PONTE
Florence, Italy
International Journal of Sciences and Research

ADOLESCENTS IN A MULTIRACIAL DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA

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July 8, 2020

Abstract

There is now a new South Africa for all adolescents where there is no need to fight against each other on ideological grounds. In diversity and constitutionally, they are united and making a valuable contribution to the building of one nation for all South Africans. Adolescents are involved in politics both in informal and formal settings. Some of the debates they engage in are so robust that they sway the views of those who are more seasoned in matters of politics. Some politicians win leadership positions as a direct result of being backed by adolescents. It was partly in view of this that the first democratically elected president, Nelson Mandela, stated: "The youth of our country are a valued possession of our nation. Their needs are immense and urgent. They are at the center of reconstruction and development program. Without them there can be no future" South Africa commands the strongest and most efficient and prosperous economy in Africa; its status in Africa is similar to that of the United States of America in relation to other Western countries. With such a prosperous and promising country, South African adolescents of all races have nothing to fear for their futures except fear itself. All the countries sharing common borders with South Africa are socially, economically, and educationally less developed than South Africa. Therefore South Africa is viewed as a land of opportunity.

Keywords: Multiracial, South Africa, democratization, Adolescence, New, Land of Opportunity, Education, strong economy, USA, universities.

Introduction & Discussion

South Africa is located at the southern tip of the African continent with a land mass of 1,219,912 kilometers inhabited by a population of 52 million Africans, Coloreds, Indians and Whites (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007). South Africa shares common borders with Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe to the north, and Mozambique and Swaziland to the east, commanding a coastline of

2,798 kilometers, with its shores marked by the Indian Ocean on the east and the Atlantic Ocean on the west.

South Africans are marked by differences in their diverse original languages, cultures and religious beliefs, as well as political persuasions. According to the 2001 census, South Africans are demographically distributed as follows: African 79%, White 9.6%, Coloreds 8.9%, and Indians 2.5%. Among these people, there are 11 officially recognized languages, with English being the most popular and commonly used across the country. Given the ethnic diversity, there is no single culture that claims to be South African, thus paving the way for each racial group and language to assert its own cultural identity. Map of South Africa in Africa, More than 80% of South Africans claim to be Christian (South Africa, 19); there are also many South Africans who adhere to African traditional religions. Other South Africans are Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and Buddhists. As a secular state, South Africa, in compliance with its constitutions, respects and upholds the democratic principle of religious freedom.

South Africa is known to have the largest number of Whites in Africa whose origin is traceable in Europe. It also has the largest number of Indians in Africa as well as the largest number of Coloreds in Africa.

The South African economy is the largest and strongest in Africa, with a modern infrastructure. Moreover, South Africa is one of the leading mineral-producing countries in the world and is well known for having the largest reserve of gold, chromium, platinum and manganese (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007). A large proportion of its minerals are exported to Western Europe, North America, and the Far East. Since the mid- 1990s, South Africa has experienced steady economic growth. There is optimism among economists that South Africa will continue experiencing a steady and sustainable economic growth of 5% per annum.

South Africa was colonized by both the English and the Dutch in the seventeenth century. English domination over the Dutch descendants, referred to as Boers or Afrikaners, led the Afrikaners to establish colonies such as the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. However, as a result of the discovery of minerals, gold, and diamonds in the colony, the English invaded, leading to what is historically known as the Anglo- Boer War. Thereafter, independence (1910) was granted to South Africa, which led to an uneasy power-sharing, the English were politically, economically, educationally, and socially in control. However, this all had to change when an Afrikaner-dominated party, the National Party, won the election of 1948 and remained in power for an indefinite period, winning successively every election ever since they came to power. The victory was due to the fact that the Afrikaners were numerically superior to the English (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007).

As part of their agenda after assuming power, the Afrikaners strategized by coming up with the ideology of apartheid which, in essence, promoted separate development. The apartheid policy was intended to consolidate their control over the economic and social system, and maintain white domination (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007).

In the apartheid system, there was ruthless social stratification and a caste system which was enforced with such rigidity that it remains unrivaled in South African history (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Burman and Reynolds 1986). It determined the education people were to receive, based on their education and career.

White and Black never got to know and appreciate each other, partly because apartheid strictly separated them from each other (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007). As the White adolescents grew up, fear of the Black people was religiously instilled in them. Many were taught to hate and kill Black people in defense of their privileged position in society (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Burman and Reynolds 1986). This indeed was an impossible and unsustainable ambition, even though it took so many decades to annihilate apartheid in the course of history. According to the Group Areas Act of 1950:

1. Each population group was allocated its own area for residential purpose.
2. Children were to be taught only by members of their population group.
3. Africans were not allowed to stay in urban areas beyond a limit of three days.
4. No interracial marriages were allowed, and violation of this law was punishable by imprisonment.

Given such an environment, "Generations of children have now grown up within this system, with uniquely different experiences and attitudes from about each other despite being members of one nation" (Mwamwenda 2020, 2007; Burman 1986).

In short, apartheid laws were institutionalized. Such laws had a bearing and impact on every aspect of social life, including the institution of marriage. No White was allowed to marry anyone who was not White. There were jobs that could be given only to Whites and remuneration was based on one's race, so that commanded the highest pay followed by the Indians, Coloreds and the Africans, who were paid the least. Residential areas, health facilities, and education were allocated on the basis of race, with Whites receiving the best and Africans getting the worst (Mwamwenda 2020, 2007).

Defiance or violation of any apartheid laws led to severe consequences such as detention without due process, torture or death while in detention, banishment, or life imprisonment. There was no question that the apartheid policy was successful in its preferential treatment for Whites.

Notwithstanding its success and the harsh measures inflicted on those who failed to comply, South Africans of all races—the majority being Africans, and many among Whites, Indians, and Coloreds—refused to be silenced and accept the apartheid system unquestioningly (Mwamwenda 2020, 2007). They went to prison, they languished in jail, they went into exile and underground, they carried out demonstrations, and they trained as conventional and guerilla soldiers, all of which contributed to the struggle against apartheid (Mwamwenda 2020, 2007).

The rest of the world backed such a struggle materially and morally. This triumphantly led to apartheid's downfall and eternal destruction when democracy dawned on all South Africans, the oppressor and the oppressed, in April 1994. South African adolescents of all races played a

monumental role in such a historical achievement of unquantifiable magnitude (Mwamwenda 2020, 2007).

Demographic distribution of South African adolescents is as follows: 8.3 million (75%) Black, 1.4 million (12%) White, 1.1 million (10%) Colored, and 300,000 (3%) Asian.

Period of Adolescence

Adolescence is a period of great physiological change. The adolescent is neither a child nor an adult, but is on the threshold of adulthood. Adolescence is a period characterized by a search for and consolidation of identity. To the Masai of Tanzania, the Xhosa of South Africa, the Basotho of the mountain Kingdom of Lesotho, the Kikuyu of Kenya, and the Chagga at the foot of Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, it is a period of initiation characterized by circumcision and tests of bravery and courage which confer on the youth of these societies special status and recognition. Youths are preparing, and in fact become ready, to participate in the affairs of their traditional lifestyle as adults (Mwamwenda 2020, 2007, 2004).

The boy considered eligible for initiation is ready for the transition into adulthood. Either he chooses on his volition to go for initiation or his father suggests the need for him to go for initiation. Among both the Pedi and Lobedu initiation is not held regularly, and is therefore youth have to make use of such opportunity whenever it is held in their areas.

