

**THE ROLE OF OPEN SCHOOLS IN THE PROCESS
OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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January 1997

DECLARATION

"I declare that this dissertation 'The role of Open Schools in the Process of Social Change in South Africa' represents my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references."



P Bhengu

DURBAN

January 1997

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Prof R P G Ngcongco, Dr M S Vos, Dr A van der Merwe and
Ms N H Gcabashe.
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DEDICATION

;

This work is dedicated to my parents:
my mother Velaphi and my late father Nkophane
for their love of progress through Education.

ABSTRACT

This study considers open schools as a movement for reform and social change. It is argued in this study that the mere act of opening up schools to all race groups is an important step in the road to social change, particularly in a country where government had enacted several pieces of legislation to prevent racial mixing of pupils in schools. A combination of social, political and economic factors such as, the crisis in black education culminating in the 1976 Soweto uprising, the moral and the social conscience of the Churches, corporate social responsibility, skills shortage and the government reform initiatives during the 1990's are cited as the main reasons for the opening up of schools.

Theoretically, the study draws on the assimilationist and pluralistic models. These two models are prevalently used in the provision of education in a society comprising of people from diverse groups and backgrounds. Approaches under each of these two models are initially discussed and analysed, and later applied in the conclusion.

This dissertation depicts the attitudes of 100 respondents selected from the teachers, parents and pupils ranks associated with open schools in the Durban Metropolitan area.

Findings drawn from the empirical data indicate that the different views on open schools held by black and white respondents somewhat blur the role of open schools as catalysts for social change. Blacks interpret open schools from the educational standards point of view, whereas whites see open schools as providing an opportunity for socio-cultural enrichment. As a result of the differing views, the educational approach adopted by open schools vacillates between assimilationism and pluralism. Be that as it may,

respondents displayed overwhelming support for the potential open schools have to bring about social change.

Finally, on the basis of the aims of the study and the empirical findings, conclusions are drawn. Recommendations to make open schools viable agents of reform and social change are formulated as follows:

- That open schools reflect their 'openness' in practice in keeping with their intended mission.
- That open schools revisit their school policies with a view to addressing those aspects of policy which members of certain groups find objectionable.
- That open schools practise differentiation with care.
- That open schools implement training for teachers on dealing with school population diversity.
- That open schools work on producing appropriate teaching material to be used in open schools.
- That open schools and the Department of Education should co-operate in dealing with problems arising from the 'openness' of schools.

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THE ROLE OF OPEN SCHOOLS IN THE PROCESS OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT

1.1 STATEMENT AND ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

The subject of this study is to examine the role and contribution of open schools in the changing South Africa. It seeks to explore how the challenges of mixing pupils from various racial and cultural backgrounds in a previously segregated schooling system, have been used to the benefit of the pupils and society as a whole. The mere act of opening up schools is viewed as an important milestone in the process of social change in South Africa for the following reasons:

- Ideological: It is a significant departure from what has been the norm in the schooling system of a country, whereby admission of pupils in schools was determined by race and not by ability and interest as open schools purport.
- Educational: It questions the idea that pupils must be prepared to serve and fit into the mainstream society rather than their 'own' societies as previously envisaged by the Nationalist Government's policy of Separate Development.

- **Cultural:** Open schools would set the pace for other social institutions on racial mixing thus making it difficult for supporters of separate development to defend discrimination on the grounds of race, colour or ethnicity.

Put differently, open schools in so far as South Africa is concerned seek to redefine the relationship between education and the social system which has all along promoted segregation in all spheres of life. In practice, open schools seek, *inter alia*, to combat discrimination and to promote amongst pupils intergroup and interpersonal relationships which are not found in segregated/closed schools. Finn (1990:30) supports this view when he states that: “(Open) schools must balance the selection and ranking function of education with the legitimating norms of socialisation into a common culture of non-discrimination and of equal rights... they have to make students more the same while at the same time making them more different.”

Given the above background, it becomes clear that if structured correctly, open schools have a crucial role to play as catalysts in a process of social change. Ozmon and Craver (1990: 162) maintain that: “It is not unusual for those who are involved with change, particularly the kinds of immediate and necessary changes that every age seems to require to turn to education as the most effective and efficient instrument for making such changes in an intelligent, democratic and humane way”.

Therefore, according to Ozmon and Craver (1990), schools play an important and a decisive function in a changing society. A more serious consequence of current and future societal changes lies in that such changes place new and intensified demands on individuals. Open schools, *ipso facto*, provide a milieu whereby demands on individual are intensified because of adjustments they have to make to their outlook towards race, colour or ethnicity. Societal changes influence an individual's view of his world and of himself, thus leading to many different types of efforts to find meaning, emotional security and self-expression.

The opening up of schools and the consequent changes thereof has many and varied implications for all the stakeholders in education. For instance, for the educationists/ educators, it means teaching and managing the schools as 'open' institutions, an experience they were not exposed to in segregated/ closed schools. For the pupils, it means understanding how race and social stratification by race are used to construct special groups of privileged and underprivileged people in society and how this can be dealt with. Schooling is one of the societally accepted ways of addressing inequalities that prevail in societies thus opening opportunities to all. For our society, it questions the beliefs and structures that have maintained and sustained racial distinctions in South Africa over the years.

In open schools, education ceases to be a tool of domination by one race over the other as has been the case with Bantu Education with its inherent inferior race and class character. The statement 'What is separate cannot be equal'

does not find credence in open schools because education in these schools becomes a societal affair devoid of colour, race or ethnicity. It is not an 'own' race affair.

1.2 OPEN SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA : HISTORY, TRENDS AND LESSONS

1.2.1 Background

In order to put open schools in context as tools for reform and social change, it is important to sketch briefly the realities that made the ground fertile for their introduction in South Africa.

The National Party came into power in 1948 under the ticket of Separate Development whereby each of the four major racial groupings in South Africa namely, Indians, blacks, coloureds and whites were regarded as separate nations/race groups, each needing separate treatment in the eyes of the law and social services, including education. In order to entrench racial separation and to protect the white race, several laws amongst others, the Group Areas Act of 1950, and the Separate Amenities Act of 1953, the Bantu education Act of 1953 were enacted by the Nationalist Government. The political and social resistance triggered by these laws is well documented and it is, except with regard to the Bantu Education Act of 1953, beyond the scope of this study.

Be that as it may, social, economic and political practices of a country have a direct impact on its education system and so was the case with South Africa. In terms of the Bantu Education Act of 1953, the control of black education shifted from the hands of non-government institutions (for example Churches, who by then had controlled the bulk of black education) to government control. Whilst the Churches welcomed the provision of the Bantu Education Act on State funding black education, most Churches vehemently opposed the other provisions of this Act as discriminatory and unjust, intending to lower the educational standards of blacks. Feit (1986: 84) in Kallaway sums up the envisaged aim of black education under the Bantu Education Act of 1953 as follows : "...the new system (of education) was intended to prepare black children for the subordinated positions that awaited them in such a way that they were appropriately equipped with limited skills as well as ready to resign themselves to their exploitation. White supremacy would be secured if the black product of schooling was a person who accepts in full the Nationalist policy of apartheid..."

The Roman Catholic Church which was then owning and running most of the black church schools demonstrated its opposition to the Bantu Education Act by refusing to hand over its schools to the State even at the risk of losing State funding. Although the Roman Catholic Church's refusal to hand over its schools to the State was an act of resistance engendered by the fears that the quality and standards of black education would be lowered, initially, it had nothing to do with open schools *per se*, but to maintain the role of the Church schools in evangelisation. Christie (1991: 88) supports this view with a

quotation from the South African Outlook as follows : “We gravely fear that any Catholic institution entering the community school system cannot retain its Catholic character nor provide the kind of education which accords with our principles.”

Also, sentiments expressed by the Roman Catholic Church were shared by the Protestant Churches as well. Christie (1991: 88) writes: “This will be the only Anglican boarding institution for Africans in South Africa. We feel strongly that there should be at least one school where our faith can still be taught and practised.”

1.2.2 The churches and open schools

The initial aim of education in schools run by the Churches was, in the main, to provide black pupils with the same educational opportunities as other race groups. Thus even though the State schools were racially segregated, some Church controlled schools, for example, Lovedale were racially mixed. By this action, although not intentionally, the Churches pioneered the concept of open schools in South Africa. Also, as early as the mid 1960's, in Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world had been called upon by the Pope to adopt a social gospel which, *inter alia*, called for: “The application of the gospel to social attitudes and conduct, and to political and economic systems flowing from them and influencing them” (Christie 1991: 94).

When the crisis in black education manifested itself intensely through the June 16, 1976 Soweto School riots, the Roman Catholic Church, driven by the principles of the social gospel and its moral conscience came out in the open about its stance on open schools.

In 1976 the Roman Catholic Church opened its white church schools to all race groups, supporting its actions as follows: "Realising that the Church must give witness to the Gospel in its institutions, the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference favours a policy of integrating schools to promote the implementation of the policy according to circumstances, and directs the (Catholic) Department of Schools to continue to study the question with view to enabling the conference to confirm and concretise the policy (Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference minutes 1976).

The decision taken by the Roman Catholic Church on open schools was later followed by the Anglican and Methodist Churches. The implications of the stance taken by the Churches on open schools were far reaching because they touched upon the ordering of society as a whole in the following manner:

- For the first time under the Nationalist Government policy of separate schooling for the different race groups, pupils were taken as scholars and not members of a particular race group, a drastic change in its own right.

- It marked the first open conflict between Church and State on the then existing government policy on separate education. The Churches were seen by government to be flirting with the enemies of the State by meddling in what was a political decision. In its attempts to diffuse this conflict, the State retorted initially by threats of withdrawing subsidies from white church schools which had opened up to other race groups.

Seeing that this threat was not heeded by the Churches, the State then tried to regulate the entry of blacks into white church open schools by a quota system on government pupil *per capita* subsidy;

- Open schools would be white registered. The implication here was that Church open schools would exist alongside close/segregated church and State schools.

1.2.3 The private sector and open schools

The precedence set by the Churches on open schools was soon to be emulated by the private sector/companies. All along the private sector had been funding black schools and offering bursaries to promising black students to study in black institutions. The change in practice of the private sector and its initiative and interest in open schools was part of the general interest in social reform. Change was prompted by numerous reasons some of which fall outside the sphere of education:

- In the aftermath of the Soweto uprising of 1976, the State and the private sector were compelled to co-operate in coming out with strategies to promote social stability in the country. Both the State and the private sector were agreed that visible social change had to take place. The politics of the day had not only divided blacks but they had also left a big chasm between the various racial groups. Given this situation, the war waged against inequalities in education of the different racial groups had shifted in 1976 to encompass the wider socio-economic as well as socio-political issues thus complicating if not worsening the social crisis in the country. The country was becoming ungovernable, making it difficult for business to operate smoothly.
- South Africa sat with millions of adults who could not read or write. There was a vast pool of under-educated blacks without jobs. Injustices and disabilities from grossly disproportionate spending on black education over the years had resulted in severe skills shortages, especially in the midst of the economic boom between the years 1977 and 1980. Imported skills were expensive and at times difficult to recruit because of the apartheid policy pursued by the government.
- Corporate social responsibility was now well in place. From 1976 onwards, several employment codes of practice, namely, the Sullivan Code, governing the American companies operating in South Africa, the European Economic Community Code governing the European counterparts and the South African Consultative Committee on Labour

Affairs Code, governing the South African companies were putting pressure on member companies to give an account on the role they were playing in improving the general lot of blacks in South Africa and advancing them to managerial positions.

Further, employment codes committed subscribing companies to a policy of total and genuine non-discrimination within the provisions of the Law. Industry and commerce had, therefore, no alternative but to try and rescue the situation in a country where education had been used so obviously and unscrupulously as an instrument of control, and also "where education had been used to protect power and privilege, to divide and segregate according to ... financing, resources, and quality" (Hartshorne 1992: 333). For instance, the Anglo American Corporation introduced a Cadet Scheme, (a support scheme for black post - matriculants) in the field of science and commercial subjects and sponsored selected recruits at the University of the Witwatersrand.

- Trade boycott by other countries against South African companies was intensifying because of the Government policy of separate development. Overseas companies were querying the social and political treatment of blacks and their reduction to second class citizens through, *inter alia*, a poor education system and lack of political rights.

- On the socio-political front, the government was being pressured locally and internationally by the liberals and business to change. To try and reform apartheid, the government appointed two commissions, namely, the Wiehahn Commission in 1977 to look into the legislation inhibiting blacks from full and equal participation in business as workers, and the Riekert Commission to investigate and report on legislation restricting the mobility of blacks in the country.
- On the education front, the government appointed the de Lange Commission in June 1980 to investigate ways and means of broadening the educational base of black education through skills training. The recommendations of the de Lange Commission on a single education ministry went unheeded by the government on the grounds of the policy 'Own Affairs.' The government opted for upgrading particularly black education rather than integrating education in the country as a whole (Zulu 1991:21).

Propelled by the above reasons, the private sector established its own open schools in 1984 under the New Era Schools Trust (NEST), a consortium of big business organisations and foundations dedicated to the founding of schools in South Africa in which each of the race groups would be fully and fairly represented in the pupil enrolment. The first school under NEST was started in Tongaat in KwaZulu-Natal. By 1989 two more NEST schools had been built, one near Pretoria and the other close to Grahamstown. As can be seen, the objective of the schools under the New Era Schools Trust was to provide a

'conflict free' model of multi-racialism for the future. The main motive of these schools was the development of a moderate black leadership both in business and in society. Zulu (1991: 22) sees the development of a black political leadership at that time as a political ploy by the government to skim off the best talents from the disadvantaged, thus depriving the protesting masses of a great section of leadership.

