CHAPTER SIX

SYNOPSIS OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS

AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this research as outlined in Chapter One was to investigate how the black adolescent from a single parent family experiences personnel, social, educational and career choice problems and how these problems affect the way in which this adolescent constitutes his lifeworld.

In order to achieve the stated objectives as outlined, guidance and counselling in the school situation can play an important role. The problem that faces the black adolescent from a single parent family is that he is viewed with suspicion by both teachers and peers, which results in emotional problems that could become a hindrance in his becoming an adult. Such adolescents can be helped through guidance and counselling programmes.

Chapter Five revealed through the analysis and interpretation of empirical data, how black adolescents need guidance and counselling in order for them to adjust well in the world and make relevant decisions.

6.2   SUMMARY AND THEORETICAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

Chapter One consists of a statement and a brief overview of the problem on how the black adolescent from a single parent family copes with personal, social, educational and career choice needs.

An intensive study of the needs of black adolescents from single parent families was undertaken in Chapters Two and Three. It became clear that these needs can be described according to the three dimensions, namely the spontaneous dimension, interpersonal relationship and orientation towards adulthood. Problems related to these dimensions were also discussed.

In Chapter Two attention was given to the significance of the said dimensions, as they can be identified in the black adolescents' major problem areas. The different ways in which the spontaneous dimension manifests itself, reveal that the major problems could be seen as **coming to terms with the self** (self-awareness), **establishing an identity, relationship with the family, school and friends** (peers). Independent view of life, social norm orientation and career directedness also serve as parameters to evaluate the development of the black adolescent towards responsible adulthood.

It is fitting to mention that the spontaneous dimension concerns itself, amongst others, with the manner in which the adolescent from a single parent family discovers himself. The adolescent can only be in a position to discover himself if he relates to his environment, hence the relationship dimension, which is concerned with the adolescent's relationship with the family and the society of which he is part. The meaningful relationships that adolescents form, help to orientate them towards adulthood.

In Chapter Three, the personal, social and vocational needs of black adolescents from single parent families, as well as their guidance needs were analysed. This analysis was followed by a discussion of strategies to be used in guidance and counselling.

The nature of their needs reveals that black adolescents in single parent families are constantly looking for assistance in order to develop into self-actualising individuals. Taking into account the aims of guidance in the school situation, as contained in literature, there is good reason to believe that guidance can contribute substantially to the solving of problems experienced by black adolescents in single parent families.

In Chapter Four attention was given to the design of the empirical investigation and attempts were made to obtain empirical information on the significance of guidance in the lifeworld of the black adolescent in the single parent family. The method of investigation, the research group, the measuring instrument and statistical techniques were clarified.

In Chapter Five a thorough analysis and interpretation of the research data statistical analysis was undertaken.

In this chapter, the major conclusions from the analysis and interpretation of data, as well as conclusions drawn from the literature review, are presented. Recommendations concerning the problem are also given, and the field for further research is outlined.

6.3   **MOST IMPORTANT FINDINGS**

The following are the major findings that emanate from an analysis of the result of this research:

- The majority of black adolescents from single parent families are staying with their mothers only. These mothers are either unmarried or widowed. The high number of unmarried women as revealed by this research can possibly be ascribed to early pregnancy while that of widows could be related to the violence that recently engulfed South Africa, particularly in black Townships.

- Very few men who are single parents due to various causes are staying with their children. Such children more often than not are brought up by relatives and never experience parental care - very often resulting in the fact that they themselves end up being single parents.

- The majority of black adolescents from single parent families are not the only children in their families. They have siblings to look after and this has an impact on their cognitive development as they are often burdened with the responsibilities of being the caretakers of their younger brothers and sisters.

- As far as the spontaneous dimension is concerned, different groups of people have different guidance and counselling needs. Female teachers differ from male teachers in their views concerning the guidance needs of pupils. Female teachers are inclined to be more positive or optimistic than their male counterparts concerning the future prospects of the pupils.

- Concerning the relationship dimension boys tend to be more realistic than their female counterparts. Boys need more information on how to be useful members of the community. They are faced with the reality of making important decisions concerning their careers, and as such feel more hesitant than girls.

- In as far as orientation towards adulthood is concerned, it would seem that both boys and girls are generally well oriented, although boys appear to be more positive than girls. It would seem that boys have a better understanding of the purpose of life (social norm orientation) than girls. All of these needs have to be met through guidance programmes including life skills training in the school situation.

- Finally, the most important finding is that there are different needs for guidance among different groups of black adolescents from single parent families. All of these needs have to be met through guidance programmes (including life skills training) in school.

6.4 REPORT ON THE TESTING OF THE HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses stated in Chapter One were tested and the following were the results:

- Adolescents in general, and in single parent families in particular, experience personal, social and career directedness problems which affect their interpersonal relationship towards adulthood. The questionnaire for the pupils revealed that the majority of the black adolescents involved in the sample experience personal, social and career choice problems and as such need guidance to overcome these problems.

- School teachers lack knowledge and understanding of adolescents' needs in general and in particular those of adolescents from single parent families in terms of personal needs, interpersonal relationship, career directness and orientation

towards adulthood. Through the results of the questionnaire for teachers, it was revealed that most of the teachers involved in the sample do not have sufficient faith in their pupils, which is a clear indication that they lack knowledge and understanding of the adolescents' need, which emphasises the need for guidance in a school situation.

- Single parents seem to have a negative attitude towards their children's needs in terms of their interpersonal relationships and career-directness. It was revealed that most of the black adolescents, from single parent families' parents are disinterested in their children's work at school and have a negative attitude towards them, while transfering their parental duties to the school.