The manner in which a surgeon is identified and appointed for performing the circumcision may differ from one ethnic group to another. Among the Southern Nguni, a surgeon is appointed on the basis of his acceptance of the appointment as an honor. Among the Pedi, a surgeon is selected from a different ethnic group and his appointment is renewable depending on his performance.

The order followed in the circumcision is fairly uniform (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007). Among the Southern Nguni, they start with youth from low-rank parents, whereas among the Venda they start with a headman's sons, followed by a chief's sons, and continue in descending order of importance. Among the Nguni, the initiate sits in the river as he splashes water on his body as a way of breaking himself with the past in preparation for the new life he is about to assume. The Pedi initiate is led to a rock where he sits, and as he does so suddenly he is slapped on the back and as he quickly looks back, his lion cloth is speedily removed he is instantly circumcised by having his foreskin removed. He is then led to a river where he stands in cold water for a while to reduce the pain caused by the surgery. Among the Southern Nguni, the initiate sits with his legs wide apart and men closely watch him, expecting him not to flinch or show any sign of pain or fear as he is circumcised. In contrast, South Sotho and Venda boys are allowed to cry, scream, and show signs of pain or fear, though their screaming is drowned by the singing of spectators (Mwamwenda 2020, 2007; Van der Vliet 1974).

In most cases the wounds are treated with medicinal leaves, antibiotic creams, paraffin, and brandy, and washed until they heal (Mwamwenda 2020, 2007, 2004; Tyrell and Jurgens 1983; van der Vliet 1974). All this time, the initiates remain the initiates' lodge observing taboos against drinking water, eating foods such as fresh green mealies and other green foods. Lobedu initiates

are forbidden from using sour milk while Bomvana initiates can drink water mixed with earth. The removed foreskin is handled differently; among the Sotho it is burned and buried, among the Southern Nguni it is secretly buried by each initiate, whereas the Pedi preserve it for medicine to be used during future sessions.

If the youth dies during the initiation, he is buried secretly and the parents are informed at the end of the circumcision period. Such deaths remain unrecognized and there are no funerals to mourn them. It is rationalized that it was not the will of the ancestors that the boy should have survived (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007, 2004; van der Vliet 1974).

Initiation is accompanied by harsh treatment as part of the training for patience, endurance and bravery. The ordeal experienced during initiation is mainly of the following nature: beatings either as a routine and part of the experience or for errors committed, eating unpalatable meals, not being allowed to drink water, difficult sleeping conditions since the ceremonies are mainly conducted in winter, and long periods of remaining cold as they wash in the river (Mwamwenda 2020, 2007; van der Vliet 1974). Initiates are also taught information such as laws, customs, and tradition.

Menarche is recognized as a significant event I the life of a girl, and therefore rituals are performed within a number of South African groups. Puberty is a much celebrated period for a number of reasons: it is the beginning of sexual maturity, and it is associated with fertility and adult accountability (Mwamwenda 2020; Hammond-Tooke 1993). The ritual may be done for individual girls or for groups of girls or for groups of girls. It may be performed soon after the onset of menarche or a long while later, including when a woman is married and has given birth to a number of children.

As puberty girls undergo initiation, which starts with the girl informing the mother about her menarche. The mother in turn informs the father, and together they inform the relative's concerned (Hammond-Tooke 1993). The girl is secluded in a house where she stays with a few other girls, and while is there she observes certain taboos. A beast is slaughtered and there is singing, feasting and dancing. She is then ritually cleansed and thus gains the status of an adult woman ready to get married at an appropriate time.

Among the Tsonga, the Pedi, the Lobedu, and the Southern Nguni, a girl may be secluded from the commencement to the end of the menarche. During seclusion, girls have the company of friends who stay with them and males who visit them and give them presents. During the nights of seclusion, singing and other merry-making activities take place. Seclusion is ended by celebrations involving singing and drinking.

The largest school of initiation for girls is among the Venda known as *Domba*. It is held when the chief's daughter experiences her menarche and therefore is ready for initiation, or it may be conducted if there has been a good harvest. Before initiation, participants go through rites which include being awakened early in the morning to go to the initiation school where the initiation takes place; clothes are removed and the initiates remain with only a piece of cloth covering their genital area; they like on their stomachs and feed on porridge placed in front of the house. Come

morning, they perform the python dance for the first time; the dance is repeated every morning and evening for the duration of initiation.

The second phase of the *Domba* consists of initiates being taught what is expected of them as adults. Some of the teaching involves knowing the signs of pregnancy, the secrets of childbirth and motherhood, tribal traditions, and human sexuality. They are also subjected to hardships, including frequent beatings (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007).

The final phase is that of washing in the river and being shaved to indicate their parting with their past as they qualify for womanhood. Then they are examined to ascertain whether they are virgins. Those who are still virgins are congratulated and celebrated, while those who have lost their virginity are beaten and jeered by the participants and spectators.

However, not every ethnic group practices initiation as a rite of passage. For example, this is not practiced by White South Africans or Indian South Africans, or by some of the other African ethnic groups such as the Zulu, who form the largest ethnic group in South Africa with a population of about 8 million (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007). On the other hand, there are ways by which the attainment of adolescence is recognized and appropriate status accorded. One of these would be the right to vote or being eligible for a driving license at the age of 18, which applies to all South Africans regardless of population classification. Other signs would be the physical changes experienced such as sexual maturity and engaging in independent decision making. All these would be applicable, in particular, to Indian, Colored, and White adolescents.

Among many Colored adolescents, belonging to a gang is important. Gangs as subculture have been described and interpreted variously such as:

1. An expression of resistance to the dominant political economy of African societies such as was the case with apartheid in South Africa and structural adjustment and military dictatorship in Nigeria.
2. Gang subculture is also said to be a finer cultural expression between the middle and working classes in townships.
3. As manifestation of the alienation of working class urban youth from their elders.
4. Gangs should also be said to be an expression of social cohesion in peripheral communities as observed among Colored South Africans in the Western Cape (Mwamwenda 2020, 2007; Salo 2005).

In the Western Cape there are areas where 70% of the Colored adolescents between 13 and 20 years of age are members of a gang. They are often conscripted into these gangs (Mwamwenda 2020, 2007; Lindegaard 2005).

Male gangs of Coloreds are notoriously associated with violent and bloody acts, including severe physical assaults, murder, and rape (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Salo 2005), which partly has led to Cape Town being referred to as the murder capital of the world. Among many Colored adolescents, joining or being conscripted into a gang is regarded as a rite of passage into adulthood.

The meaning of a man in the township through gangs' rites of passage is a process that marks the start of the journey into the wider world of gendered adulthood. Like other rites of

passage men are encouraged to take on the values and responsibilities which signify manhood within their communities. In Manenberg, toughness and display of loyalty to local men first, and then to other members of the community are quintessential values of masculinity. Individuals, who want to be recognized as men, are expected to display their ability to withstand emotional and physical deprivation that will mark their lives. More than that, they have to display their potential loyalty to the gang, measured in their ability to withstand the severe beating and painful tattooing, without flinching. For the gang has to ensure that in future conflicts, a gangster would display enormous courage and the ability to defend his brother's life even under the most difficult circumstances (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Salo 2005).

Imprisonment among Coloreds is a path leading youth to adulthood/manhood. In prison the adolescent is toughened and must ensure that he preserves or endures in preparation for manhood.