1.2.4 State open schools - 'the models.'

Because of the government's reform initiatives led by President F W de Klerk in the late 1980's, the writing was on the wall that education could not for long remain an island of apartheid and a white privilege in a rising sea of change.

The changes introduced at this time marked a departure from the strict apartheid philosophy, a departure which in a sense would sacrifice some holy cows that had nourished the tenets of racial separation. It was inevitable that State schools would open up to all race groups.

In 1990 the government proclaimed a school system of 'Models' (A.B.C) which made provision for white parents to select a 'Model' they would like their state schools to be classified under. "Model' C fitted to some extent in the pattern and definition of open schools.

In a Department of Education circular of 18 February 1992 to white parents, a "Model' C school was defined as a school in which:

- parents through a Governing Body manage and control many facets of the school, and have a wide range of decision-making powers e.g. admission policy, financial policy;
- salaries of all staff on the approved staffing establishment are paid by the State;
- other expenses related to the day-to-day running of the school are met by the parents and the wider community in which the school functions;
- the buildings and grounds, furniture and equipment, durable and non-durable items are transferred free of charge from the State to the Governing Body of the school.

Under the 'Model' C system, white communities who had previously enjoyed compulsory free education were now to bear a significant portion of the school's cost and in return, would have effective control over admission and other critical school policies.

In describing the rationale behind this drastic change in policy, the government stated that: "On account of the present economic climate the education budget for 1992/93 has been greatly reduced. To balance the books the Department

has the choice to reduce quite severely the number of teachers at your school or stop providing the services for which it has traditionally been largely responsible - upkeep of buildings; payment of accounts for services; provision of textbooks and stationery" (Department of Education 1992: 6).

1.2.5 Open schools in South Africa - trends and lessons

Given the above historical outline on the establishment of open schools in South Africa by the Churches, the private sector and the State, it becomes clear that, whilst open schools attempted to deracialise education and in turn society, they were also responsible for re-racialising education. For example, open schools were registered with the Department of Education as white schools under the ambit of the government 'Own Affairs' policy in a Tricameral Government. Thus, although they were open schools by virtue of admitting pupils of other race groups, they remained to all intents and purposes white schools. They were not expected to make any changes in order to accommodate the mixing of races.

Of significance, however, is that open schools accelerated the process of decentralising decision making about schools and school matters to 'grass root' level. Freedom of choice of individuals and educational institutions in society was recognised. Parents and not the State, as had been the case all along, would decide on how schools should be structured and run. This in itself was

sufficient, albeit in a small measure, to counter the racism of State imposed apartheid education.

The churches, the private sector and government were all agreed that a crisis existed in black education but what they disagreed upon was the strategy for the resolution of the crisis.

For example when the de Lange Commission recommended a single Ministry of Education which would integrate the education system of the country as a whole, the government, on the one hand, reacted to this recommendation by increasing expenditure on black education and lowering expenditure on white education. The Churches and the private sector on the other hand saw the resolution of the crisis in black education in open schools which would be modelled along the lines of white schools. These schools would be able to provide blacks with, *inter alia*, better quality education which would qualify them (blacks) for advancement to higher positions in the corporate world which was white in terms of its control, tradition and practice.

Open schools proved a point that inter-racial contact is possible without friction or conflict erupting between races, a point borne out by racial peace most of these schools have enjoyed since their inception in 1976. In other words, they proved wrong one of the view points which had been held by the Nationalist Government and its supporters all along to justify social separation of races in South Africa. Beard and Gaganakis (1991: 114) claim that open schools

provided laboratories of the future, by moving towards developing an alternative education based on non-racial principles.

There were, however, unintended consequences that manifested themselves in open schools.

- These schools were seen by protesting pupils attending black schools as elitist and intended to direct attention away from the reality of inequality in the education system (Zulu 1991:22, Beard and Gaganakis 1991: 11)
- Open schools marginalised black pupils from their communities. Pupils attending these schools became selective about whom they mixed with in their communities. They formed small, cohesive groups within their communities.
- Eligibility of black pupils in open schools was not only based on academic ability but also on social acceptability. Open schools were perceived by blacks in particular, as legitimizing social class and, therefore, not affording equal opportunity to all pupils. Their location, high fees and good facilities compared to State schools were used as a point to justify this claim.

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

It is against the above sketched background that this study seeks to establish the role of open schools in a changing South Africa.

In this study, role will be defined as a contribution made by open schools in redefining the relationship between education and a social system where race and racial segregation have been used as indices to categorise and classify people in society. Put differently, role will be seen as a way open schools prepare pupils for an open society. Prager, Longshorne and Seeman (1982: 29) citing the experience in America, support this role as follows: "Education has been identified as a central mechanism for greater inclusion of divergent groups and has been, therefore, an agent in the democratisation of the American public."

In specific terms, therefore, the objectives of this study will be:

- To establish the extent to which open schools are promoting deracialisation of society where indices of deracialisation will be constituted by :
 - the school staffing policy and the school staff composition by race:

- the racial composition of pupils in the classes and the school as a whole;
 - admission policy and criteria for admission;
 - the racial composition of the Board of Governors of the school; and
 - the existence/non-existence in school policy of clauses affirming 'openness' of the school.
-
- To investigate the extent to which open schools are viewed as necessary from a political ideological perspective in creating common values and culture bases in society.
 - To examine student body participation in the learning process with the intention of enabling students to challenge the existing social order, bearing in mind that schools are, in the main, structures that aim to reproduce society as it is.
 - To ascertain the extent to which common learning experiences in open schools impact on pupil's identity and outlook towards life.
 - To determine what learning and teaching strategies have been put in place in open schools to promote inter-cultural/inter-racial understanding.

- To probe into the perceptions, attitudes and views of the 'controlling communities' i.e. white pupils, parents and teachers as well as those of the 'recipient communities' i.e. black pupils and parents towards opening up of schools.
- To establish what unintended consequences in open schools have been by ascertaining experiences of blacks and whites to the process of opening up of schools and their views to these experiences.
- To examine the nature and extent on how open schools have influenced and impacted on pupils and communities outside these schools.

1.4 ELUCIDATION OF CONCEPTS

For the sake of clarity, it is essential that certain relevant concepts used in the topic of the study be defined.

1.4.1. Role

Role is usually defined as a function that any individual or institution can play in society to fulfil a particular objective of that particular society. In this study, role is defined as a part or function played by open schools in bringing about social change.

1.4.2 Open schools

Open schools can be described as schools which comprise of pupils from divergent groups and backgrounds. In open schools, pupil selection for education is based on the criteria of ability, talent, quality of the individual and the needs of society. Race, colour and creed are irrelevant in this type of schooling system. The implications in the above definition are that:

- Open schools seek to afford fulfilment and self-actualisation to 'all' pupils
- Open schools 'open' doors of learning and culture to all
- Education is non-racial and non-discriminatory
- Race, colour, ethnicity and creed are relegated to the background in so far as the admission of pupils is concerned

1.4.3. Social change

Social change means alteration or change in ways of life and structure of a society over time (Ezewu 1982: 123).

Ezewu's definition emphasises the notion that:

- Social change is comprehensive because by its very nature it impacts on all aspects of life of a society. This change can be defined as change that has a consequence in the functioning of a social system for attaining

its goals efficiently or fulfilling efficiently the conditions that must be met if the system is to survive.

- Further, social change is a process.

Social change may also be described as societal transformation. (Ezewu 1982: 339) argues that although theorists on social change have always sought a single cause of change, for example ideas, economics, conflict and the interaction between cultures, none of them is necessary as well as sufficient cause for all changes. He advises that it is better to find out which causes are most important in the instance of social change being studied.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 Research methods

Research with regard to this study will be conducted as follows :

- A literature study of available, relevant literature will be undertaken.
- Structured open-ended interview schedules will form the basis for discussion between the researcher and the respondents. The researcher will also train and utilise the services of field workers to assist him with the interviews.

1.5.2 Sampling method

A sample of 120 respondents comprising of 40 parents, 40 teachers and 40 standard 9 and 10 pupils will be selected in 4 open schools in the Durban Metropolitan area.

The sample will consist of an equal number of blacks and whites.

Respondents will be selected by means of the random sampling method.

1.5.3 Permission

With the aim of administering questionnaires in the selected schools, it will be necessary to first request the permission of the principals of the 4 schools.

1.5.4 Analysis of data

Questionnaires will be coded in preparation for data capture. The descriptive technique will be employed for the quantitative analysis of the data.

1.6 FURTHER COURSE OF THE STUDY

The next chapters of this study will address the following aspects:

- In chapter two, attention will be given to the theoretical framework. Models prevalently used in the provision of education will be discussed and approaches under each model will be analysed and critiqued. A literature review on open schools will be undertaken and South African open schools system will be discussed.
- The research methodology will be the focus of chapter three. In this chapter, the steps followed in conducting this research will be described and limitations in the methodology will be tabled.
- In chapter four, the analysis and interpretation of data will be presented by theme. Where appropriate, a discussion of critical findings will be undertaken at the end of each of the main themes.
- Finally, conclusions and certain recommendations will be tabled in chapter five. Also issues for further research on open schools will be suggested.

In the following chapter, the assimilationist and the pluralistic models will be analysed and the approaches under the two models will be discussed. Further, a literature review on the pluralistic model will be undertaken. Finally problems facing open schools in South Africa will be tabled.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND APPROACHES TO THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines models used in integrating pupils from diverse groups and backgrounds in a school setting. In South Africa, this diversity has been seen and defined in the main, in terms of race, ethnicity and colour. Total separation of races geographically, socially and culturally was achieved through apartheid. This was done to maintain 'purity' of nations, and in particular the Afrikaner nation. The Afrikaners believed that this purity could only be maintained by racial dominance and separation. Hence, for Afrikaner supremacy to prevail, it was necessary to control black education. Because of the accentuation on race by the previous government, immense power struggle has ensued and ultimately leading to conflict.

Sleeter (1991: 10) posits that educators have tended to conceptualise and define schools in accordance with their goals and practices and the groups they are focusing upon. What Sleeter is saying is very significant to the South African setting where, because of past discriminatory and unjust practices in the provision of education for the divergent racial groups, the goal of the new policy on education is now expected to "... enable a democratic, free, equal, just and

peaceful society to take root and prosper in our land, on the basis that all South Africans without exception share the same inalienable rights, equal citizenship and a common national destiny, and that all forms of bias (especially racial, ethnic and gender) are dehumanising" (Government Gazette 1996 : 8).

Given the above new policy on education, deciding on a model and an approach to educate pupils from diverse groups and backgrounds poses a problem about striking a balance between harmonious integration of groups and allowing human/group diversity to flourish. Put differently, the question whether to eliminate, modify or encourage diversity inherent in the groups needs to be addressed satisfactorily in order to re-organise society better. As a matter of fact, putting pupils of different races in a school or a classroom does not, *per se*, mean that a better ordering of society has come or that desirable change in group relations will occur. A deliberate and conscious approach is necessary to achieve this goal.

The outcomes of putting together people of diverse groups and backgrounds in social institutions are usually determined by how a society is ordered and may change over a period as the balance of power within and amongst the groups shifts or the domination patterns of one group over the other(s) is neutralised. Further, some of the other more important determinants of these outcomes are:

- the degree to which groups are dispersed and concentrated in a geographical setting;

- the degree of hostility and fear the dominant group(s) may have towards the subordinate group(s) and vice versa;
- the nature of contact between the groups, for example relatively friendly or co-operative or the reverse;
- the extent to which groups compete over scarce resources in society and the nature of the competition;
- the relative sizes of the dominant and the subordinate group(s).

2.2. MODELS OF EDUCATION

Models that have been used to obtain the desired outcomes in bringing together pupils of diverse groups and backgrounds in open schools have been either assimilationist or pluralistic. Many educators, however, have campaigned for a form of education that is pluralistic in nature, positively accentuating diversity in society rather than a form of education which is assimilationist.

But before going into this detail, a brief look into the two contending theoretical positions in society is advisable. Basically, there are two models of looking into society : the assimilationist and the pluralistic.

2.2.1 The assimilationist model

When two or more groups meet, there is a tendency for a hierarchical relationship to develop amongst the groups. The relationship is based on, amongst other things, one or more of the following :

- military capability,
- technology, and
- ideology.

Colonialism thrived on a combination of the above factors to generate a relationship where the coloniser was superior and the colonised inferior. This is pertinent in the integration of schools since the culture and practices of dominant groups tend to prevail.

The rationale behind the assimilationist model is to amalgamate into one whole the many diverse persons or groups in a plural society. Assimilation, therefore, becomes a process of fusion in which persons or groups acquire the way of life of the most dominant group. In practice, assimilation seeks to dissolve all ethnic identities and insists on common institutions and language. Thus what may be perceived as a non-ethnic policy under the assimilationist model may actually be a policy geared towards the destruction of all cultures except that of the most dominant group(s).

In assimilation, persons or groups are, *ipso facto*, encouraged through persuasion or coercion to acquire traditions and attitudes of the dominant group(s), and by sharing their experience, are incorporated with them into a common cultural life. In education, for example, assimilationist approaches to the provision of schooling manifest in a formal and a hidden curriculum where not only the aspects of life of the group(s) that are being assimilated are ignored, but also the language of the dominant group(s) is regarded as the official language. Differences in culture such as values, habits and religion to mention a few aspects, are almost totally relegated to the background.

Members of group(s) that are being assimilated are taught to give up their values, beliefs and behaviours and adopt a 'new' and 'better' lifestyle of the mainstream group(s).

2.2.2 Problems inherent in the assimilationist model

The assimilationist model is beset with a number of problems. some of which are the following :

- There is no one 'official' way of life in a plural society. Diverse groups in a plural society have a natural and an instinctive way of self preservation. They jealously safeguard what they feel holds them together as a group. Groups are mainly concerned with survival based on adaptive change that enables them to cope with the problems of living in society. Groups adapt certain traits of their way of life rather than change their way of life in its entirety and

the result is partial assimilation where only some traits are traded between groups.