- Guidance in schools is essential in assisting black adolescents from single parent families to actualise their potential. Through the pupils' and teachers' response to the questionnaires it was revealed that there is a need for guidance in schools to assist these adolescents to actualise their potential.

6.5 EVALUATION OF THE STUDY

Despite the pilot study and careful structuring of the study, certain pitfalls did occur, and yet these were insignificant in terms of the aim of this research. The instrument used was a structured questionnaire. Like any paper and pencil test, the problem of skipping certain items was observed but these were so few that they had no impact on the overall results.

The research was based on school-going black adolescents, and yet, a different view might have been achieved if black adolescents who do not attend school had been

involved in the sample. It is, however, difficult to scout for such adolescents in an organised research of this nature.

6.6   RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations which flow from the research findings are as follows:

6.6.1.   Attitude of people towards single parenting

Single parenting is a God given phenomenon and should not be regarded as a different entity from ordinary parenting. Adolescents from such families should see themselves as ordinary children like others and should be assisted to constitute their lifeworld accordingly. Single parents should not shy away from their parental responsibilities. To be a single parent is better than not being a parent at all and to have one parent is better than having no parent at all.

6.6.2.   Spontaneous dimension

Guidance and counselling programmes should endeavour to assist black adolescents from single parent families to understand themselves as persons so that they can have self-confidence. The development of the adolescent's personality should be regarded as a priority in a teaching-learning situation.

Both the family, the school and the society in general should join hands in guiding adolescents towards maximum realisation of their personality potential. Failure to do so

will result in a generation which can be truly regarded as "lost and marginalised". The consequences of this are too ghastly to contemplate.

6.6.3. <u>Relationship dimension</u>

People can in modern times be educated and trained in virtually any skill. They hear and read of sex education, computer education and much more. If people worry about getting educated on matters such as how to conserve nature and environment, they should also be more concerned about being educated on parental responsibilities.

Parents in general, single parents in particular, need to be educated in current trends in child care and parent behaviour such as educational psychology, child psychology, adolescent psychology and contemporary parental life styles. It is through education in these disciplines that parents acquire knowledge and acumen in the art of successful parenting.

Parents' role in the guidance and counselling of their children should be promoted through guidance and counselling centres throughout the country in the spirit of Reconstruction and Development, which is the policy of the government of National Unity. Universities can play a vital role by including parental education in their distant learning programmes.

Teachers should at all times relate their subjects to various careers and professions from which pupils can choose at the end of their schooling. Every teacher should be trained and equipped with guidance skills (including life skills training), and this should not only be the duty of the guidance and counselling teacher.

6.6.4.   Orientation towards adulthood

Guidance and counselling teachers in schools and guidance lecturers at universities and colleges should promote the development of an independent view of life. They must also encourage and teach students to become helpful members of the community regarding social, moral and career matters.

The maladjusted adolescents of today will obviously become maladjusted adults of tomorrow and their offspring will probably be maladjusted children. This type of occurrence should be prevented at all costs, and the solution is likely to be found through formal guidance programmes in schools and universities. The government should support such programmes in the spirit of the Reconstruction and Development Programme.

6.6.5.   General recommendations

In addition to the above recommendations which are on specific dimensions, the following also apply:

- All communication media such as newspapers, radio and television should be engaged in propagating the importance of guidance and single parenting in general. The South African Broadcasting Corporation has made a significant move towards achieving this goal in programmes such as "Top Level", which recently screened programmes on single parenting. Such programmes should be encouraged and video cassettes be made available to the public.

■   In the restructuring of the education programme of the country, people structuring the curriculum should include in the guidance syllabus an aspect on parenting (complete families and single parent families). These guidance programmes should also include the challenges of child rearing in the current socio-economic dispensation.

6.6.6   Recommendations for further research

This research was an attempt to explore and describe how the black adolescent in a single parent family experiences problems of personal, social, educational and career choice nature. It should be followed by an in-depth study of the total population, especially black adolescents whose parents are single due to unnatural and political reasons such as a parent being forced to be in exile and deportation with no chance of being with the family. Such adolescents experience unique emotional and social dislocation and their alienation and disillusionment must be very intense when compared to the other black adolescents from single parent families.

Community interest and involvement, with reference to parents themselves in the upbringing and education of their children, should be further investigated. This problem requires the attention of all role players in education as well as the government itself.

6.6.7   Conclusion

This study may be regarded as the tip of an iceberg in the field of black adolescents in single parent families. The investigation showed that the needs of black adolescents from

single parent families vary from problems regarding personal, social, educational and career choice issues. There might be other problem that still need to be identified.

In the light of the above, it remains a constant and continual challenge to educationist and parents to make a concerned effort to:

- Identify other needs of black adolescents from single parent families, and to try and meet these needs through guidance both at home and in the school situation.

- Prepare these adolescents for the future through purposeful guidance programmes, enabling them to become responsible members of the community.

- Provide guidance and help to adolescents to become what their capabilities allow them to be, assisting them to actualise their lifeworld to its fullest degree.

Finally, it suffices to state that this study has highlighted but a few matters regarding the problems of black adolescents from single parent families and how to help and guide these adolescents. The government of the day must view these problems with the seriousness they deserve.

It is recommended that further research be encouraged to investigate areas which were not covered by this investigation, so that a white paper concerning all aspects of single parenting and how they impact on the development of the adolescent, can be produced.

Relevant and feasible recommendations made by various researchers, together with the recommendations of this research if implemented, can assist the learning-becoming black adolescent in a single parent family to accomplish his main objectives and to grow into a fully fledged member of society, able to fulfil his role in the community and the society in which he finds himself.

Guidance should form an integral part of the education programme and must receive the unqualified support from all those who are involved with the education of children in general.

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