Beliefs

Parents transmit to their children what they perceive to be right or wrong, good and evil, valuable and worthless, which in most cases is predominantly influenced by their religious beliefs. In the case of South Africa, this would include Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Judaism (Kruger 1996). In research dealing with religious affiliation of South Africans 8% of the respondents had no religious affiliation, whereas the vast majority expressed the view that religion played a significant role in their lives (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Malan 2005).

Gender

South African cultures are mainly male dominated and as such the following hold true:

1. Women hold a lower status than men.
2. Men grow up with the concept that women are inferior and they are superior.
3. They are also of the view that women must be subjected to their control.
4. Women are reared to hold men in high esteem and respect and feel that they ought to be submissive to men.

It can be stated without fear of contradiction that one's gender gradually becomes internalized through the early interactions that a person goes through with family or environment (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Gaganakis 1999). In general, girls are associated with being passive, nurturing, emotional, and intuitive in contrast to boys, who are associated with being rational, assertive, competitive, curious, ambitious, and independent (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2004).

Before the age of 5 there is little difference in the activities of boys and girls as they play together, share similar games, and spend time together (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Hammond-Tooke 1993). Many boys start herding cattle, sheep, goats, and other animals by the time they are about 4 or 5. As they do so, they have the opportunity of observing nature in tis splendor and beauty, acquiring knowledge about plants, birds, weather, and human behaviour. Children among the Lobedu are known to be able to identify 200 different plants growing within their environment.

Similarly, as a girl grows she assumes the important economic and social role in the affairs of her home at the knees of a great teacher, the mother. She participates in cooking, keeping the house clean, drawing water, looking for firewood, taking care of the baby, and delivering messages.

The Self

On the basis of the Western model, great importance is attached to being independent of others and being able to discover one's own special attributes (Markus and Kiyatama 1991; Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007, 2004, 2007). The self is perceived as being autonomous and interested in personal independence that sets one apart from tohers (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Berry et al. 1992). In this model, the emphasis is on personal goals over collective goals and self-reliance over dependency (Mwamwenda, 2920, 2007; Triandis 1989). The self is therefore interpreted as "Constructing oneself as an individual whose behavior is organized and made more meaningful primarily by reference to one's internal repertoire of thoughts, feelings and actions of others" (Markus and Kiyatama 1991, p. 226).

It is generally held that in Western countries more people identify the self from such a perspective than in most third world cultural milieus, including African cultures.

An interdependent perspective of the self, with the emphasis on connectedness, relatedness and interdependence, is prevalent in Africa and other third world cultures. "The person is only made whole when situated in his (or her) place in a social unit" (Berry et al. 1992, p. 94). Mischel (1977, p. 25) elaborates that the self cannot be understood in isolation, but only in relation to other persons. "Experiencing interdependence entails being oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship and recognizing that one's behavior is determined, contingent on, and to a large extent organized by what the actor perceives to be the thoughts, feelings, actions of others in the social relationship. The self becomes most meaningful and complete when it is cast in the appropriate social relationship" (Markus and Kiyatama 1991, p. 227).

Characteristic of this perspective of the self is the tendency to act in harmony with others' wishes and expectations, rather than on the basis of personal wishes. "A premium is placed on emphasizing collective welfare, on showing a sympathetic concern for others" (Markus and Kiyatama 1991, p. 228). In fact, "Africans are extremely sensitive to the interdependencies among people and view the world and other extensions of one another. The self is viewed, not as a hedge closure, but as an open field" (Markus and Kiyatama 1991, p. 227). Durojaiye (1976, p. 23) further points out that an individual in the traditional African society considers himself fulfilled only if he is in symbiotic relationship with his extended family. If he is rich, many of his extended family may be dependent on him for food, shelter, clothing, apprenticeship, and formal education. As part of the interdependent aspect of the self, others are assigned great importance, carry considerable weight, and play a focal role in a person's behavior. However, concern for others is usually restricted to a group of people who may be close to an individual. For example, people falling outside the family, friends, co-workers, or ethnic group are not likely to be treated in the same manner. As the child grows, the importance of doing things together through sharing and helping

one another is impressed upon the child, and less emphasis is placed on personal gain and individualism (Mwamwenda 2004). "The selflessness and community spirit of these youngsters is quite remarkable, particularly in the more remote areas where the tradition way of life is followed" (Tyrell and Jurgens 1989, p. 111). In African child rearing the identity of a child is one with the group to which the child belongs. As such, the child's personal well-being, significance, safety, and prestige can only be realized by being one with the group, without which there is little the child can achieve (Mwamwenda 2020; Tyrell and Jurgens 1983).

The African self is predominantly interdependent and collective, as opposed to being individualistic and independent. As such, its focus is on the extent to which others' needs and interests can be taken care of before those of the individual. This may seem like neglect of the self in the interest of others, but in practice this is not the case. In taking care of others' needs, the individual's own needs are also taken care of since he or she is part of others. Moreover, just as an individual is concerned with others' needs, so are others equally concerned with his or her needs. It is important for individuals not to become self-centred to the extent that they are no longer concerned with communal well-being. The main reasons Africans have a dominant interdependent self is the way they bring up their children, the existence of the extended family, polygamy, and the overall cultural milieu. However, owing to contact with other cultures, the African interdependent self has not remained undiluted. Consequently, some Africans may have a more dominant independent self than an interdependent self. This number is likely to increase as a result of change in African child rearing practices and greater exposure to education. Western culture, and technology.

Family Relationships

While most Western cultures focus on the nuclear family, dominated by parents and children, Africans have an extended family consisting of immediate members of the family, as well as other relatives such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, and cousins, who may either live under the same roof or nearby (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007, 2004). As a result, numerous activities are carried out jointly such as working, eating, and sleeping. Through these activities, the extended family members learn to value, respect, and trust one another, and realize that their success as a community depends on each and every person's contribution. While they may not be equal in strength, each person is expected to contribute, and the strong ones are expected to assist the weak ones. This is an educational experience for most Africans. For this reason, non-immediate members of the family such as aunts or uncles may take on the responsibility of paying school fees for children if the parents are financially unable to do so. A person helped in this manner is likely to reciprocate when faced with a similar situation. The typical household structure among White South Africans consists of a nuclear family made up of father, mother, and children. There is also a sizable proportion of unmarried adults who are single and living in their households independently. As evidence of how committed Whites are to a nuclear family, a survey carried out among them (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Simkins 1986) showed the following outcomes:

1. They were opposed to parents living with nuclear family (86%).
2. They were opposed to married children living with their parents (95%).
3. They were opposed to their relative living with a nuclear family (95%).

The ideal type of family among South African Indians is focused on a joint household consisting of two or more male-headed families, the males being brothers (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Simkins 1986). In addition, the joint family may have other things in common such as co-residence, sharing of meals, commenality, and joint ownership of property (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Jithoo 1978).

Before Western influence entered South Africa, both patrilineality and patrilocality were important cultural factors. When a woman gets married, she leaves her home to join her husband's kin. The children she bears culturally belong to the husband. Her marriage is sealed by transfer of bride-wealth from her husband or her husband's family to her parents. The ideal family is the extended family, which includes any number of close relatives (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007, 2004).