- The assimilationist model is conflict generating rather than conflict reducing or containing. It emphasises the notion of superior/inferior ways of life. It smacks of ethnocentrism.
- The model encourages domination of one group or more over the other groups with the mainstream group(s) prescribing to the others. The non-mainstream groups are made to feel alien in society.
- Assimilation is to some extent, accompanied by a higher rate of upward mobility by members of the non-mainstream groups. However, the fact that the mainstream groups have had a head-start means that the members of the non-mainstream groups will remain in the base structure for sometime because individuals do not automatically make claims in terms of ethnic or group identity. Whether and how these claims are made depends to a large extent on the policy towards and method of ethnic/group(s) incorporation into the lifestyle of the mainstream group(s).

2.2.3 The pluralistic model

Pluralism refers to a form of society in which groups maintain their independent cultural traditions (Hawkins 1981: 210). The definition implies that society accommodates cultural diversity and each group is allowed to exercise its right to

be different. Further, though independent, each group acquires a distinct but “equal” status in a common polity. In other words, pluralists prohibit official recognition or favouritism toward ethnic or racial groups. However, cultural and racial diversity are not the only sources of pluralism. Pluralism may also emanate from many other sources such as social class, politics, religion, ideology, language and ethnicity. In this way, culture is given a broader meaning and definition to encompass one, some or all of these sources as determinants of a way of life of a people. For example in Ireland pluralism in that society is defined mainly in terms of religion.

Nieto (1992: 282) maintains that there are three different ideologies for understanding pluralism in society or the lack of it. She then goes on to describe these ideologies as follows :

- Anglo-conformity, a model of pluralism based on the concept that all ‘newcomers’ need to conform to the dominant English-speaking majority.
- the ‘melting pot,’ a model that maintains that differences need to be wiped out to form an amalgam that is unique but without traces of the original cultures. and
- the ‘salad bowl’ (alternatively a mosaic or tapestry), a model based on the premise that all ‘newcomers’ have a right to maintain their languages and cultures while combining with others to form a new society reflective of differences.

A fourth ideology on pluralism could be added to Nieto's list, namely, cultural pluralism which is ethnocentric. This model stresses a strong ethnic identity, maintaining that the different 'nations' co-exist in one State because of different cultures and, therefore, need to be kept apart. This model has been the basis upon which the ideology of apartheid in South Africa has been built.

Two main variants of pluralism have been advanced. These two variants are the conflict variant and the consensus variant. In the conflict variant it is assumed that societies organise around specific natural attributes such as race, ethnicity or religion. These attributes constitute a culture which serves as a uniting bond with societies so organised. Society thus consists of numerous distinct sub-cultures which are unwilling to lose their identity. The conflict element is a product of economic forces acting on the natural synergy where the various cultures have to compete with each other especially for resources.

The consensus variant of pluralism assumes that religious, economic, cultural and the political societal structures that exist in society play a mediatory role between individuals and the State as the sovereign body in this instance.

The plurality of intermediate institutions creates cross cutting groups affiliation as well as avenues for individual self-expression, creating safety valves for the realisation of individual leadership talent thus broadening the basis for fair competition. In this way pluralism constitutes the basis for healthy competition and consequently, consensus as opposed to the conflict variant.

For this reason the 'salad bowl' argument has been advanced to bolster the course of pluralism. In this argument it is posited that each group in a pluralistic society has a unique role to play in contributing to the advancement of society. There is, therefore, a perceived value for the continuance of diversity. It is logical that by seeing continuance of diversity in a pluralistic society, cultural spaces in which individuals regardless of their cultural affiliation will move freely without losing identity will be created. In other words, there will be a re-definition of existing boundaries allowing for alternative traditions to develop because social and cultural institutions are open. Trindis in Mogdil, Verma, Mallick and Mogdil (1985 : 77) concurs with this view as follows : "As people live in different schedules of re-enforcement, they develop distinct points of view about the way the environment is structured."

Given the above analysis of pluralism, it becomes clear that certain principles underpin this model. These principles are cultural integration, cultural differentiation and cultural continuity.

- cultural integration : implies that members of a plural society remain not only proficient in their own life-style but they also acquire knowledge, understanding and appreciation of life-styles of other groups in society without losing their life-style. Peaceful co-existence amongst different groups in society is promoted.
- cultural differentiation and variety in life: By affirming diversity, this principle takes into account both the specific and individual needs of groups, that is individuality in universality.

- cultural continuity : the continued existence of diverse life-styles alongside each other is guaranteed. Society gives a positive recognition of diverse life styles. Members of a pluralistic society develop positive perceptions, feelings and disposition towards their own and other groups' life-styles.

2.2.4 Assimilationist *vis a vis* pluralistic models

Both the assimilationist and the pluralistic models emanate from the same premise, namely, that a particular society is composed of diverse groups. The point of departure of the assimilationist model lies in the fact that it negates pluralism in the sense that at the end of the day, the ways of life of the non-mainstream groups must be give way to the way of life of the mainstream group.

The pluralistic model, lends itself to the view that a political democracy must also be a cultural democracy, and, therefore, groups have a right to exist and maintain their way of life. This approach seeks to foster the development of a plural society in which the equal validity of numerous different cultures is recognised.

Both the assimilationist and pluralistic models are, on the basis of the above assumptions, normative and hence prescriptive, that is, they focus on social engineering on the basis of their respective theoretical positions on the structure of society.

2.3 PREVALENT ASSIMILATIONIST APPROACHES TO THE PROVISION OF SCHOOLING

2.3.1 Business as usual

The main objective of this approach is to maintain the *status quo* in so far as the *classification and stratification of diverse groups in society is concerned*. For example in education the school system does nothing to accommodate the diversity of its school population. Pupils are mixed in schools on the basis of race and ethnicity and are offered the same traditional curriculum and instruction hence the title of the approach, “business as usual.”

The rationale behind this approach is that assimilation is desirable and will occur if bodies are mixed physically.

2.3.2 Teaching the exceptional

In this approach pupils from non-mainstream groups are regarded as exceptional because of their *distinguishing traits*, for example language, and for this reason the school treats them differently from the pupils from the mainstream group(s). Teaching strategies and material in the curriculum are altered and modified to fit more closely to the learning patterns of pupils from the non-mainstream groups.

The assumption underlying this approach is that assimilation is desirable and will occur more readily if transitional bridges are offered to non-mainstream pupils until they can succeed in school without these bridges, hence, for example, the alteration of material in the curriculum to suit pupils who are ‘exceptional’.

2.4 PREVALENT PLURALISTIC APPROACHES TO THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION

Extant overseas literature pertaining to education for pluralism reveals that pluralistic approaches to the provision of schooling advanced by different individuals and agencies overlap. Lynch (1986 : 10(b)) asserts that approaches are often used in hybrid or combined forms.

Different titles are given to the different approaches depending upon the educational, social and political meaning the individual or an agency wants to advocate through the particular approach. In a literature review conducted by Grant, Sleeter and Anderson (1986 : 47) they found three rationales given most often for writing or editing books on pluralism. The reasons were, firstly to acknowledge and promote human diversity, secondly to argue the importance of bilingual-cultural learning in education and to promote and to provide help for educators in this sphere.

Also in that review it was found that each of the approaches seeks to address various forms of human diversity used for social stratification. These forms of human diversity include, *inter alia*, race and ethnicity, social class, gender and handicap.

There is a dearth of literature covering the approaches to school provision for pupils from diverse groups and backgrounds in South Africa because of the policy of separate development that has been in vogue over the years. For this reason,

this section of the study on approaches will draw from experience in the United States of America and in particular from the works of Gibson (1984), Grant and Sleeter (1985) and Sleeter (1991). They set out the approaches as follows :

2.4.1 Education of the culturally different (benevolent multi-culturalism).

This approach, as its name implies, seeks to equalise educational opportunities for culturally different pupils. It emanates from the observation that there are fundamental and important problems of academic performance amongst students who do not belong to the mainstream culture in a system of education that is dominated by the mainstream culture. To be culturally different is, therefore, defined as not being a member of the mainstream group.

As an approach, it rejects the notion that problems encountered by children at school result from a disadvantaged upbringing (cultural deficit theory) but instead claims that school for these children represents a foreign culture because it is founded on a homogeneous model of society.

There is, in other words, discordance between home and school culture for children not belonging to the mainstream culture. Learning problems encountered by these children are a result of this discordance. Therefore, there is nothing wrong with the child's upbringing but the school must be changed to promote equal opportunity.

Further, this approach negates the introduction of compensatory educational programmes that deny cultural differences. It assumes no hierarchy of cultures but on the contrary, it assumes parity amongst cultures by defining human diversity as inherent in any society.

In terms of strategy, this approach advocates formulation and implementation of educational programmes that will increase compatibility between home and school environments. It sees the introduction of multicultural education as a solution in bringing about this compatibility.

A number of major problems beset this approach. Some of them are the following:

- Education of the culturally different as an approach accepts *prima facie* that the poor academic performance of children who do not belong to the mainstream culture is caused by cultural differences and offers multicultural education as a panacea to this problem.

Research in problems of academic performance of non-mainstream children reveals that there is no clear relationship between school success and multicultural education (Pettigrew 1964: 194).

- Parity among diverse groups in society does not necessarily come about because multicultural education is provided in schools particularly when one

group seeks to maintain and retain its dominance over the other groups. This approach subconsciously is conceived as a special programme designed to help and deal with a special group of pupils who are culturally different.

Proponents of multicultural education Banks (1994), Sleeter (1991), and Lynch (1986), maintain that this education is for 'all' children not just a particular group. Put differently, multicultural education should cut across cultural bounds used to define human/group diversity.

- This approach is seen as patronising and condescending by implying that certain groups are given help.

2.4.2 Education about cultural differences (cultural understanding)

This approach seeks to teach children to value cultural differences and to accept the right of others to be different. It emanates from the desire by various groups in a pluralistic society to uphold their ethnic identities and that schools should be modelled towards the cultural enrichment of all.

It claims that cultural diversity is valuable and should therefore be preserved by reinforcing it through the school, system. The school in this approach is seen as a social institution that plays a major role in shaping children's attitudes and beliefs in society.

As a strategy, this approach advocates the development and implementation of educational programmes that preserve cultural diversity. Such programmes will foster increased teacher and pupil understanding of cultural differences. Further, all pupils will learn and live and work in a culturally diverse society. According to Gibson (1984 : 100), education about cultural differences is expected to yield the following outcomes:

- cultural sensitivity;
- respect for cultural differences;
- fuller and more understanding of a nation's heritage;
- increased social justice;
- reduction of prejudice and discrimination; and
- pupil preparation for life in a heterogeneous society.

The approach. education about cultural differences, has the following shortcomings:

- It assumes that each group possesses uniform discernible traits and a set of values which are characteristic in all members of a particular group. In this respect it ignores similarities among all groups and neglects differences within any one group. Within any given group there are also for example gender and class identities. Labels like : 'black people are' and 'white people are...' can easily creep in the approach resulting in categorising and pigeonholing people of a particular group as if they are all alike.

- The approach places heavy reliance on change in the ordering of groups in society by means of an established education system. Education is capable of many things but not everything. There is, therefore no guarantee that teaching pupils about cultural appreciation and understanding will stop prejudice and bring about equality among various groups in society. The structures that cause these problems also deserve attention. Wolpe and Unterhalter in Unterhalter, Wolpe, Botha, Badat, Dlamini and Khotseng (eds.) (1991 : 9) in support of this view maintain that it is impossible to assign a transformative role to education without considering the social, political and economic conditions in society.

2.4.3 Education for cultural pluralism

This approach seeks to preserve and extend cultural pluralism in society. It incorporates aspects of the first two approaches described above, namely, education of the culturally different and education about cultural differences. Proponents of education for cultural pluralism reject enforced assimilation and the melting pot theory. Instead, they claim that promoting cultural diversity is of vital importance for the survival of particular groups and therefore schools should be channelled towards helping achieve this goal in society. The approach is intended for both mainstream and non-mainstream groups and does not single out any particular group.

Proponents of this approach maintain that racism and oppression in schools and society in general are related to the *locus* of power in education. Pupils should, therefore, be empowered as individuals by achieving and receiving validation for who they are. Further, they should be empowered for social change by having lived a pluralistic model (Sleeter 1991 : 11). This approach further claims that boundaries existing in diverse groups exist only as a result of social engineering to preserve group interests and not out of conservatism.

The main weakness of this approach is that it encourages the creation and maintenance of boundaries between groups rather than promoting individual competence to operate across cultural and ethnic boundaries.

2.4.4 Bicultural education

This approach upholds the view that diverse groups in a particular society should maintain their identities as groups. It encourages individuals in diverse groups to learn and acquire an alternative culture in society, hence its name bicultural education. It seeks to help both mainstream and non-mainstream pupils to participate alike and benefit in the socio-economic opportunities that societies offer. Like the other approaches discussed above, it is an outcome of non-mainstream groups' rejection of assimilation and the melting pot. Acculturation is viewed as a reciprocal process than a linear process. Pratte (1979: 160) sees bicultural education as leading to concurrent socialisation to two or more cultures.

Bicultural education as an approach has the following short-comings :

- It assigns to the school system almost the total burden of socialising the pupils into different cultures. The school alone cannot fulfil this task adequately without involving other socialisation agencies.
- The approach also equates culture with ethnic group or language. In fact, most proponents of this approach are also proponents of bilingual education, that is, education of groups whose mother tongue is not English. Ethnicism and language are some but not all the factors that cause people to form identifiable groups.
- It tends to see bilingual education as a solution to all socio-political problems of society.

