equipment as well as the travelling costs of such participation. Hence the children are unable to distinguish themselves on the sports field beyond school level.

5.9. CONCLUSION

It is apparent from the preceding discussion that HIV/AIDS impacts negatively upon the research subjects who are orphans of AIDS in child-headed households, since they lack the necessary guidance and support those parents normally provide. Hence, their social lives as well as their educational and aspirations are stymied by the fact that their lives are transformed to accommodate for their lack of parental support.

Being orphans in child-headed households, HIV/AIDS has impacted negatively on the research subjects' self-actualisation and ambitions. They find themselves in insecure and apprehensive states. They want to finish school knowing that they do not have effective support systems to attain their ambitions. Furthermore, they are compelled to take care of themselves, their siblings, their homes and their personal needs without proper guidance, which disregard their personal ambitions. It is obvious that the education of the research subjects has suffered in the sense that two of the four subjects had to temporarily abandon their studies to take care of their ailing parents and two had to drop out of school permanently. The lack of an effective support system also had a negative effect on the research subjects socially. They were all abandoned by their relatives and sometimes suffered the stigma and discrimination that becomes apparent with the pandemic. Nevertheless, the research subjects are all emphatic about the fact that they want to extricate themselves from their indigent environment in order to enjoy what they considered "better" lives.

The support that a child receives influences his social and educational ambitions. In the case of the fourth research subject, the support he receives from his neighbour affords him more stability and he has a greater chance of realizing his goals. This is contrary to the future aspirations of the other subjects who are deprived of support and cannot achieve their goals under the present circumstances.