Coloreds are not easy to classify in terms of an ideal family type, given the complex composition of their inherent structure consisting of Khoi and San, Malay slaves, and White-African unions (Simkins 1986). In fact, it is difficult to state whether there is such a thing as a Colored marriage. Coloreds themselves seem to experience problems identifying themselves as to who they are in South Africa (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Scheper-Hughes 2005). In view of the difficulty of identifying what marriage is – which is neither civil nor religious nor traditional, as is the case with Africans – there is a low rate of marriage among Coloreds being reported, while the rate of illegitimacy of children is very high: 52% compared to 43% Africans, 15% Indians, and 5% Whites. More than 50% of South African households are nuclear in nature, whereas the rest are either extended or multiple.

It appears that each previous generation holds the view that they were better than the succeeding generation in their relationship with parents and their elders. A number of experts therefore have shared their views as to how child rearing can be promoted without leading to an adversarial relationship. As such, South African parents engage in social child rearing practices by emphasizing trust as an essential component in understanding adolescents. They further take note of the importance of being a good listener, as they hold the view that only by being a role model will adolescents be prepared to listen to them. As part of listening, parents also adhere to the principle of spending quality time with their adolescent children so that they truly get to know the understand each other. Ideally, the emphasis on child rearing practice is more on the positive aspects than on criticizing them on their negative behavior. "It is more beneficial to provide encouragement, motivation and positive feedback" (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Van der Linden 2005, p. 1). It is also important to focus on the effort more than on the outcome.

As part of adolescence, there is a need to move away from parents, as they assert their individuality, independence, and freedom of choice. They wish to make their own decisions and have some

privacy in their lives, all of which understanding parents appreciate and apply in their relationship with adolescents. Failure to do so is bound to cause conflict, tension, and hostility in family relationships. The adolescents are provided with the opportunity to explore the world as much as this is within bounds, and as much as they want to be free, they value sharing with parents their life experiences as they go through the most fascinating periods in their life time (Mwamwenda 2004). Adolescents crave respect from parents, and once treated with respect the chances of conflict or defiance are minimal (Van der Linden 2005). A study of variations in parenting of African adolescents based on age and gender (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Mboya, 1995) showed that "competence in social interaction is a more significant factor for girls than for boys and younger adolescents have a closer association with their parents than do their older counterparts" (Mboya 1995, p. 955).

As daily life in South Africa is experienced it may result in stress, which has a negative impact on relationships. For example, the rate of divorce has reached an unprecedented level, resulting in children developing behavioral problems whose origin can be traced to the family. Should whatever problems faced by adolescents remain unresolved, they will form part of their adult life as they grow beyond adolescence. HIV/AIDS has reached a level of pandemic, and as such there is need for counseling for those who are affected and infected (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; CEDPA 2005). The type of counseling entails fostering marital family relationships. Similarly, rape and violence are on the increase; so is substance abuse, extramarital affairs, and murder. Every six hours a murder is committed against women, not by strangers, but by familiar people such as husbands, boyfriends, and others. Relationship challenges can be unpacked to their components, which are sexual difficulties, substance abuse, parenting problems, single-parenting problems, and domestic violence, directed particularly at both women and children.

There are times when adolescents feel they are torn between two important people in their lives such as is the case in relationships to peers, friends, and parents (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; FAMSA 2005). Adolescents feel the need to be with friends and are also engaged in struggling in separating from parents as a form of asserting independence from many years of dependence. As a result of the quest for independence on the part of adolescents, there develops a state of conflict. On the basis of a survey carried out on matriculating students, it was shown that the family in South Africa has been in serious upheaval (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Malan 2005). Families headed by women are as follows: 22% of Whites, 20% of Asians, 32% of Coloreds, and 40% of Blacks. On the other hand, it can be stated that there is stability in a range of family settings such as nuclear, extended, compound, or single-parent families. It ought to be noted that "The extended kinship system among blacks and Asians seems to cushion the negative effects of disrupted nuclear family units" (Malan 2005, p. 1).

Many adolescents nevertheless are not receiving adequate care, nor can they be declared to be experiencing satisfactory stability. There is evidence for lack of control, supervision, and attention over adolescents, which clearly manifests itself in antisocial behavior of alcohol and drug abuse,

crime, and indiscriminate and unprotected sexuality. Pregnancies and births among adolescents are unacceptably high. The level of HIV/AIDS infection among adolescents is alarmingly high. According to a study undertaken by Le Roux (1996), there were 9,000 Black street children, whereas there were 10,000 White children were in state registered and administered children's homes and who otherwise would be street children. There was no such provision for Black children, as a legacy of apartheid policy. The private homes for Black children accommodated only 1,000 children.

There is a gender difference in the number of street children, with more male adolescents than female adolescents. This may be because girls are expected to stay home to take care of the younger children, girls are abandoned less often and are less daring to take up such a challenging lifestyle, relatives are more sympathetic with girls than with boys, and therefore they may be welcomed to their homes when abandoned or fleeing from home. Another reason is that female street children take up prostitution and therefore secure themselves accommodation (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Le Roux 1996).

There were a number of reasons advanced for South African adolescents leaving their homes in favor of street life (Le Roux 1996). These sere family violence, parental alcoholism abuse, poverty, drug abuse, and peer pressure (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Le Roux 1996, Abdelgalil, Gurgal, Theobald,and Cueves 2005). The mother of children in the street and some of the reasons for opting for such way of life shows that in some South African families the relationships between the adolescents and parents have reached a breaking point. The home environment is so nonreinforcing that street life is an attractive preferred option for some adolescents.

Friends and Peers/Youth Culture

As part of self-identity, adolescents may find it necessary to change some of the values and beliefs passed on to them by parents and society. This of necessity may lead to conflict not only with parents but also with teachers at school. It is common knowledge that adolescents at times come to the conclusion that peers and friends are more important in their lives than their parents, leading to their inclination to comply with peers' and friends' expectations and wishes more than those of parents (Mwamwenda, 2020,; FAMSA 2005). In the perception of parents, this is nothing but rebellion, though this is part of the important social changes adolescents have to go through.

Both recreation and sports are an important aspect of an adolescent's life. The membership in sports clubs stands at 41.7% of male adolescents and 18.7% of female adolescents. There is nevertheless an urgent need for additional sports facilities as well as recreational and organizational activities.

It can be argued that both acceptance by and interaction among South African adolescents as reflected among friends and peers is vital for social development (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Du Plessis 1999). On the other hand, it is important to note that there is very little acceptance and interaction interracially. Each racial group tends to isolate itself from other racial groups in terms of peers, friends, and interracial heterosexual relationships (Du Plessis 1999). As such, research

in this area has concluded that South African adolescents are marked by racism, segregation, and discrimination.

It can be further argued that, despite the many changes that have occurred following the demise of apartheid, South Africa is to a considerable extent "characterized byc deep segmentation not only on the basis of culture, race, historical background, language and religion, but also on the basis of economic and or class status" (Zegeye 2005, p. 2).

Love and Sexuality

Love and sexuality in South Africa are experienced in a multitude of ways, given the ethnic diversity that permeates the country. While there may be much commonality among the various population groups, there are also differences, both of which will be the focus of this section of adolescence in South Africa. Dating, courtship, and cohabitation as understood and practiced in Western countries is what is experienced by White South Africans along with Westernized Africans, Coloreds, and Asians. Adolescents are likely to grow up in the same community, go to the same church, and attend the same sports and games. In the process of interacting in these varied activities, they get to know one another and consequently date one another and possibly fall in love. This may pave the way for them to engage in sexual activities, including sexual intercourse. There are other adolescents, nevertheless, who will not want to engage in premarital sex for either religious or cultural reasons (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007, 2004).