2.4.5 Multicultural education as a normal human experience

This approach stands on its own by building upon the weaknesses of the other four approaches discussed above. For example, the above four approaches thus far discussed equate culture and ethnic groups. In this way they categorise and stereotype people in their ethnic enclaves.

The basic assumptions of this approach are the following :

- It views education as a cultural process whereby pupils are socialised to fit successfully into an environment of the total society rather than their 'own' environment.
- Culture is seen as various standards of perceiving, doing, believing and evaluating that a person attributes to other persons. Thus, attributing different patterns of standards to different pupils will mean that a person is competent in more than one of them.
- Schooling is viewed as a process whereby a person develops competencies in multiple systems of standards for perceiving, evaluating, believing and doing. Proponents of this approach maintain that schooling should not therefore be only restricted to special compensatory education programmes but both school and out-of-school programmes should be considered together and be given equal weight in the socialisation of pupils in a pluralistic society.
- Similarities and differences between pupils of diverse groups should be explored fully. Repeated participation of pupils with one another in more than one or more activities should be exploited to facilitate cross-group competency.
- The dichotomy between mainstream and non-mainstream groups is seen as restrictive and denying individuals freedom of full expression of cultural diversity. Awareness of and competence in multiple cultures is fostered by forces and factors in and out-of-school.

2.5 RELEVANCE OF THE APPROACHES TO EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

All the approaches to the provision of education derived from both the assimilationist and pluralistic models described above demonstrate the fact that schools are always at the focal point of social change which could easily generate social conflict. Opposing groups in society work out various compromises by virtue of which the schools can be made acceptable to all parties, thus amalgamating into one whole the representatives of diverse groups. Therefore schools are as such ideologically, organisationally and strategically linked to social change. This statement is true, given that the approaches originate within a context of social activism and draw their inspiration from struggles against domination of one group or more groups by others. The approaches depict the dual role of the schools as, on the one hand, being capable of reinforcing and legitimating the *status quo* and, but also, on the other hand enlightening and emancipating individuals, thus working with rather than against efforts to bring about social justice and equality in society.

2.6 REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON PLURALISM IN THE PROVISION OF SCHOOLING

Up to now, it has been established in this chapter that the pluralistic model as applied to schools and schooling is about enabling pupils from diverse groups and backgrounds to co-exist in society. The different approaches to the provision of schooling in pluralistic societies discussed above do not only suggest ways and

means of preparing pupils to live and co-exist in such a society but they also touch upon the rationale behind the conception of each approach.

Grant, Sleeter and Anderson (1986: 55) argue that most advocates of pluralism in education focus mainly on culture and cultural differences as predominant factors in a pluralistic society and side step issues of (racial) discrimination. In other words, advocates of this view assume that given intercultural understanding and goodwill, the problem of eliminating discrimination and racism will be solved.

Culture must be understood against the background of what it is for. Wax, Diamond and Gearing (1971), Bock (1969), Schneider and Bonjean (1973) see culture as a survival 'programme' which enables individuals in a social group to cope with problems of living within the environment. This meaning attached to culture begs a question on two very important issues, namely, that culture is not static and further that, most important, social groups should be thought of separately from their cultures because people do not live in a culture. There are cross cutting group affiliations in a plural society. Kallen (1924: 175) in support of this view maintains that people can live in several cultural environments because of the fluid nature of pluralism.

Appleton (1983 :12) is of the opinion that the concept pluralism is plagued with ambiguity, generality and confusion particularly in the educational circles. To give accuracy and clarity to the definition of pluralism. Corlett (1983 : 14) points out that education for a plural society must confront discrimination and inequalities in society and must be positively anti-racist. The views expressed by Grant, Sleeter and Anderson, (1986) Appleton (1983) and Corlett (1983) reinforce a very

pertinent point that in any given society, pluralism in education emanates from a certain ideological premise which will be used at a given point in time to maintain the *status quo* and existing power relations in society.

Pluralism in education should not, therefore, be simply a descriptive statement about how things are or must be or what we can take for granted because schools are used by the dominant groups to socialise the young into a stratified society.

Banks in Sleeter (1991: 175) maintains that the school is itself contradictory since it often expounds democratic values while at the same time contradicting them. Formulation of an education policy in a plural society should not then be seen as a monopoly of one group. Instead, a range of different groups should participate. This will overcome the control of power exercised by the dominant groups in order to get the largest share of scarce resources in society.

Harzard and Stent (1973: 10) in Bullivant maintain that pluralism must include basic ideas of controlling the significant environmental and psychological forces impinging upon the people. In a radically changing society like South Africa, pluralism will be ineffective in dealing with problems emanating from racial differences in a social institution like a school not unless the concept culture is extended to give race its proper weight. Bullivant (1987: 112) in support of this view maintains that contact between groups with significant differences often leads to a heightening tension and prejudices.

For example in a study conducted by the Centre for Educational Development at the University of Stellenbosch in 1992. black pupils in open schools maintained that white pupils taunted them with references to current events, for example: 'Barend Strydom is free now. He is going to come and kill you. The AWB will get you' (du Toit 1995 : 215).

Pratte (1979: 197) pleads for a civilising influence that the schools must play in a pluralistic society. He maintains that bilingual/bicultural education programmes have only scraped the surface in trying to solve a deep seated problem in plural societies. He then suggests that pluralism in education should address what is wanted, that is, full participation in society by all members, according of respect and dignity and a social order that guarantees the end of humiliation and denial of human rights.

Several common principles emerge from the views of Pratte (1979: 120) and the other authors cited above about the contribution open schools can make in a plural society that is experiencing social change. These principles are:

- fostering the rightful existence of all groups;
- social reform;
- educational reform both in the content of education and the school environment; and
- inculcating into pupils ideals of non-racialism and equity.

Schools cannot make any meaningful contribution to society if they remain open in practice and nothing is done to meet the challenges that go with their 'openness'.

2.7 OPEN SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Two major problems face open schools in South Africa. The problem is, firstly, the strong feeling by the controlling communities of open schools that these schools should maintain the basic ethos, traditions and character they held prior to opening up; in other words, 'business as usual'. Secondly, the problem of facing up to the reality that these schools have opened up and, therefore, have to do something to acknowledge that they are changing together with a changing society is always present. The latter view prevails in open schools and for this reason we cannot, therefore, talk of a multicultural approach to education in South Africa because the proponents of this type of education (Sleeter 1991), Suzuki (1984), Baptise, Baptise and Gollnick (1980), Baker (1983) argue that for a system of education to qualify for this approach, visible changes and reform in the school system and practice must be in place.

The approach adopted by the South African open schools, is criticised by Dekker and Lemmer (1993: 58) as limiting their activities to cultural activities and cultural reproduction, again another simplistic justification for their 'openness'. Banks (1989: 29) maintains that the openness of a school requires reform in such areas as power relations, relations between teachers and students, student/student

relations, the ethos of the school, the official and hidden curriculum, attitude towards other languages, grouping practices and testing procedures.

The school reform initiatives suggested by Banks (1989) make the future status of open schools as agents of change in South Africa very fragile because their existence is continuously challenged on ideological and educational grounds. Be that, as it may, South African open schools have gone a long way towards equalising access to schooling.

Squelch in Dekker and Lemmer (1993: 42) outlines some conditions that schools must meet to realise multicultural education in practice.

These conditions are:

- Early integration of pupils to ensure social cohesion;
- Reform of curriculum so that it reflects the pluralistic nature of society;
- Selection of appropriate educational material that reflects the diversity of groups in a plural society;
- Adoption of a repertoire of instructional methods and techniques that take into account the student population diversity in open schools;
- Accepting the diversity of languages as an asset rather than a deficiency in an open school;

- Use of assessment techniques which are non-discriminatory and appropriate for all pupils regardless of their background;
- Creating positive home-school relations between the teachers and all parents regardless of their background;
- Preparing teachers to meet the challenge of teaching in a multicultural setting.

The implications of the above conditions are that open schools need to adopt a holistic approach in grappling with the problems of managing the changed patterns of the school population if they are to play a meaningful role as social change agents.

In the following chapter attention will be given to research methodology.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The complexities of this field of study are manifold and it is for this reason that some time and effort were spent in exploring the terrain before deciding on the methodology to be used. Methodologies used elsewhere (particularly in the United States of America) formed the initial thrust of the study. This was essential as the United States had gone through a similar process in the 1960's and experiences gained there would have been beneficial to South Africa. Further, extant literature on open schools in South Africa is scant. Also, the existing literature focuses mainly on what ought to be in open schools rather than what has been done to make these schools viable agents of social change. The reason for this is that these schools did not have to change to live up to their changed status as open schools.

3.2 PREPARATION FOR AND DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

3.2.1 Selection of schools

The selection of schools was to a large extent dictated by the background of the opening up of schools in South Africa discussed in chapter one of this study

because it was felt that the type of open schools, the reason(s) for opening up the schools to admit all races and the length of time the school had been open will have a bearing on the perceptions and attitudes of the respondents towards open schools. In total four open schools were randomly selected from a list of schools representing each type of school in the Durban Metropolitan Area as described below. (NB The Department of Education has its own terminology of describing and categorising types of schools in the country. The terminology used below is, therefore, not the official terminology of the Department of Education).

- Roman Catholic Church open schools.

As stated elsewhere in this study, the Churches and in particular The Roman Catholic Church was the first institution to open its doors and admit pupils of all races in its schools in the 1970's. Given its pioneering work in this respect, it was felt that this type of school should be included in the study for this reason. Roman Catholic open schools have had a longer time than the other open schools to experiment on different policies and practices to integrate pupils from diverse groups and backgrounds in their schooling system.

- Private Schools

These types of school are called private schools because they are independent from government and draw little or no subsidy from government. What brings them closer to government is that they have to register with the Department of Education. As educational institutions, they are exclusive in terms of fees, pupil selection criteria and rich endowment with facilities. The

main reason for including this type of schools in the study was that because of their exclusivity, they would give more insight not only to race and ethnicity but also class in the integration of pupils in schools.

- **Model B Schools**

In 1991 Minister Clase introduced a 'model system' for categorisation of schools. A 'model' B school is a fully state funded government school which is racially desegregated. The fact that the school remains a state school implies that parents will not be expected to pay more even when the school becomes racially desegregated. This type of school was chosen because it is a state run open school.

- **Model C School**

A model C school is a state aided school which is 'owned' by a management committee composed of elected and State appointed members.

This model offers the possibility of semi-privatisation and places on parents not only a financial burden of meeting the day to day costs of running the school but also gives the management committee wide powers in school policy formulation and execution.

3.2.2 Selection of respondents and the criteria used

The final decision in the preparation for the research was to draw a sample of teachers, parents and pupils from the types of schools listed above. All schools

selected were in the Durban Metropolitan area . The sample comprised black and white respondents . Parents had to have a child attending an open school and were not necessarily parents of pupils in the sample. The reason was to cast the net as widely as the limited circumstances could permit. Teachers and pupils had to come from open schools. Pupils were selected from the last two forms of high school, that is, standards nine and ten.

3.2.3 Sampling design and sample selection

The sample of the study was selected from pupils (standard 9 and 10), teachers and parents. A total of 100 respondents was interviewed. Interviews took place in 1996.

All respondents, that is, (pupils, teachers and parents) were chosen on the basis of the following criteria :

- racial classification and ethnicity
- gender (in co-educational schools)
- some association with an open school

The sample for this study was selected mainly from black (African) and white pupils and parents. This was done not because the researcher wished to single out these groups of people as a problem but rather because it was felt that the most cogent responses would be elicited from these groups for the following reasons:

- Socio-political tensions in South Africa have been more pronounced between blacks (African) and whites as compared with other groups;
- when schools opened up to admit all race groups, white teachers, parents and pupils remained the 'controlling' parties and black (African) parents and pupils, in the main, were the 'recipient' parties.
- Preliminary reading and investigation suggested that the attitudes of blacks (African) towards open schools as agents of social change may differ from those of indians and coloureds because of the latter groups enjoying a different status in the eyes of the government under the Tricameral Parliament.

The criteria for sample selection stated above were not applicable to teachers in most cases because teachers in open schools are predominantly white.

3.3 SELECTION OF PUPILS IN THE SAMPLE

In the selection of pupils a systematic random method was applied. i.e. from a random starting point in the alphabet per class. Respondents were selected at specific intervals until the required quota was met.

3.4 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT (QUESTIONNAIRE)

Interviews were carried out in 1996. A structured open-ended interview schedule formed the basis for discussion between the researcher(s) and the respondents. In constructing the questionnaire, the researcher was guided by the following considerations:

- that the questionnaire should be long enough to get the essential data as dictated by the objectives of the study;
- that the questions will be objective, with no leading questions to the desired responses;
- that the questionnaire will deal with challenging topics which the respondents will recognise as significant in spending their time: and
- open ended questions were seen as appropriate because a wide range of opinions on the subject of the study were anticipated. Further, deep-seated feelings of the respondents had to be determined.

Discussion with each respondent took approximately one and a half hour. Three sets of questionnaires (that is, one for parents, one for teachers and one for pupils) were used. Although almost identical, the questions for pupils and parents differed slightly. The questionnaire was divided according to the following main themes:

- School policy;
- Openness of schools from a political ideological perspective
- Teaching and learning in open schools

Before commencing the fieldwork, the questionnaire was tested and refined where necessary.

3.5 LIMITATIONS IN THE METHODOLOGY

The first limitation relates to the representativeness of the sample. The size of the sub-samples was small because of limitations of resources, mainly, time and financial constraints. The second has to do with the selection process itself. The selection of parents and teachers was not conducted at random but on the basis of availability as long as they met the requirements of the stipulations and criteria mentioned above.

- The questionnaire used was lengthy and exhaustive. While it is acknowledged that there are definite problems associated with the administration and analysis of a lengthy questionnaire, it was felt that shortening it would result in a superficial coverage of themes and analysis of the topic for the study.
- Respondents at times formulated what they considered to be 'suitable' answers in an effort either to oblige the researcher or to show themselves in

a favourable light. Further, respondents were not always willing to commit themselves on particular items on the questionnaire, for example those that dealt with racism.

- Difficulty was experienced in finding enough parent respondents. Most parents are working and could not spare time to be interviewed. However, this problem was in some way overcome by interviewing parents at home.

In the next chapter the research data will be presented and analysed.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the research findings are presented in three main themes as follows:

- school policy;
- openness of schools from a political ideological perspective:
 - Views on open schools
 - Open schools and social change
 - Open schools and inter-racial and inter-cultural understanding; and
- teaching and learning in open schools.

The research data was examined and analysed not only in terms of the views of the respondents by category, namely, teachers, pupils and parents but in many instances, also in terms of race where the racial factor is significant. Where appropriate, the crucial findings related to the main themes are briefly discussed at the end of each theme or sub-theme.

In some instances, very small minority views in the Tables are not re-stated or discussed in the analysis. Further, the figures are presented in the form of percentages. Where percentages exceed 100, this is because of multiple responses where respondents could offer more than one response to a question at a time.

4.2 SCHOOL POLICY

Respondents were asked to express their opinions on school policy under the following aspects:

- admissions
- staffing (respondents : teachers only)
- educational approach (respondents : teachers only)

Parents and pupils were expected to give their views on school policy from the user friendliness perspective. Teachers, by virtue of their position were expected not only just to state their views on how school policy impacted on pupils and parents but were also requested to evaluate school policy in terms of its facilitative role in bringing about change that behoves an open school. Hence, the question on school policy for teachers was extended to include staffing and the educational approach.

4.2.1 Parents and pupils reactions to school policy

Table 1 highlights problems encountered by black and white respondents with regard to admission policy.

TABLE 1*: Problems encountered when joining an open school. Respondents : N = 64			
	Total 64	Black 34	White 30
	%	%	%
Repeating a class	27	100	0
Cultural differences	23	11	73
Race and discrimination.	64	68	60
No problems encountered.	13	27	0
Teachers selecting subjects for pupils.	16	36	0
Black (African) languages were not to be used during school hours.	13	29	0
Higher standard of education	13	25	3

* NB. Multi-response table therefore percentages exceed 100.

Responses to school admission policy by, in the main, black respondents were largely negatively critical on the grounds that pupils coming from the traditionally black schools had to "repeat a class" they had already passed in their former schools. This happened despite pupils 'passing' an entrance test.

In response to the probe on how this problem could be resolved, parent respondents claimed that they asserted themselves by insisting that their children be admitted for the class they had applied for.

Another serious concern expressed by black respondents on school admission policy was that teachers imposed upon pupils not only the choice of subjects in the curriculum a pupil would have to follow but also the level at which the subjects had to be studied was prescribed by the teachers. Blacks were asked to take most of their matriculation subjects at standard/lower grade level whereas white pupils were encouraged to take most of their matriculation subjects at higher grade level. The latter aspect of school policy was viewed by black respondents as giving white pupils a head start in life opportunities.

It is, however, noticeable that white respondents maintained that they had experienced "no problems" about the school policy in general, citing that starting in an open pre-primary had prepared them well academically and otherwise for attending an open school.

Further, another serious and yet expected observation by black respondents is the "high standard of education" in open schools. Pupils from traditionally black schools attending open schools in their mid-schooling career for the first time had to obtain extra lessons either from the school teachers or private institutions in order to cope with class work.

Black respondents cited a number of aspects of school policy which they believed were racist. Amongst other issues cited were :

- the use of black (African) languages in the school premises was forbidden;
- black pupils had to write selection/entry tests (in English and Mathematics) whereas pupils from other race groups went through the interview only.

Problems about “cultural differences” were experienced mainly by white respondents. Part of the reason for this could be that a few black students in a predominantly white school stood out as culturally different. Also under-exposure of the people of South Africa to different cultural groups because of the previous government policy of apartheid could be cited as another reason.

“Race and discrimination” was perceived as a problem equally by both black and white respondents. Although not part of official school policy, race and racial discrimination was largely felt in social interactions in and outside the classroom situation.

4.2.2 Teacher reactions to school policy

Table 2 gives the responses of teachers regarding school policy

TABLE 2 A*: School policy with regard to staff composition by race Respondents : N = 36.			
	Total 36 %	Black 9 %	White 27 %
Teaching staff is predominantly white.	81	44	93
Teachers are selected and employed according to their qualifications.	36	67	26
Open schools are equal opportunity employers.	42	44	41
School management are influenced by race when employing new teachers.	6	32	0
TABLE 2 B*: School policy with regard to admission of pupils of different races Respondents : N = 36			
	Total 36 %	Black 9 %	White 27 %
Pupils have to pass an entrance test	64	55	67
Parents of pupils must be able to afford to pay school fees.	25	33	22
A non racial policy is applied.	83	88	81
TABLE 2 C*: School policy with regard to the educational approach Respondents : N = 36			
	Total 36 %	Black 9 %	White 27 %
Teachers teach in the middle, that is, no special attention is paid to the level/grade at which each subject is offered.	55	44	50
Pupils are separated according to streams.	27	22	27
The school tries to prepare pupils for a "real society" (racially mixed society).	30	0	39

* NB. Multi-response table therefore percentages exceed 100.

Teacher respondents views on staffing policy were based more on practice/tradition rather than policy. For example, they maintained that “staff is predominantly white teachers” and that “race is not the issue” in the employment practices of the school, but “qualifications are considered.” These responses were not unexpected because open schools carry a powerful legacy as previously white schools.

Teacher respondents did not seem to experience any problems with regard to school policy on admission of pupils. They maintained that “it is non-racial” and “it facilitates equal treatment of all pupils” Hence all pupils are admitted on the basis of two main criteria, namely, passing an entrance test and being able to afford to pay school fees.

With regard to the question on the educational approach, that is, what policy is being adopted by the school in teaching pupils from diverse groups and backgrounds, teachers maintained that they “taught pupils equally.” In other words, they did not pay any special attention to grades/levels at which subjects were offered and the background of pupils. Their aim was to “prepare pupils for real life” outside the school.

4.2.3 Discussion

The negative views expressed by black respondents on open schools policy are a manifestation of what Banks in Sleeter (1991: 139) criticizes the schools for, that schools are contradictory since they often expound democratic values while at the same time contradicting them. The balancing of democratic values in open schools becomes problematic because these schools have to satisfy their white original clientele whilst at the same time trying to accommodate the needs and aspirations of the incoming groups. Thus, a radical departure from the traditional school policy might result in the school losing the support of whites, a fact which leaves open schools with a hobson choice in so far the reformulation of school policy is concerned.

It is for this reason that across the three school policy issues, namely, admissions, staffing and educational approach, differences on the expressed views across the sub-samples are, in the main, a result of the racial background of the respondents. Open schools policies are being challenged by blacks on racial grounds. These schools are not seen to have made visible changes in such areas as power relations, attitude towards other languages and grouping practices (Bank's 1989 : 29). Two reasons (although not conclusive) may account for this observation. Firstly, open schools try to maintain the tradition and ethos of the original group in the school. For this reason, blacks in open schools are suspicious of any policy which they perceive to apply to them only as a group. This is understandable because black pupils attending open schools experience several other difficulties which are not experienced by their white counterparts like repeating a class, extra

lessons and language. Secondly, teachers in open schools are mainly white and, therefore, are comfortable in going on with 'business as usual' rather than introduce changes to accommodate members of the other groups. In fact, their training and exposure prior to their schools being opened had not prepared them for this challenge.

4.3. REACTIONS TO OPENNESS OF SCHOOLS FROM A POLITICAL IDEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE.

Under this theme, respondents were questioned about their general views on open schools. Focus was directed mainly at the contribution open schools can make in bringing about social change and the creation of common culture and value bases in society. Also respondents were asked to cite the challenges they had to face because of their association with open schools. Further, respondents had to state the unintended consequences on open schools and the positive and negative experiences they have had because of their association with open schools.

4.3.1 Views on open schools

Table 3 gives a reflection of the respondents' thinking and views about open schools in general.

TABLE 3 *: Views on open schools:						
Respondents : N = 100						
	Total 100	Teachers 36	Parents 20	Pupils 44	Black 43	White 57
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Open schools offer better quality education	48	44	55	48	67	30
Open schools enhance pupils' cultural awareness	77	92	65	71	53	90
Open schools expose pupils to a "real society"	60	69	50	57	23	83
Pupils cannot select their subjects at will. Teachers select subjects for pupils	40	0	20	25	41	2

* NB. Multi-response table therefore percentages exceed 100.

On the whole, views expressed by respondents (that is, parents, teachers and pupils) on open schools were largely positive. Reasons for this were both educational and socio-cultural. On the educational side, open schools were described as offering "good quality education." A significant factor in the educational aspect is that a very great majority of blacks endorsed the latter view

on open schools than was the case with whites. On the socio-cultural side, respondents felt that open schools promoted "cultural awareness amongst the divergent groups in society" by exposing pupils to the "real society." Real society was seen as a society representative of the 'rainbow nation' of South Africa. Again here it is significant that the socio-cultural value of open schools was, in the main, appreciated by white respondents. Very few black respondents expressed the same sentiments as whites on this issue.

A minority criticism on open schools by black parents and pupils referred to "lack of freedom of choice" these schools offered. Freedom of choice was described by the respondents as being forced to choose certain subjects in the curriculum like Zulu if one's home language is Zulu and also the level/grade at which to take subjects at matriculation - a point discussed earlier on in this chapter that black pupils were advised to take most of their subjects at standard/lower grade level.

4.3.2 Reasons for attending open schools.

Table 4 gives reasons why parents send their children to open schools and also why pupils chose to attend an open school.

TABLE 4*: Views on choice of attending open schools -			
Respondents : N = 64			
	Total 64	Black 34	White 30
	%	%	%
Open schools offer better quality education.	61	85	17
Better sports facilities.	11	16	0
The school was chosen on religious grounds.	4	2	7
To learn to understand and accept other races better.	22	7	53
The school is closer to where I work.	4	0	10
It is a private school.	5	0	10
There are no riots or school disruptions.	30	42	3
The school is closer home.	8	0	17
The school prepares pupils for a "real society."	53	33	68
These schools enhance pupils' cultural awareness.	34	12	57

* NB. Multi-response table therefore percentages exceed 100.

Two dominant attitudes towards open schools prevailed, depicting the different worlds that blacks and whites came from since the days of the apartheid policy of the previous government. On the one hand, black respondents gave “better education” as their reason for sending their children to open schools. Better education was seen, in the main, as attending a school where there are “no riots or disruptions.” Further, “better facilities” and “more qualified teachers” were cited as other reasons by black respondents. On the other hand white respondents saw open schools as institutions where pupils’ “cultural awareness” will be broadened and “racial tolerance” cultivated. Another very cogent reason was that open schools prepared pupils for a “real society,” described as a racially mixed society. Preparing pupils for a “real society” was also cited as a reason by a few black respondents.

Also, in views where lesser strong feelings were expressed regarding sending pupils to open schools, the pattern of different black and white worlds became evident. White respondents cited reasons such as, the “school is closer home,” “it is close to my work” and that the school was “chosen on religious grounds” and finally for a “being a private school” with smaller classes where teachers can give pupils individual attention. The choice of open schools by some blacks was because these schools have an edge over black schools in extra-curricular activities.

4.3.3 Comparison between open schools and the traditionally black schools

Table 5 depicts the main points of difference between open schools and the traditionally black schools.

TABLE 5* : Views on open schools as compared to black schools Respondents : N = 80					
	Total 80	Teachers 36	Pupils 44	Black 29	White 51
	%	%	%	%	%
Racially mixed schools contribute to better inter-racial understanding	53	72	68	62	73
Open schools provide a better and a higher standard of education than black schools	86	84	89	91	83
White teachers at times discriminate on the basis of race.	20	0	34	57	4

* NB. Multi-response table therefore percentages exceed 100.

Predictably, when the respondents (that is, teachers and pupils) were asked to compare open schools with exclusively black schools, open schools received a more favourable rating than black schools. Respondents saw open schools as providing "a better and a higher standard of education than black schools." Also, because open schools are "racially mixed," they would help contribute to "better racial understanding." Of significance here is that both black and white respondents were agreed on the above observations.

What was rather unpredictable was the response on discrimination. A majority of black respondents saw teachers as discriminating against them. This observation is significant on the basis that if pupils attend the same school and are in the same class, surely any discriminatory practices displayed by the teachers should be noticed by all pupils. What can be inferred from this observation is that the respondents' views were based not so much only on teacher/pupil interaction but were a result of the perceptions arising from how the school in general handled the question of group diversity.

4.3.4 Discussion

Although, in the main, the views of the respondents on open schools were positive, three major issues, however, warrant comment. Firstly, evidence from the analysis of the respondents' views on open schools suggests that open schools are a natural area for portraying what a changing society like South Africa stands for, simply because the State has previously used its policy of separate development to deny mixing of people from diverse groups and backgrounds in all walks of life, including education. For this reason, the contribution that open schools can make towards bridging the socio-cultural gap between people from diverse groups and backgrounds is bound to stand out as a positive factor to the respondents. Secondly, the different attitudes and expectations held by black and white respondents towards open schools are not surprising. To the black respondents, a high standard of education is of far greater significance than the other things open schools can offer, whereas to the white respondents educational

standards are of lesser significance because of the advantaged position previously enjoyed by white education. Instead, the value of open schools to the white respondents lies in their racial and cultural mix. The different attitudes and expectations held by black and white respondents to open schools in fact blur the socio-cultural value of these schools to society in general.