Dating and courtship among traditional Africans and Asians may be done differently for cultural reasons. For this group, parents and other important relatives have a role to play, and as such their input is vital to the point that in a number of cases an arranged marriage results, whereby the decision is made by the parents of the girl and the boy.

Cohabitation is common among nonreligious White adolescents and some urban Black adolescents, but it is almost nonexistent among Indians and rural Africans. In traditional African culture, marriage is not entered into so much to legitimate sexual relations as it is for procreation and establishing paternity and granting the husband the right to sexual relations with his wife (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Hurwitz 2005).

South African adolescents, irrespective of race, collectively engage in sexual activity at one time or other. However, the extent to which this is likely to hold true is not the same, as some ethnic groups, due to the nature of their environment, engage in sexual activity more than others. Research in this area has been rather selective and therefore there is not sufficient reliable information from which to draw firm conclusions.

In South Africa there are one million young people attaining the stage of adolescence every year, which implies that many of them will inevitably become sexually active (Benjamin 2005). The age at which adolescents have their first intercourse varies from one study to another; however, on the average boys have their first intercourse at the age of 15 years whereas girls have it at the age of 16 years Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007 ;(Mokgalabone 1999; Fisher 2005; Nicholas and Daniels 2005). Adolescents of all races watch pornographic videos and films from which they are

motivated to engage in sexual intercourse on a regular basis, and those retaining their virginity look forward to the time when they will be able to engage in sex (Nicholas 1994).

Many adolescents engage in sexual intercourse without prior planning, or they do so sporadically or because of pressure or coercion (Foundation for Adolescent Development 2005). Other reasons for engaging in premarital sexuality are peer pressure, poverty, male domination, lack of parental guidance, insufficient knowledge and skills, low self-esteem, or an unrealistically low expectation of personal risk (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Fisher 2005). Female adolescents who have experienced sexual intercourse regularly state that they did so under pressure, and they were assaulted or threatened with violence in the event they failed to cooperate.

Parents and adolescents hold the view that it is wrong for adolescents to engage in sex outside of marriage. Engaging in premarital sex, it is argued, will lead to the loss of virginity and is contrary to religious teaching on fidelity and is a high risk in terms of getting pregnant, or contracting sexually transmitted diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS.

In a large study of university students, 45% of respondents were opposed to premarital intercourse (Nicholas and Daniels 2005). In terms of gender, 17% of the males and 28% of the females expressed opposition to premarital intercourse. For those who had premarital sex (48%, only 30%of them approved such behavior (Nicholas and Daniels 2005).

South African adolescents have a high rate of fertility, to the extent that before they turn 20 years of age, about 30% of them will have given birth to at least one child (Population Council 2005; Mokgalabone 1999; Kaufman and Stadler 2001). It is noted that pregnancy is among the most serious causes of school disruption, particularly at the secondary school level (Makgalabone 1999). In the past, thousands ofgirls have had their education interrupted as a result of teenage pregnancy (News 24 2004; Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007, 2004). However, in the recent past their fate has been ameliorated somewhat in as far as teenage mothers are allowed to resume their studies after giving birth (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Makgalabone 1999; Fisher 2004, Kaufman Stadler 2001).

Although adolescents are sexually active, many of them do not use preventative measures against pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS (Fisher 1996; News 24 2004; Nicholas and Daniels 2005). It is part of the South African government policy for adolescents to promote responsible and healthy reproductive and sexual behavior among adolescents and the youth to reduce the incidence of high-risk teenager pregnancies, abortions, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Benjamin 2005).

"South Africa has one of the fastest growing HIV/AIDS rates in the world with particularly high infection rates among the adolescents and adults" (CEDPA 2005, p. I). There are 7 million South Africans who are HIV positive; the majority of these are adolescents, especially girls (Mwamwenda, 2020,2007; Hartell 2005). It is estimated that 25% of females aged 15 to 24 years are HIV positive (Population Council 2005). Across South Africa, rural and urban, adolescents are suffering from AIDS, which has a serious impact on them psychologically, socially, economically, and educationally (Hartell 2005). On the other hand, there is an increase of

adolescents' knowledge about HIV prevention, as a result of which some adolescents are willing to take the necessary precautions for themselves against HIV/AIDS (Population Council 2005). This, nevertheless, is contradicted by other studies showing that, although South African adolescents have adequate knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS, such knowledge fails to have a corresponding impact on adolescents' behavior change (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Visser 1995; Mwamwenda 2004; Hartell 2005; Richter 1996).

Offering sex education in schools has been controversial among all South African population groups. Parents often fear that offering such education would be tantamount to promoting promiscuity among adolescents. Moreover, it would be sanctioning adolescents to engage in sexuality, which is only permissible in a marital relationship (Nicholas and Daniels 2005). At one time, there was an attempt to introduce sex education among Indian schools. Both Indian parents and their religious leaders raised strong objections because they thought it would not be in the future's best interest of their adolescents. Research on university students regarding sex education showed that the majority did not support making sex education available to learners at the kindergarten and primary school level. Only very small numbers of respondents showed support for sex education being available at the university or college level (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Nicholas and Daniels 1994).

Marriage as practiced by Africans is a "contract between the relatives of the bride and groom, who conduct the preliminary negotiations and settle on the amount of goods to be transferred" (West 1976, p. 9). A boy proposes to a girl, and if she is agreeable the boy brings the matter to the father's attention for consideration. Alternatively, a father may suggest that his son gets married to a certain girl of a given family. Then the family will get in touch with the girl's family and declare their interest in the daughter. Once this is mutually acceptable, the negotiation for the bride wealth (*lobola*) is set in motion. The negotiation is conducted by a third party or go-between as it is held that it is not proper for the boy's father or the boy himself to deal with the matters of this nature (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; West 1976). The agreed bride wealth is paid in instalments, some of which may be paid even after the wedding has taken place. Once sufficient *lobola* has been paid, a wedding is arranged.

In all African marriages, the bride wealth is compulsory. The bride wealth is important on the following grounds (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Tyrell and Jurgens 1983):

1. The bride is a social and economic asset for the family and therefore her removal through marriage has to be compensated by the bride wealth.
2. It is an expression of gratitude for the good upbringing of the daughter on the part of parents and relatives.
3. It legitimizes the marriage.
4. It legalizes the identity of children and membership in the father's lineage.

5. It guarantees fair treatment of the wife by the husband and his relatives. If not well treated, she may return home and if it is the husband who is in the wrong, there will be no return of the bride wealth.