Thirdly and finally, the claim by black respondents that open schools discriminate on the basis of race proves a point that bringing together pupils of different racial background in the same school does not *per se* bring about racial tolerance and understanding. Schools should deliberately work towards creating racial tolerance and understanding.

4. 4 THE ROLE OF OPEN SCHOOLS AS CATALYSTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE.

In this sub-theme respondents were questioned about the role of open schools as catalysts for social change. They had to express their views under three main trends, namely,

- What open schools should be doing to contribute in bringing about social change;
- What were open schools actually doing to bring about social change;
- Open schools and separate development: and

- Open schools and the creation of common value and culture bases in society.

Respondents' comments on open schools as catalysts for social change appear in Tables 6,7,8 and 9 below.

4.4.1 What should open schools be doing to bring about social change.

Table 6 explains what respondents (that is, teachers, pupils and parents) felt open schools should be doing to bring about social change

TABLE 6*: Role that open schools play in our changing society						
Respondents : N = 100						
	Total 100	Teachers 36	Parents 20	Pupils 44	Black 43	White 57
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Open schools should unite people of different racial and cultural backgrounds.	53	81	40	36	29	63
Open schools should promote racial equality.	45	56	25	46	6	69
Open schools should promote racial tolerance.	51	61	40	48	26	63
Open schools should improve the quality of education.	24	0	45	34	50	9
Open schools should eliminate racial discrimination.	13	0	25	18	35	2
Open schools should bring about better cultural understanding by teaching people about different cultures.	38	52	35	27	29	42
Open schools should offer all better life chances.	7	19	0	0	3	11
Open schools could make pupils lose their sense of identity.	1	3	0	0	3	0
Open schools promote racial discrimination.	7	0	5	14	18	2

* NB. Multi-response table therefore percentages exceed 100.

According to Table 6, a predominantly large number of respondents identified the role of open schools in bringing about social change as “uniting people of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds.” Mixing pupils from divergent cultural and racial backgrounds would create “a better^x understanding amongst them” and thus bring about “racial tolerance.”

Further, respondents displayed sensitivity to the inequalities that had existed in South Africa’s previous education systems and sub-systems. To them, provision of the same type of education to all by opening up schools to all races would^y “promote equality.”

A minority of respondents saw open schools as “offering better education” than the traditionally ‘closed’ schools of other race groups, namely, Indians, coloureds and blacks. Open schools would, therefore, according to these respondents offer all their graduates “better life chances.”

Another small minority of respondents displayed scepticism about the role open schools could play in bringing about social change. Instead, they claimed that^z these schools would make pupils “lose their identity” as members of a particular group in society. Further, they maintained that open schools practice covert racial discrimination as is evident in the application of certain school policies in favour of one race group over the other, for example dividing pupils according to streams (general, commercial and science streams). Black pupils were encouraged to follow the general stream. Of significance in Table 6 is that a higher percentage of white than black respondents were appreciative of the role open schools can

play in bringing about social change. The reason for this difference in views may be ascribed to the fact that racial togetherness in an open school is not the issue to blacks as much as to receive better education. Therefore, issues like "racial tolerance," "uniting people" and "understanding and" knowing more about other peoples' cultures" are of secondary importance.

4. 4.2 What open schools are doing to bring, about social change.

Table 7 gives the views of respondents (that is, teachers) about what their schools are doing to bring about social change.

TABLE 7* : Ways own school goes about becoming a viable agent of social change in South Africa Respondents : N = 36			
	Total 36 %	Black 9 %	White 27 %
Teachers encourage unity amongst pupils.	78	89	74
Teachers promote racial equality at school.	42	22	48
Teachers inculcate into pupils cultural awareness.	42	44	48
Teachers make people aware about class.	47	44	48
Teachers make people politically aware by teaching them about the political history of South Africa.	17	11	19
The school tries to involve all parents in the running of the affairs of the school.	8	11	7

* NB. Multi-response table therefore percentages exceed 100.

A further probe prompting for views on what open schools are doing to make them viable agents of social change elicited further reasons for the adoption of the stance respondents had adopted earlier about open schools and social change.

Respondents placed the burden of the role of open schools as change agents mainly on teachers, maintaining that “teachers promote political awareness amongst pupils” for example, in the teaching of history and further by “promoting racial equality” in all academic and extra-curricular activities of the school. They claimed this was achieved through fair testing and evaluation of class performance and guidance in academic and extra-curricular activities.

A sizeable majority of respondents felt that open school “exposed pupils to different cultures.” For example schools had formed cultural clubs, and in their teaching, teachers were using examples representative of the different cultures in society.

An attempt to “involve parents from different race and cultural groups” in the running of the affairs of the school was cited by a few respondents as a way the school was contributing to change.

4.4.3 Open schools and separate development.

In order to pursue further the role of open schools in the process of social change, respondents were asked to give their views on what open schools were doing to challenge the old order of separate development. It was hoped that the views of the respondents would be useful as predictors of the likely strategies that open schools might use to bring about change.

The views of the respondents (that is, teachers) about what their schools are doing to challenge the old order of separate development appears in Table 8.

TABLE 8* : Challenging the old social order of separate development			
Respondents : N = 36			
	Teacher 36 %	Black 9 %	White 27 %
The school does not practice racism	86	83	89
There is racism at school	17	33	11

* NB. Multi-response table therefore percentages exceed 100.

Respondents could not state specifically what open schools were doing to challenge the old social order of separate development except to say “these school do not practise racism.” A number of inferences can be drawn from the reaction

of the respondents. Firstly, respondents could have equated the mere opening up of schools to other races as a challenge to the old order and therefore the school should do nothing else. Christie (1990 : 131), however, maintains that more than this should be done. She advises that : "those involved with open schools cannot simply deny the effects of race, but will need to confront them." Secondly the question was of such a sensitive nature that the respondents tried to play a safe hand in their answering. The fieldwork of this study was conducted at a time when drastic policy changes in education were being mooted at government level. Thirdly, racism has been the brick and mortar of separate development. Thus the denial that racism exists could have been seen by the respondents as the only satisfactory answer they could give because open schools are racially mixed. A small minority view that "racism still exists in school" was expressed.

4.4.4 Open schools and the creation of common value and culture bases in society

Respondents had to state whether open schools were capable of creating common value and culture bases in society. Their views appear in Table 9.

TABLE 9* : Response to the opinion that open schools should attempt to create common value and culture bases in society. Respondents : N = 100						
	Total 100 %	Teachers 36 %	Parents 20 %	Pupils 44 %	Black 43 %	White 57 %
By their very nature open schools bring together pupils of diverse race and cultural groups and for this reason create a common value base and a culture base to some extent.	35	0	65	50	27	39
Racism is promoted.	11	3	5	21	21	5
Open schools unite people from different race groups.	28	44	25	16	12	35
Friendships that develop amongst people of different race and cultural groups are responsible for creating common value and culture bases in society.	28	0	25	16	12	35
People lose their sense of identity because of common value and culture bases created by mixing in schools.	9	0	30	7	26	0
There is one dominant culture	5	14	0	0	3	5
Open schools increase awareness about different social backgrounds of pupils.	4	14	0	0	0	7
Open schools expose pupils to different cultures.	19	53	0	0	9	28
Racial imbalance in open schools makes it difficult for these schools to create a common value and culture base in society.	2	6	0	0	0	1
People stick to their own culture.	21	28	10	21	12	26

* NB. Multi-response table therefore percentages exceed 100.

On the whole respondents (that is teachers, pupils and parents) felt that open schools would ultimately succeed in creating common value and culture bases in society. Parent and pupil respondents maintained that bringing together pupils of diverse race and culture groups and “the friendships that had developed across racial and cultural lines” would enable pupils to discover and cherish common elements of culture and values in society. For example social justice would be upheld as a value because open schools sought to promote “racial equality.”

Teacher respondents maintained that “open schools fostered unity” by inculcating amongst pupils “awareness of what is happening in other cultures.” In this way cross-cultural understanding would lead to the creation of common culture and value bases in society. Respondents in the three categories however felt that a common value and culture base should not be seen as a change of cultures. Pupils should “retain their original cultures” and also embrace what is common in the cultures.

Negative reasons pertained to pupils ending up with “mixed identities” because of culture learning and the fact that the Anglo-Saxon way of life would eclipse other cultures in this mix.

4.4.5 Unintended consequences on open schools.

Table 10 gives a reflection of the respondents' thinking about the unintended consequences on open schools. These are consequences which are latent and may have been unwanted or unrecognised.

TABLE 10*: Unintended consequences on open schools						
Respondents : N = 100						
	Total 100 %	Teachers 36 %	Parents 20 %	Pupils 44 %	Black 43 %	White 57 %
School policy discriminates on the basis of race.	38	31	40	43	68	21
Pupils lose their sense of identity (<i>Blacks playing white</i>).	12	6	30	9	24	2
The neighbourhood where black pupils reside are not in favour of blacks attending open schools.	11	6	25	9	27	4
Teachers force pupils to mix racially	6	0	10	9	0	7
Conflict in values held by families from divergent groups and backgrounds particularly in the upbringing of children.	20	0	25	34	21	21
There is racism in open schools	43	56	35	36	44	44
Mixed marriages.	4	0	15	2	6	2
School not supported by local white population	13	25	5	7	3	19
School is too far from home.	1	3	0	0	0	2
Syllabus is irrelevant.	3	8	0	0	0	4
Drop in standards of discipline at school.	3	8	0	0	0	4

* NB. Multi-response table therefore percentages exceed 100.

The majority of the respondents in the sample felt that the key negative unintended consequences on open schools emanated from racism and school policies which were perceived to be promoting racism. In support of their feelings, respondents maintained that "school policy discriminates on the basis of race" and further that "there is racism in open schools". What could be inferred from the majority statements is that the respondents had thought through the issue and from experience were responding rationally because their positive views on open schools in Tables 3 and 4 above were to a large extent being contradicted by this.

A significant observation, however, is that whereas more black than white respondents felt the full impact of school policy in racial terms, racism *per se* was as a whole, equally felt by both white and black respondents.

In response to a probe on how this racism was expressed, respondents replied that it was, in the main, in terms of interactions during social functions organised by the school and also by pupils during school hours. For example pupils separated themselves racially in school assembly, outings organised by the school and during breaks. Pupils summed up the racial incidents succinctly: "simple arguments between pupils of different racial backgrounds turn into racial skirmishes." What was, also, rather significant about the views expressed in Table 10 was the comment that "values held by families from different groups regarding child upbringing tended to conflict in open schools." Blacks felt that white parents gave their children too much freedom prematurely, for example allowing young pupils to go to night clubs and late evening parties whereas whites felt that blacks did not encourage socialising amongst their children.

What was rather disturbing were the minority views expressed by black and white respondents about the unintended consequences on open schools. Black respondents on the one hand maintained that "some people around their neighbourhood did not approve of black pupils attending open schools" whereas on the other hand, white respondents claimed: "open schools did not enjoy the support of the neighbourhood" where these schools are located. All the open schools in which the research was conducted are located in predominantly white residential areas. Also another disturbing minority view was that "teachers force pupils to mix racially" at school.

4.4.6 Discussion

Two dominant views prevail about the way in which schools can contribute towards social change in society. Firstly, there is a view that schools are accorded an immense position and role as mechanisms of social change. The second view is that schools are a necessary but not a sufficient condition for bringing about change and, therefore cannot be analysed as an autonomous social force. For this reason, processes of educational change must be linked to changes in other social conditions and institutions in society. Given the above two views, the latter view can be said to apply to South Africa mainly because of the ubiquitous changes that have been taking place in other social conditions and institutions during the 1990s mainly in the political and economic spheres.

Respondents displayed a clear understanding of what changes need to be brought about in society, citing as the main changes "racial equality," "racial tolerance," "inter-cultural understanding" and "improving the quality of education."

Of significance in the sub-theme about open schools and social change is the predominant number of white respondents supporting the views of "exposure to other cultures" and "the desire to know what is happening in other cultures." The main reason (although not conclusive) that may account for this observation is that under the apartheid policy of the previous government, the then so called non-white sector of society had to put in more effort to try and learn ways and means to survive outside their cultures. In other words whites as a group lagged more in cross-cultural learning than was the case with the other groups. The social change that is taking place in the country is now putting more pressure on them to learn about others.

At a general level there were no major indications that respondents were opposed to the opinion that open schools should attempt to create common value and culture bases in society. To support this view respondents claimed that open schools by their very nature, were capable of performing this function.

4.5 ✓ OPEN SCHOOLS AND INTER-RACIAL AND INTER-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING.

4.5.1 Promotion of inter-cultural and inter-racial understanding in open schools.

Tables 11(A) and (B) give responses to both sets of questions pertaining to the ways and means the school is trying to promote inter-cultural and inter-racial understanding in the community of teachers, parents and pupils at school.

TABLE 11A* : Promotion of inter-cultural and inter-racial understanding amongst staff and pupils			
Respondents : N =36			
	Teachers 36 %	Black 9 %	White 27 %
Cultural clubs have been formed in which pupils and staff participate.	58	50	56
School choir	14	17	15
Racially mixed subject groups have been formed where pupils discuss and assist each other in class work	33	17	33
Group work in class work	50	33	60
TABLE B*: Promotion of inter-cultural and inter-racial understanding amongst staff, pupils and parents			
	Teachers 36 %	Black 9 %	White 27 %
School organises family and sports days where everybody participates	36	50	33
Parents, pupils and teachers participate in subject choices	11	17	11
Involvement of all in parents/teachers association (PTA)	33	17	37
The school organises cultural evenings for parents.	42	33	48
Parents are reluctant to be actively involved in the school activities	22	0	26

* NB. Multi-response table therefore percentages exceed 100.