Marriage among Whites, Coloreds, and a few Africans and Indians is based on love between the two young people of the opposite sex. While this is particularly true of some Africans and Indians, for the majority there is a bride price involved, without which marriage cannot be duly recognized. Though whatever form of marriage may have been sanctioned remains stable for many years, the rate of divorce is as high as 50%. In 1987 the rate of divorce was as follows: Whites 18, 371, Coloreds 4,368, and Indians 1,046. In 2003 the divorce rate was as follows: Whites 11,890, Africans, 6,637, Coloreds 3,394, and Indians 1,486. In total there were 28,587 divorces in 2003, which was less than for the previous year (31,370). The number of marriages has increased slightly, given that in 2003 there were 178,689, which exceeded by 1,487 the number of marriages in 2002. Marriages in South Africa are civil, religious, or traditional among Whites, Indians, and Africans. However, it is rather difficult to identify Colored marriages, as a result of which Coloreds have the highest number of children born out of wedlock (Mwamwenda 2020, 2007; Scheper-Hughes 2005). Among the Zulu it is culturally important for a woman to be industrious and of good character to be eligible for selection as a wife. They are expected to be faithful and resist temptations, particularly in the absence of a husband. A woman who is known to be lazy and flirt with men does not stand a good chance of being selected as a wife. In view of this, a Zulu woman fiercely defends her reputation. She will go to great lengths to feign indifference toward men who court her, bheavig in an offhand and cutting manner, and forcefully rejecting a man who tries to touch her. A mindful '*tshitshi* holds herself aloof no matter how attractive she finds a man, or how outrageously he flirts with he. She thus protects her good name as someone who is "inaccessible, untouchable nad pure" (Dewernt 1998, pp. 99-100). She is nevertheless polite, submissive, and accords great respect to members of the community, particularly those who are senior to her in age and status. Prior to marriage, a Zulu girl goes through a ceremony known as "coming of age" (*icece*), at which time she goes in seclusion for close to two months. During seclusion, she is treated as a lady of leisure, kept from the sun to prevent her becoming dry or her skin burning a darker color, and is fed on the best food that can be found. As part of seclusion, the young lady is told the secrets of womanhood, taught what it means to be a wife and mother, and taught how to show respect for the community. At the end of seclusion, she looks her best: her skin glows, her eyes are bright, and her body is plump, which is taken as a sign not only of good health, but also desirability and beauty. When she rejoins society from seclusion, *icece* is held and it is announced to the ancestors and community that the lady has now come of age. An ox is slaughtered from which the caul of fat is obtained, which she wears as she entertains guests with dancing. "This symbolizes the protection that her ancestors will afford her when she leaves her home in order to marry and live in her new husband's homestead" (Dewernt 1998, p. 115).

Health Risk Behavior

The main causes of death among South African adolescents are accidents, poisoning, violence, and motor vehicle accidents (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Molten et al. 1986). Moreover, it is common for South African adolescents to engage in risk-taking behavior, including cigarette smoking, drug use, drinking alcoholic beverages, and engaging in unprotected sex. There are five major causes of death among 15- to 29-year olds: unintentional injuries, AIDS, other infectious diseases, homicide, and war. There are also other intentional injuries and self-inflicted injuries and suicide.

South African adolescents are by no means strangers to drug and alcohol use, crime gang activity, suicide, pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and violence. Many adolescents across social lines are known to engage in behavior that laces them at high risk starting at the age of 13 years (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Coetzer and Underhay 2003). As they reach the peak of adolescence, the frequency of engaging in health risk behavior rises rather dramatically.

South Africa is one of the southern African countries that serve as transshipments in the international drug trade (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Mazibuko, 2005). Use of drugs in South Africa is common, as recent research by the South African medical research council has reported. South African adolescents are increasingly using alcohol and illegal drugs. A quarter of the people in substance abuse treatment centers are below the age of 20 (SA Health Info 2005, p. 1).

As a result of alcohol drug abuse among South Africans, the following effects have been reported (SA Health Info 2005, p. 1):

1. The risk of experiencing death or injury is increased by interpersonal violence, drowning, and automobile accident.
2. The user becomes vulnerable to sexual behavior which may lead to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.
3. They may be tempted to engage in suicidal behavior.
4. The possibility of psychiatric disorders such as anxiety and mood disorders is high.
5. Socially, it has been said that the use of drugs results in involvement in crime and gang activity, deterioration in psycho-social function such as impaired psychological and social development, as well as poor peer and family interrelationships Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; SA Health Info 2005). Academically, drug use is associated with academic difficulties, poor performance, truancy, absenteeism, and dropping out.

Some of the adolescents engage in crime activity in order to obtain the money required for the purpose of purchasing drugs (Mazibuko 2005; Mwamwenda 2020, 2007). According to Stein (2001), the use of drugs is racially based with Colored adolescents using mandrax, Whites using ecstasy, and Blacks using *dagga* (marijuana). In the Western Cape, particularly amongst Coloreds, "Local gangs have been incorporated into the global drug trade and have increased their economic resources as a result" (Salo 2003, p. 23).

Research shows that for every five adolescents, there is one who has contemplated self-inflicted injury. Of these, 7.8% have attempted suicide in the past and 57.7% of them were planning on committing suicide (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Health 24 2005). Similar studies have reported that 24.5% of attempted suicides have occurred among Black adolescents aged 17 years and under. About 34% of Black adolescents have been tempted to give serious thought to suicide as a way out as a result of being faced with problems such as divorce of parents, conflict, and love-relationship problems (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Health, 2005).

Adolescents have a propensity to commit suicide on account of a wide range of problems, including dealing with physical, social, and academic change that they find beyond their coping mechanism (Mwamwenda 2020, 2007; Health, 2005). Some of the noted specific problems that they have to grapple with are as follows:

1. Returning to school at the beginning of the year causes adolescents a considerable level of anxiety.
2. Pressure is exerted on them as they think about the New Year and new class with new faces of classmates.
3. Transitions from primary school to secondary school or from secondary school or from secondary school to tertiary institution (college or university) are stressful.
4. Some of the conflicts that they had during childhood, they resurface during adolescence.

Research has further shown that adolescents attempting suicide tend to come from broken homes or where there is poor communication between the family members and adolescents (Health 24 2005). Furthermore, depression in combination with aggressive behavior or substance abuse or anxiety is associated with 50% of the attempted or planned suicides (Health 24 2005). Another set of adolescents who are at high risk of suicide include those who have made such attempts in the past, those who have easy access to firearms, and those suffering from situational stress.

Education

The system of education in South Africa has had to undergo a dramatic change since the ushering in of democracy over a decade ago. Prior to this dispensation, education, like other spheres under apartheid, was run on racial lines. There were schools for Africans, Coloreds, Indians, and Whites characterized by gross inequality both qualitatively and quantitatively (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Steyn 1999), with African schools getting the rawest deal. African schools were grossly under-funded, under-staffed and under-equipped, which conferred on Africans the lowest status in society.

Education in many Black schools leaves much to be desired. They are principally characterized by limited places, facilities that are neither up to date nor adequate, and many teachers who are unqualified or under-qualified. In subjects such as mathematics, science, economics, and accounting there is limited access as a result of the shortage of qualified teachers. This means that

the majority of Black students concentrate on subjects such as biology, geography, history, and African languages.

While much has been done to transform education in South Africa, there is much more to be done to undo what apartheid did for more than half a century of domination. The effects of apartheid still haunt and daunt today's South Africa as it breaks with the past by providing quality education to all South Africans irrespective of their race or creed.

According to 2002 statistics, South Africa has 33,484 public and private education institutions. Government manages as many as 27,647 schools with a breakdown of (DOE: 2004):

1. 17,197 primary schools with 6,378 educators and 179,222 learners.
2. 5,752 secondary schools with a workforce of 113,171 educators and 9,514,162 learners.
3. 4,698 intermediate and middle schools with a workforce of 63,337 and 2,024,677 learners.

There were 677,913 (5%) students in higher education. Altogether there were 13,531,690 learners and students in the national system, who were served by 413,648 educators and academics. Statistics show that there were more female than male learners attending school (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; DOE 2004). This held true at the various levels of education: pre-grade A, senior phase, and further education and training. On the other hand, this was not the case in the enrollment in the foundation phase and intermediate phase, where the enrollment of male children was higher than that of female school-age children. In the final year of secondary education, there were more females than males in attendance, which was the highest (54%) of all the grades (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007, 2004; DOE 2004).