In response to the question "what is your (open) school doing to promote inter-cultural and inter-racial understanding amongst staff and pupils," most respondents (that is, teachers) cited the founding of several "cultural clubs" as one way of achieving this understanding. Also encouraging "group work" where pupils of all racial and cultural groups were represented in the groups under the guidance of teachers was cited as another way.

Teachers also led by example in promoting inter-cultural and inter-racial understanding by paying attention to this drive in their handling of content when teaching, for example by giving representative and balanced racial and cultural examples where appropriate.

The school choir was also seen by the respondents as contributing to inter-cultural and inter-racial understanding. For example, not only classical/choral songs were sung but also traditional black and Indian songs were presented by the choir.

With regard to promoting inter-cultural and inter-racial understanding among staff, parents and pupils, respondents maintained that regular cultural evenings were organised by the schools where each cultural and racial group was afforded an opportunity to participate. Further, the parent/teacher/pupil association was seen as giving each cultural and racial group represented in the school population a suitable platform to participate in school matters affecting sectional interests necessitated by culture and race. Of concern, however, was the view expressed by some respondents that some parents were reluctant "to participate actively in school activities." This was seen as breaking the 'family feeling' which the school was trying to inculcate in all.

4.5.2 New challenges because of being in an open school.

Table 12 depicts responses emanating from respondents' association with open schools.

TABLE 12* : New challenges in an open school						
Respondents N = 100						
	Total 100 %	Teachers 36 %	Parents 20 %	Pupils 44 %	Black 43 %	White 57 %
Adjustment to an environment with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures.	22	0	40	32	24	18
Having to pay more for transport to and from school.	11	0	25	14	29	2
Having to pay more for education (expensive education).	23	0	40	34	29	21
Hostile neighbourhood around the school.	3	3	5	2	9	0
How to cope with racism from others.	34	44	35	25	30	33
Attend extra lessons.	2	0	0	5	6	0
Travel longer distance to and from school.	11	6	15	14	21	7
Higher standard of education.	4	0	10	5	6	4
Inadequate parental support of school activities.	2	6	0	0	3	2
Language barrier.	16	44	0	0	3	26
Paying equal attention to pupils from diverse background and groups in class.	2	6	0	0	3	2
Maintaining fair standard of discipline in the school/class.	4	11	0	0	0	4
Treating pupils of diverse groups and backgrounds equally.	3	8	0	0	0	4

* NB. Multi-response table therefore percentages exceed 100.

Respondents (that is, teachers, pupils and parents) cited three major challenges arising out of their association with open schools. In their order of frequency the challenges were stated as firstly "coping with racism," secondly "having to pay more for education," and thirdly "adjustment to an environment with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures."

"Facing racism" was equally seen as a challenge by both black and white respondents. Also there was very little difference in both black and white respondents in perceiving as challenges "adjustment to an environment with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures" and "paying more for education."

Another noticeable observation was that teacher respondents did not see "adjustment to an environment with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures" as a challenge. This somewhat contradicts their earlier claims in the previous Tables on the strategies that they had to put in place in their school to meet this challenge. Further, an insignificant number of teacher respondents maintained that they had to make an effort "to pay equal attention to pupils from diverse groups and backgrounds" and "to treat pupils from diverse groups and backgrounds equally in class." For these reasons, one would have therefore, expected teachers to see personal adjustment in dealing with pupils from diverse groups and backgrounds as a big challenge to their position in and out of the classroom. Be that as it may, they demonstrated a high sensitivity to racism.

Other issues which were seen by the respondents as lesser challenges compared to the three major ones above were : "travelling longer distances to and from school," "increase in transport costs," and "the language barrier." The language barrier was described as a problem experienced, in the main, by black pupils in a strictly English medium school. A disturbing response but fortunately a minority view was "the hostility experienced by blacks from the neighbourhood" where the (open) schools are located. Open schools in which the research was conducted are located in predominantly white residential areas.

4.5.3 Responses to challenges because of being in an open school.

Table 13 gives the challenges respondents had to face because of their association with an open school

TABLE 13* : How challenges were resolved on admission to an open school						
Respondents : N = 100						
	Total 100 %	Teachers 36 %	Parents 20 %	Pupils 44 %	Black 43 %	White 57 %
By organising private transport.	9	0	25	9	20	4
Taking extra lessons in certain subjects.	5	0	0	11	12	2
Accepting the fact that people from divergent racial and cultural backgrounds will at times act and behave differently in a given set of circumstances.	25	0	45	36	27	19
Investment in educational policies.	9	0	20	11	3	12
Moving home.	1	0	2	0	0	2
Buying extra books	3	0	5	5	6	2
Reporting incidences of racism to school authorities.	6	0	5	11	12	4
The school providing bursaries to the needy pupils	4	0	5	7	3	5
Teachers encouraging inter-racial mixing e.g. through groupwork in class.	1	3	0	0	0	2
Installing an academic support programme in the school.	17	47	0	0	6	25
Joining/forming a lift club.	2	6	0	0	0	4
Could not solve problem.	4	0	0	9	12	0
Making a conscious effort to understand people from diverse groups and backgrounds (racial tolerance).	15	42	0	0	6	21
Respecting others.	4	11	0	0	3	2

* NB. Multi-response table therefore percentages exceed 100.

In response to the probe “how did you resolve the challenges that presented themselves by being in an open school?”, respondents gave a number of solutions (depicted in Table 13) they had applied in an attempt to resolve their individual problems like transport, high fees, living far from school etc.

Three factors, however, stand out in table 13 because of their high frequencies. The first one is the formulation of a *modus vivendi* to accommodate other people from diverse groups and backgrounds by the parents and pupil respondents. The second one is the conscious effort by teacher respondents to bridge the knowledge and the educational standard gap among pupils through the introduction of academic support programmes. The third factor is an attempt by the teacher respondents to try and practice “racial tolerance.”

Of concern but not so disturbing because of very low frequency is the view held by some respondents that they could not find a solution to their problems. Examples of problems which could not be resolved were cited by respondents as “repeating a class.” “having to take extra lessons outside the school” “and transport problems.”

4.5.4 Discussion.

At a general level there seems to be a lot of good intention to make open schools work. People associated with open schools are conscious of the fact that these schools are now a *fait accompli*. This becomes evident from the ways and means

people in open schools have tried to cope with the challenges facing them because of their association with these schools.

However, the problem of dealing with people from divergent groups and backgrounds in an open school system does not seem to be resolved satisfactorily. For example, the issue of race and racism seems to have been swept under the carpet because people associated with open schools do not think it should be a factor in these schools.

4.6 THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF OPEN SCHOOLS

4.6.1 Social activities

Table 14 depicts the activities open schools were engaged in to promote inter-racial and inter-cultural understanding.

TABLE 14* : Social activities (excluding sports) where pupils from various racial and cultural backgrounds mix or come together at school					
Respondents : N = 80					
	Total 30	Teachers 36	Pupils 44	Black 29	White 51
	%	%	%	%	%
Cultural evenings.	91	92	91	91	92
Competitions (music).	30	0	55	46	22
Inter-racial and inter-cultural mixing is unsatisfactory because it is irregular.	6	7	5	9	6

* NB. Multi-response table therefore percentages exceed 100.

Respondents cited "cultural evenings" as the main occasion where people from various racial and cultural backgrounds came together. These occasions were highly supported by people of all race and cultural groups. Next to cultural evenings but far down in the list were "music competitions."

A somewhat disturbing response, though a minority view, was that inter-racial and inter-cultural mixing was irregular.

4.6.2 Home inter-racial visits

Respondents had to state occasions where home inter-racial visits occurred and to comment on such visits. Responses to this appear in Tables 15A and 15B.

TABLE 15 A* : Occasions friend's home visited			
Respondents : N = 64			
	Total 64	Black 34	White 30
	%	%	%
There are no genuine inter-racial friendships.	30	47	10
No visits take place.	21	24	17
Visiting because we live in the same neighbourhood.	19	21	17
Regular visits - as friends there need not be any special occasion.	22	18	27
Visit on special occasion.	30	18	43
TABLE 15 B* : Views on these visits			
	Total 17	Black 8	White 27
	%	%	%
Parents are protective. They forbid their children from visiting townships.	42	32	57
Improves inter-cultural understanding.	34	59	6
Visits create inter-racial understanding.	31	50	1
Neighbours do not like the visits.	21	11	33
Friendships across culture and races are not close enough to allow visits.	22	11	33

* NB. Multi-response table therefore percentages exceed 100.

On the positive side respondents (that is, pupils and parents) maintained that inter-racial visits occurred mostly because “people were friends” and frequently on “special occasions” such as birthday parties. What, however, is noticeable, on the above responses is that more whites seem to appreciate and encourage these visits than is the case with blacks. The reasons for differences in frequency between black and white respondents are clarified in Table 14.B. Personal safety was cited by some respondents : “parents forbid their children from visiting townships because they are unsafe.” Further, “neighbours in the township are against inter-racial visits.” With regard to visiting on special occasion, only respondents felt that “friendships across races and cultures are not close.”

Also a strong positive view in favour of inter-racial home visits was that “such visits improve inter-cultural understanding.” On the negative side, a majority of white respondents felt that “there are no genuine inter-racial friendships.” Although such a response was not unexpected because of the past history of our race relations, it is, however, too strong in this time of change and reconciliation in South Africa.

4.7 TEACHING AND LEARNING IN OPEN SCHOOLS

In this section respondents were requested to give their reflections on the teaching and learning processes in open schools. They were expected, *inter alia*, to examine teaching strategies, if any, that have been put in place in these schools to cater for the learning needs of the diverse school population.

Also, respondents had to give an account on how open schools had impacted on their lives and the lives of the communities outside these schools. With regard to communities, respondents were channelled to focus on the relationship, if any, between open schools and the ‘disadvantaged’ communities because it was felt that as previously “advantaged” schools, their point of vantage could be used to the benefit of those whom the ‘system’ had sidelined.

4.7.1 Impact of open schools on respondents’ outlook towards life.

Respondents were asked to state how their association with open schools had impacted on their identities and outlook towards life. Responses on their views appear in Table 16.

TABLE 16* : Ways teaching/learning or association with an open school impacts on identity and outlook towards life						
Respondents : N = 100						
	Total 100 %	Teachers 36 %	Parents 20 %	Pupils 44 %	Black 43 %	White 57 %
It has increased level of understanding people of other races and cultures.	62	63	50	68	74	56
It has made me see the importance of treating everybody equally in society.	86	100	85	75	82	88
It has made people form friends across race and culture.	27	0	35	45	24	26

* NB. Multi-response table therefore percentages exceed 100.

On the whole, respondents felt that their association with open schools had taught them a lot about other races and cultures : “it has increased my level of understanding of people of other races and cultures.” Also, respondents saw value modification : “it has made me see the importance of treating everybody equally in society,” and as a result “friendships were being formed across race and culture.”

4.7.2 Contributions of open schools to the wider community - especially the 'disadvantaged' communities.

Table 17 illustrates the comments of the respondents (that is, teachers) regarding the social responsibility of open schools and in particular to 'disadvantaged' communities.

TABLE 17 : Impact of openness of school on communities - particularly 'disadvantaged communities' Respondents : N = 36			
	Teachers 36 %	Black 9 %	White 27 %
Funds are raised by the school to be donated to disadvantaged communities (donations)	36	33	33
The school organises workshops to help teachers from the 'disadvantaged' communities to improve their teaching skills.	28	0	37
The school arranges bursaries for its 'disadvantaged' pupils (bursary offered on merit).	22	17	26
The school shares its facilities e.g. laboratories, computers with some 'disadvantaged' township schools.	17	17	19
The school does not contribute much to 'disadvantaged' communities	11	33	4

* NB. Multi-response table therefore percentages exceed 100.

All open schools in the sample seemed to be doing something to alleviate the plight of the 'disadvantaged' communities or pupils from the 'disadvantaged'

communities. Fund raising campaigns for donating money to disadvantaged communities was on top of the list. The moneys raised were, in the main, donated to educational institutions like crèches and pre-schools. Also, workshops were organised to share teaching skills.

Each open school surveyed had some scheme in place to assist needy pupils financially. However, such help was not just a handout but was offered on merit. Also race was not taken into account in offering financial help to needy pupils.

Conclusions and recommendations will receive attention in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter, the most pertinent findings presented in the analysis and interpretation of research data are discussed. Further, these findings are evaluated against the two models that are prevalently used in the provision of education in a society comprising of divergent cultures, beliefs, ideologies and experiences: that is, the assimilationist and pluralistic models.

5.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

At this point, the problem of this study needs to be restated in order to relate the conclusions and recommendations in context.

The problem addressed by this study revolved around the role open schools play in redefining the relationships between schooling and a social system in a country where race and racial segregation had been used as indices to separate, categorise and stratify people of different racial backgrounds. Through separation, people were locked into their racial enclaves. Also, to carry the categorisation and stratification of people in society according to race to its logical conclusion, the previous government, *inter alia*, treated each race group differently in the eyes of

the law and in the allocation of resources. For example, government expenditure on white education far outstripped expenditure on black education resulting in inequality of resources and consequently in the quality of education between races. This led to perceptions, by the 'disadvantaged' race groups, that in order for their children to compete equitably, they have to send them to white schools which were better resourced and consequently had a better quality of education. Further, inadequate communication and contact amongst different races fostered by the policy of separate development (apartheid) had resulted in very little inter-racial and inter-cultural understanding. Misconceptions existed because people were not always aware of the circumstances under which members of the other racial groups lived.

It was against the above background that open schools were defined and analysed in this study because these schools *ipso facto* set out to defy and challenge the educational, cultural, racial and ideological foundations upon which the previous government policy of apartheid was founded.

5.3 A CASE FOR AN ASSIMILATIONIST OR A PLURASTIC MODEL IN OPEN SCHOOLS

Earlier on in this study it was argued that open schools as schools *sui generis* are faced with the challenge of striking a balance between integrating pupils from diverse groups whilst at the same time allowing and encouraging group diversity to prevail amongst the groups. This presents to these schools a somewhat tall

order because they have to decide whether to go the route of pluralism or assimilationism, assuming that pluralism is a negation of assimilation.

The findings in this study revealed that open schools as they are presently constituted have maintained the *status quo* in their teaching approach. For example, teacher respondents maintained that when teaching they disregarded the cultural and educational backgrounds of their pupils and did not pay attention to the mixed pupil population. A significant observation can be made from this finding, namely that a strong identification by teachers with the 'business as usual' approach indicates that, at the educational level, the openness of the school has had very little impact on accommodating pupil diversity. The traditional Eurocentric perspective directs school policy on teaching.

Further, the empirical findings in this study demonstrate that it is not only ideological factors that operate in the construction of attitudes towards open schools. Pragmatic considerations are equally significant. This is borne out by the fundamental differences in expectations and views held by black and white respondents about what open schools should achieve for society in general. The expectations and views favour the simultaneous application of two models in the provision of education to pupils of diverse groups and backgrounds namely, assimilation and pluralism.

Black respondents saw the value of open schools, in the main, from a purely utilitarian perspective, that is, high educational standards and trouble free schooling. To them it mattered little therefore, what model the school used to

integrate them into the open school system. On their part, open schools did nothing to adapt or modify their practice and tradition to accommodate the changed pupil population in the school. Black pupils were thus being assimilated into a schooling system with better academic standards and a culture of learning. (Christie 1990 : 130) in support of this view maintains that in comparison with black schools, white schools could all too easily appear to be educationally sound and thus escape closer scrutiny. She goes on to say that the heritage of open schools may operate as a gatekeeper to change, with the result that assimilationism is taken for granted.

To white respondents, open schools meant a schooling system which exposed pupils to a multicultural environment. Thus, in so far as they were concerned, the issue of academic standards was a given. For this reason exposure to and learning about other's cultures in open schools received an overwhelming support. This view held by white respondents on open schools fits in with the pluralistic model in the provision of education for pupils from diverse groups and backgrounds because pluralism *inter alia* entails that:

- pupils should not only remain proficient in their own lifestyle but they should also seek to acquire understanding and appreciation of lifestyles of other pupils; and
- they should give a positive recognition of diverse lifestyles.

It is however, significant to note that the power of western technology predisposes the entire schooling system to assimilation. Hence, as a matter of practice, open schools were more inclined towards assimilationism than pluralism. For example, English is the primary medium of communication. On the contrary Zulu is offered only as an optional subject in open schools and pupils are, in the main, encouraged not to use it as a communication tool at school during the day. This then defeats what pluralism stands for. Further, where pluralism finds favour with open schools, it is, in the main, limited to somewhat static aspects of other cultures, for example, during open cultural evenings traditional food and attire tend to be emphasised.

5.4 THE DILEMMA OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN OPEN SCHOOLS

Respondents displayed tremendous understanding of what open schools should be doing to bring about social change. They emphasised, amongst other things, inter-racial and inter-cultural understanding. To them the key agents of social change were classroom teachers. However, evidence in this study suggests that teachers were not doing enough to meet this challenge. For example the majority of teacher respondents did not see racism as a factor inherent in open schools. Perhaps this reflects the notion that racism and racial discrimination are so finely interwoven into daily life in South Africa that simply bringing people of diverse groups and backgrounds does not bring a clear understanding of the dynamics of race. Past and present government policies on race and racial issues will always influence pupil judgement and perceptions of other race groups.

Also another significant, though not conclusive result shown by this study is that respondents did not see open schools as directly involved in a deliberate movement for change but primarily as learning institutions focussed on purely curricula and other school-related issues. That respondents conceptualised open schools as they did has certain implications. Firstly, it would not be possible for open schools to undertake such an enormous task. As a matter of fact, schools are places of learning; to engage in ideological issues takes second place. Secondly, open schools came about at the height of the social and political crisis in the country during the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's. With the socio-political pressure having abated, their 'openness' was taken for granted. In other words, they somewhat lost their initial mission as stalwarts in challenging the commonsense belief that schools in South Africa should be racially segregated. This is evident from their adoption of the approach "business as usual" in school policy and teaching. Thirdly, social change brought about by being in an open school was seen by respondents not so much as an all embracing course for the good of society in general. Focus was on what respondents would achieve as individuals - for example better life chances. Be that as it may, findings from this study indicate that there is considerable support for open schools as open educational institutions. This general approval is borne out by the claims made by respondents that open schools had impacted positively towards their outlook towards life in general and in particular their attitude towards members of other racial groups. For this reason it may be said though not conclusively that open schools are to a large extent successful in reducing racial tension and promoting social cohesion and for this they should be recognised as an important initiative for change.

Finally, notwithstanding the merits and the demerits of either assimilationism or pluralism, there is still a basic logic in providing schooling. The logic is predicated on the primary functions of the school and these functions are:

- Providing people with literacy and hence quality of life; that is, providing a map into the world.
- Selecting and allocating individuals into slots in the social division of labour and services.
- Empowering people through excellence, that is, providing society with, *inter alia*, inventors, theorists and intellectuals.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to make open schools viable agents of social change are made as follows:

5.5.1 Facing up to the 'openness' of the schools.

Motivation

For open schools to play a meaningful role in bringing about social change, a conscious, deliberate and systematic effort must be made by teachers, pupils and parents to ensure that this function of the school is dovetailed into all the school activities. In other words change must start in the school itself.

It is recommended that:

- Open schools should reflect their 'openness' in practice. This will entail formulation of a mission statement that will give practical form to the idea of racially mixed schooling.
- School policies in open schools should be revisited with a view to dealing with what are perceived as irritant aspects in them. Aspects of (written and unwritten) policy which need urgent attention are the following:
 - admission policy
 - curriculum (subjects choice)
 - staffing policy
 - language policy (for communication and not as a medium of instruction).

5.5.2 Inter-cultural and inter-racial understanding.

Motivation.

Open schools offer pupils, teachers and parents opportunities for cultural and racial contact which they would otherwise not experience. In South Africa people from various racial and cultural backgrounds have inherited and have been taught from the past to absorb views about other cultures and races uncritically. People have no clear theoretical understanding of their actions towards other racial groups.

It is recommended that:

- Open schools should challenge pupils away from their racial common sense by confronting racism openly.
- Open schools should practise differentiation but they should not give pupils who are not members of the original group in the school the conviction that they occupy a special position. In other words they must demonstrate parity in cultures.
- Open culture days organised by the schools should not be limited to the static aspects of other cultures e.g. food fairs but should be aimed at developing amongst pupils competence in multiple cultures.

5.5.3 The teacher as an agent of social change

Motivation

Teachers do not only exercise influence over how knowledge is organised and implemented but even over what should be taken as knowledge, and, in the final analysis what 'reality' should be. In his/her exercise of his role, the teacher no doubt has to take into account the cultural and racial background of pupils in classrooms which include pupils from diverse backgrounds and groups. Unless teachers have a positive attitude towards racially mixed schooling and are equipped to deal with this challenge, a vast gap will exist between theory and the actual practice in the school.

It is recommended that:

- A training programme for teachers needs to be implemented to inculcate into them informal sensitivity to cultural and racial diversity.
- Teachers must be involved in producing appropriate teaching material to be used in open schools.

5.5.4 The role of the Education Department

Motivation

Some of the problems faced by open schools in implementing strategies to deal with a racially mixed pupil population are outside the control of these schools and teachers. There is no visible support from the Education Department and its officials to assist these schools to realise their goal as open schools.

It is recommended that:

- Collaboration is established between open schools and the Department of Education with a view to engaging in a joint problem solving exercise. Some of the issues which could be tackled at this level are the following:
 - bridging classes
 - in-service training of teachers
 - language competency
 - curriculum and content modification.

5.6 FURTHER RESEARCH

Motivation

Open schools are faced with a challenge of creating an environment where pupils, parents and teachers from diverse groups and backgrounds will benefit maximally from the 'openness' of the school. Opening up a school to all starts with racial mixing but implies a great deal more. It demands an appreciation and understanding of diversity as a resource, not a disadvantage.

It is recommended that an in-depth study be conducted on the following aspects:

- Problems of academic adjustment of black pupils who join open schools in their mid-schooling career.
- The cultural bias of admission tests used in open schools.
- Race and class as a factor in social mixing in open schools.
- Curriculum development to meet the challenges of racially mixed schools.

5.7 FINAL REMARK

The success of open schools in bringing about social reform and change hinges on two issues, namely:

- A concerted effort and willingness by all groups to make the open school system work.
- Members of each group examining their attitudes to others and changing / modifying these attitudes where necessary.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(FOR PARENTS)

CONFIDENTIAL

A. SCHOOL POLICY

1. What problems did you encounter when you applied for your child to be admitted to an open school?
- i) State and discuss the problems.

- ii) How were the problems resolved?

B. OPENNESS OF SCHOOLS FROM A POLITICAL IDEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

2. What are your views on open schools? Explain.

3. What role do you see open schools playing in our changing society? Explain.

4. Why did you send your child/children to an open school? Explain.

5. There is an opinion that it is desirable that open schools should attempt to create common value and culture bases in society. What is your response to this and why?

6. What have been the unintended consequences on open schools?

7. (a) Once your child was admitted to an open school what new challenges presented themselves to you and your child?

(b) How did you resolve those challenges?

8. Describe experiences you have had to face because of association with an open school?

(a) Positive experiences

(b) Negative experiences

9. How are the above experiences handled?

10. (a) On what occasions have your children visited families (other than Black) of their class/school mates?

(b) What are your views on this?

C. TEACHING AND LEARNING

10. In what ways has the mixing of pupils in school impacted on your identity and outlook towards life?

11. How has your association with an open school spilled over to : -

(a) Your social life? (Explain how)

(b) Your work life? (Explain how)

(c) Your community? (Explain how)

(d) What are your views on this?

C) **PERSONAL PARTICULARS**

11.1 Mother

11.2 Father

11.3 Occupation

11.4 Home language

11.5 Educational qualifications

11.6 Age : 31 years

 40 years ☐

41 years

 50 years ☐

51 years

 60 years ☐

60 + years

 ☐

11.7 Area of residence

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(FOR PUPILS)

CONFIDENTIAL

A. SCHOOL POLICY

1. What problems did you encounter when you first arrived at an open school?

i) *State and discuss the problems.*

ii) How were the problems resolved?

B. OPENNESS OF SCHOOLS FROM A POLITICAL IDEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

2. What are your views on an open school like yours? Explain.

3. What role do you see open schools playing in our changing society? Explain.

4. Why did you choose to attend an open school? Explain.

5. There is an opinion that it is desirable that open schools should attempt to create common value and culture bases in society. What is your response to this and why?

6. What have been the unintended consequences on open schools?

7. (a) Once you were admitted to an open school what new challenges presented themselves to you and your parents?

(b) How did you resolve those challenges?

8. Describe experiences you have had to face because of association with an open school?
(a) Positive experiences

(b) Negative experiences

9. How are the above experiences handled?

10. (a) What makes your school different from Black schools?

11. In which social activities (excluding sports) do children from various racial and cultural backgrounds mix or come together at school?

12. Name 4 of your best friends in your school. Please indicate what race group they belong.

13. On what occasions have you visited their:-
(a) homes and vice versa?

- (b) What are your views on this?

In which social activities (excluding sports) do children from various racial and cultural backgrounds mix or come together outside school?

C) PERSONAL PARTICULARS

- 15.1 Standard _____
- 15.2 Age _____
- 15.3 Sex _____
- 15.4 Home language _____
- 15.5 Area of residence _____
- 15.6 Type of school attended? _____
- Model C _____
- Private _____
- Other (Specify) _____
- 15.7 Medium of instruction _____
- 15.8 When did you first register at the school you are attending?
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
(FOR TEACHING STAFF)

CONFIDENTIAL

A. SCHOOL POLICY

1. What is the school policy with regard to:

(a) Staff composition by race?

(b) Admission of pupils of different races?

(c) The educational approach?

B. OPENNESS OF SCHOOLS FROM A POLITICAL IDEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

2. What are your views on open schools?

3. What role do you see open schools playing in our changing South Africa?

4. What should be done to make open school viable agents of social change in South Africa?

5. How does your own school go about doing that?

6. There is an opinion that it is desirable that open schools should attempt to create common value and culture bases in society. What is your response to this and why?

7. What have been the unintended consequences on open schools?

8. What is the school doing to promote intercultural/inter-racial understanding:
(a) Amongst pupils?

- (b) Amongst staff and pupils?

(c) Amongst staff, pupils and parents?

9. How did you feel when you were told that your school will be open to all races? Explain.

10 What new challenges presented themselves?

(a) When your school was opened to all races?

(b) How did you resolve those challenges?

C. TEACHING AND LEARNING

11. What is the school doing in so far as teaching (including teaching material) to accommodate change from a 'closed' school to an 'open' school?
- ;
-
-
-
-
12. Besides opening its doors to all races, what else is the school doing to challenge the old social order of separate development?
-
-
-
-
13. In what ways has teaching in an open school impacted on your identity and outlook towards life?
-
-
-
-
14. In what ways has the mixing of pupils in your school impacted on their (i.e. pupils') identity and outlook towards life?
-
-
-
-

15. How has the openness of your school impacted on:

(a) The social life of parents of all races (Please explain)

(b) Communities - particularly the 'disadvantaged' communities
(Please explain).