The pass rate for 2002 was 68,9%. In all the nine provinces, there were more female candidates than male candidates. In terms of success rate in the examinations, males performed better than females with a pass rate of 70.7% compared with a pass rate of 67.4% for females (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; DOE 2004).

Performance in biology, mathematics, and physical science for males was better than that of females. At he university level, the enrollment on the basis of population group was as follows: 60% Africans, 27% Whites, 7% Indians, and 6% Colored. For the next ten years, it is expected that over a million adolescents will join secondary education annually. Similarly, over a million adolescents will complete secondary education and proceed to join the world of work and postsecondary education (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Benjamin 2004). Over a million children will enter the adolescent period, when they become sexually mature and active. For such adolescents sex education will be important for guidance in their sexuality.

In the South African education system, there are more girls at school than there are boys; similarly, there are more girls than boys passing their matriculation (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Gaganakis 1999), though such number superiority is not reflected in the labor market, which remains predominantly gender specific. In spite of their achieving better than boys at school, girls achieve far less than their counterparts in the world of work. The majority of them end up in low-paid, low-skilled, and low-status employment (Mwamwenda, 2020; Gaganakis 1999).

The gender equality in exposure to education in South Africa is different from other third world countries, and as a matter of fact, it is comparable to advanced industrialized countries (Chisholm 1994). For example, there was 200,000 more female than male students in the schooling system and more of them pass matriculation. Correspondingly, there are more female than male students at institutions of higher learning such as colleges and universities (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Hofmeyer 1995). In 1994 there were more female than male undergraduates. It is interesting to ntoe that in the selection of subjects and training undertaken, choices made by females reflect the role society expects them to play within the home and family (Chisholm 1994). Some of the reasons for such trends are gendered pedagogy, male bias in textbooks and in extra-curricular activities, men's monopoly of leadership positions, sexual harassment, and lack of self-confidence (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Gaganakis 1999).

Differences in enrollment can be accounted for by a number of factors.

1. In the 1970s and 1980s boys were more involved in the liberation struggle, which led to their high dropout rate, while girls' enrollment remains steady because not many involved themselves in political activities.
2. In rural areas boys preferred to join the ranks of migrant labor so that they could be of financial assistance to their families. Girls did not have such opportunities and therefore they focused on education.
3. It is further argued that some parents kept daughters in school on the basis that more bride price is paid for an educated girl (Kaufman and Stadler 2001; Gaganakis 1999).

Work

Adolescents play a significant role in the welfare of the household. This occurs in the form of employment within the labor market. Alternatively, they take up household tasks to relieve parents of such work so that they can work for an income from outside the home of self-employment. There are times when economic hardships are experienced; consequently, children [adolescents] are advised to pull out of school to join the workforce so that they can earn an income for the family.

For most adolescents education is perceived as a critical gate to success in life, and failure to attain adequate education is seen to lead to low wages, unemployment, and criminal activities. A good number of adolescents drop out of school so that they can support themselves as well as households, and as a preparation to adult independent life as they marry and start their own families (Hunter 2003; Mwamwenda 2004),.

Many adolescents do not have the necessary education, training, and skills to participate meaningfully in the labor market and thus contribute meaningfully to their own well-being and national economic development. As a result of the lack of employment opportunities, and therefore being denied an income for survival, participation in criminal activities has increased, to the dissatisfaction and concern of society. Part of this has led some young women to engage in

prostitution and other criminal activities such as dealing in drugs. As a result of prostitution, adolescents are vulnerable to sexual abuse and sexually transmitted diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS. The rate of unemployment in South Africa is over 40%, and 52% of the unemployed are adolescents. Following the completion of high school, only 10% of school learners find jobs in the formal sector. Women are in a worse position, as their level of unemployment is 14% higher than that of male adolescents. On the basis of provinces, unemployment among adolescents is highest in the Eastern Cape (56%) and Northern Province (61%0 and is lowest in the Western Cape (25%) and Gauteng (31%; the remaining five provinces fall in between.

Unemployment among adolescents is high, standing at 45% for Africans, 40% for Coloreds, 29% for Indians, and only 12% for Whites. Unemployment among Coloreds is the second highest, with Africans leading by 5% (Malan 2005). It is nevertheless believed that education and training can make a valuable contribution to the alleviation of unemployment among adolescents.

In the past, adolescents in South Africa prepared for the world of work through family life and socialization, whereas now as a result of social and economic change, education has assumed a critical role in preparing youth for the world of work (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Jenkins 2005). Adolescents – particularly Africans – hold the view that education holds the key to their liberation from both oppression and poverty. While education has replaced family life and socialization as a preparation for work, the two still work hand in hand, given that parents' inspiration for their children contributes to academic achievement which in turn contributes to academic achievement which in turn contributes to the acquisition of education in preparation for work, the two still work hand in hand, given that parents' inspiration for their children contributes to academic achievement which in turn contributes to the acquisition of education in preparation for the world of work (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Jenkins 2005). In advice to adolescents, a provincial deputy minister urged that education was the best medicine to compete in the marketplace for suitable jobs (Benjamin 2005). For the next ten years it is expected that, on an annual basis, there will be one million adolescents joining the world of work.

Media

Mass media are widely used across South Africa, not only by adolescents but also by other population age groups. About 99% of South Africans have access to TV and radio; 75% have access to TV, and 7% have access to newspapers in different languages (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007, 2004; Coulson 2002). Among adolescents, 69% of them watch TV five times weekly (Coulson 2002). Among Black adolescents, about 50% of them claim to have no TV in their homes and about one-fifth of them showed that they had no radios at home (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Malan 2005).

South African adolescents have access to foreign cultural media products in the form of soap operas, rap music, and international brands of clothes (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Salo 2003). Such access is facilitated by electronic media such as radio and TV, as well as visits to nightclubs

and cosmopolitan beachfront neighborhoods (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Salo 2003). The point being made here is that such media do not lead to hegemonization and homogenization in the countries importing them. To the contrary, the meaning that these cultural forms assume in this non-Western context are shaped by specific local histories and cultural practices (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Salo 2003).

In South Africa it has been decided that one of the useful and effective means of combating contracting and the spread of HIV/AIDS is by means of mass communication (Coulson 2002). To this end, there are three programs that engage mass media that communicate with adolescents and others on the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Education in South Africa, so it is argued, is not enough to meet the needs for education (Mwamwenda 2020; Malan 2005). For example, not all South Africa school children have access to formal education. There is a need therefore to go beyond formal education. There is a need therefore to go beyond formal provision as it currently exists, and this can be met by introducing and using electronic audio-visual media (Malan 2005). Such an approach would be of tremendous value to disadvantaged adolescents, particularly in the rural areas. There are various methods that can be employed to implement such an innovative approach. Transporting the media to the youth through mobile audio-visual units are a number of educational programs of the national broadcaster (SABC), which can be used and reused on both radio and TV and could be taken to remote areas and made use of for those adolescents with less access to education. Countrywide classroom interactive radio/TV broadcasts would involve not only listening to programs but also being able to raise questions and discuss for clarity with those in charge of such broadcasts, broadcasting to their homes and one-way educational radio and TV broadcasts.

South African adolescents are infatuated with the media in its various forms. They spend thousands of hours of their lives playing and listening to music, singing, and dancing; watching videos, TV, and movies; reading newspapers and comics; as well as other forms of media that command their interests.

Politics and Military

During adolescence, youth have at their command tremendous energy to drive which may well be directed into a military nature of activities (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Smyth, 2003). As such, a career in the state security forces provides young people, driven by patriotism, with the opportunity to work for the community or country.

As part of development, adolescents attach great significance to status and independence (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; 2004). A career in the military or police force fulfills this developmental need. They assume armed authority over civilians, and also their families are given status and respect on account of their children holding such an important office in society (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007; Smyth 2003).

Both politics and military activities have been part of adolescence the apartheid era as well as following the dawn of democracy in 1994. Their involvement has been both of a peaceful nature and in combat leading to the loss of many lives. That was part of the price South Africa had to pay to emerge as the democratic country it is today. To begin with, the young people, particularly Africans, played a significant role in the liberation struggle by fighting and demonstrating and defying the apartheid regime for decades on end. Many of them gave up their education in preference to the liberation of their country; thousands of them left South Africa for other countries like Tanzania, Angola, Nigeria, Mozambique and Zambia for training and combat activities against the apartheid regime. For this, many were tortured, persecuted, imprisoned, maimed, and killed. The White adolescents also played their role, but from a different perspective. Theirs was to engage the liberation youths on the side of the apartheid regime. In the 1960s Whites were recruited in the South African defense following the completion of their high school education. "Hundreds of these youths were forced to participate in violent repression inside the country as well as serve in combat in the Namibia and Angolan theatres of war" (Lucas 2005, p. 2).

There is now a new South Africa for all adolescents where there is no need to fight against each other on ideological grounds. In diversity and constitutionally, they are united and making a valuable contribution to the building of one nation for all South Africans (Mwamwenda, 2020)(. There is the South African national defense whose role is to defend the territorial and sovereignty integrity of South Africa and serve as a peacekeeping force in a number of African countries. The defense force regularly recruits South African adolescents who on their own volition have chosen a career in the military (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007).

Politically, there is universal suffrage starting from the age of 18. Adolescents are not only eligible to vote, but also can be elected as members of parliament at the provincial or national level. As a matter of fact, South African adolescents, like other African adolescents, have a high level of political consciousness, as a result of earlier colonial social relations (Mwamwenda, 2007; African National Congress Youth League 2005). Political participation of adolescents is witnessed at the community level as well as in educational institutions such as secondary schools and institutions of higher learning. In this setting, they engage in debates and organizational activities both among themselves and their communities as well as with senior management of their institutions and prominent politicians at large.

Adolescents are involved in politics both in informal and formal settings. Formally, each one of the major political parties has a youth league involved in recruitment of members and participation in political activities alongside the mother party. Some of the debates they engage in are so robust that they sway the views of those who are more seasoned in matters of politics. Some politicians win leadership positions as a direct result of being backed by adolescents. It was partly in view of this that the first democratically elected president, Nelson Mandela, stated: "The youth of our country are a valued possession of our nation. Their needs are immense and urgent. They are at the centre of reconstruction and development program. Without them there can be no future" (ANC Youth League 2005, p. 6).

Unique Issues

Since the introduction of democracy and the dismantling of apartheid, many changes have taken place, as a way of parting and breaking away with the past in order to build a united nation in diversity (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007, 2004). This is a daunting challenge and formidable task not only for the government, private sector, and politicians, but for every South African as an individual. There are those who will say there has been no change and, if anything, the situation is worse than it was during apartheid, particularly in the area of employment where more than 45% of South Africans remain unemployed. While this is so, it is also correct to conclude that many more South Africans have benefited immensely in the post-apartheid era (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007).

To begin with, there is a government led by an African majority under the leadership of an African president, Cyril Ramaphosa. The government in office is representative of all South Africans. Unlike in the past, all institutions, be they schools, colleges or universities, hospitals, hotels, public places, business, religions, or clubs, are open to people of all races. Racism is still being fought, but is less prevalent than it was during apartheid, when it was an institutionalized policy strictly enforced (Mwamwenda, 2020, 2007).

The whole country has opened up within and without, internally and externally. Within the entire country, South Africa is open to everyone in terms of residence, hotels, restaurants, beaches, sports, educational institutions, health services, marriage, employment opportunities, business enterprises, and leadership opportunities, wherever they exist. There is calculated effort to promote affirmative action and Black empowerment so that leadership does not exclusively belong to one population, as it was in the past. This aspect of transformation has been debated numerous times, as those affected (Whites mainly) are of the view that it is discrimination in reverse. The government in South Africa is sensitive to such criticism, and therefore frequently monitors the policy to see that challenged aspects of affirmative action successful, and the government has had to abide by court decisions.

Before 1994 South Africa had nothing to do with most African countries and other countries in the world, because of sanctions and economic embargoes. This is all history, as all the barriers have been set aside, thus creating an opportunity for South Africans to travel to many African countries, as many Africans travel to South Africa as tourists and business entrepreneurs. South Africa Airways, a national airline of international status, and other international airlines are actively involved in the industry of transport. Such activity has opened up thousands of jobs, thus contributing to national economic development. Everywhere one goes in African countries, South Africa has registered its presence and its numerous business entrepreneurs are not only very popular, but also very prosperous, which also serves as a gateway for employment and economic development.

Internally, South Africa is fiercely fighting poverty among millions of its citizens. Social grants are made available for children aged 0 to 18 years; they are also available to the elderly and other deserving citizens. This is something that is hardly heard of in the rest of Africa. Schools are being improved in the supply of books and furniture, the construction of classrooms, and the production of qualified teachers at all levels of the school system. There has been a nationwide construction of thousands of houses for South Africans who could otherwise not afford to buy houses. Clean water is available where there was none. Communication in the form of roads, airways, and railways as well as in the forms of telephones, computers, e-mails, and fax have increased and improved by leaps and bounds.

South Africa commands the strongest and most efficient and prosperous economy in Africa; its status in Africa is similar to that of the United States of America in relation to other Western countries. With such a prosperous and promising country, South African adolescents of all races have nothing to fear for their futures except fear itself. All the countries sharing common borders with South Africa are socially, economically, and educationally less developed than South Africa. Therefore South Africa is viewed as a land of opportunity.

While people from whatever part of Africa and the world at large are welcome to make South Africa their home, not everyone meets the criteria for entry. For this reason, there are people who enter the country illegally and mainly by the back door. It is estimated that there are about 5 million illegal immigrants in South Africa. Other estimates put the figure at 8 million, the majority of whom come from neighboring countries such as Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Mozambique, and Swaziland. Others are from the rest of Africa, with very few coming from Botswana given the prosperous economy there that has prevailed for the past several decades attributed to minerals and responsible governance.

South Africans as individuals resent immigrants and allege that they are responsible for unemployment and homelessness, crime, and drug trafficking. This is all driven by xenophobia, which appears to be occupying the minds of South Africans. Such an attitude has led to unpleasant results. Foreigners are harassed by both ordinary South Africans and by the police, who mistake them for being illegal immigrants. There are a few cases in which some foreigners have been assaulted physically and killed.

Given the shortage of high-level skills required in South Africa, many people from African countries and elsewhere have joined the labor market and are making a meaningful contribution to the national and economic development of South Africa. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that there are thousands of South Africans of all races – and Whites in particular – who are emigrating to Western countries such as the U.K., Australia, Canada, and the United States for various reasons, the main one being the rate of crime and the fact that some parents are of the view that there is no security and no future either for them or their children. Interestingly enough, there are a few South Africans who emigrated and later decided to come back.

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