

# Coloured education

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**THE EDUCATION** of the Coloured community was taken over from the provincial departments of education after the passing of The Coloured Persons' Education Act, No. 47 of 1963.

South Africa has been divided into six educational regions. The whole of the Transvaal, Natal, OFS and part of East Griqualand comprise one region and fall under the Chief Inspector of Education for the Northern Regions, Mr. B. Goosen.

He explained that all statistics are now gathered on a regional or national basis and that it was not possible for him to supply me with statistics relating only to the Johannesburg area.

There are 18 primary schools in this area.

There are six high schools. It is Government policy to centralise secondary education, so some high schools have hostels and take pupils from rural areas.

In addition there is one private high school, St. Barnabas College, run by the Anglican Church which is without State aid and had an enrollment of 142 pupils for 1973.

Most primary schools are using the double session system to accommodate all the pupils from Sub. A to Std. I.

No teacher takes two sessions, but the principal is paid more to supervise both sessions.

Because of this system the Chief Inspector feels that all the children who applied to attend school in the lower classes and who qualify to do so, have been placed.

While he is not satisfied with this system he feels that it is better than nothing. Many children who attend the second session have to be left at school very early in the morning by their parents. (This means that they have no shelter for hours, even in bad weather.) The minimum number of hours of schooling per week has had to be slightly reduced. Careful timetabling helps to overcome this.

Most parents and teachers are highly critical of the double session system and look forward to its speedy abolition.

It has been necessitated by a shortage of school accommodation. At all the schools seen many pre-fabricated units were in use. These were generally poorly insulated and have a high noise level which is tiring for teachers and pupils.

Good work is being done by intelligent, dedicated and highly qualified teachers and principals. What concerns us deeply is the shortage of such qualified teachers among the Coloured community throughout South Africa.

The Chief Inspector estimates that more than 50 per cent of the teachers in his region have only JC plus two years of professional training.

The following table is taken from the SAIRR "Survey 1972" page 364. It contains information given by the Minister of Coloured Affairs. It relates to the number of teachers and their qualifications in March 1972.

	NUMBER	%
Professionally qualified and had:		
a university degree	645	3,70
passed matriculation or equivalent	3 771	21,61
passed JC or equivalent	12 084	69,24
No professional qualification but had:		
a university degree	102	0,58
passed matriculation or equivalent	282	1,62
technical or other qualifications	72	0,41
Not matriculated and had no technical or vocational qualifications	495	2,84
TOTALS	17 451	100,00

From these figures we judge that less than 30 per cent of Coloured teachers are adequately qualified and equipped and have sufficient background themselves to enable them to help their pupils become financially adequate,

happy and successful members of an increasingly technical and urbanised society.

The reasons for this shortage are numerous. Salaries are about 20 per cent lower than those for White teachers in equivalent posts with comparable training. It is felt that many qualified teachers are going into commerce and industry where the wage gap is closing more rapidly.

Another reason suggested by a prominent Presbyterian Minister is that many highly qualified Coloured people are emigrating. He said that all their contemporaries in his and his wife's family have already left South Africa.

It will be remembered too, that the Coloured Persons' Education Act No. 47 of 1963 was bitterly and vociferously opposed. (See SAIRR: The Education of the Coloured Community in South Africa 1952-1970, pages 94 and 95). This opposition remains among the Johannesburg community's educationists themselves.

Nobody commented favourably. There seemed to be general agreement with the statement, of a prominent Coloured educationist: "I abhor compartmentalised education. The whole concept of coloured education and White education is abhorrent to me. We are all South Africans." If this is how the community and its teachers feel, then it is scarcely surprising that few really able and well qualified people are entering the teaching profession.

The Government department is aware of this tremendous stumbling block — the shortage of highly qualified teachers. The Chief Inspector explained that his staff is told that "their most important function is guidance and the training of teachers, not inspection".

Inspectors give one-day courses to help teachers master new methods and materials. These are followed up. All kindergarten inspectors are doing in-service training. The difficulty we feel, is that there are only four full inspectors in the Transvaal. Two of the inspectors are Coloured.

The Rand College of Education is the only teacher training college in the Transvaal.

The diploma for teaching technical or commercial courses can be obtained after three years of post matriculation study at the Technical College for Advanced Technical Training at Belville. As sufficient teachers become

trained pupils at high schools will be able to trained pupils at high schools will be able to mic courses.

Technical and commercial training has yet to be studied, but we are informed that at present there are only 38 pupils at the Highveld Technical Training College which is the only such college in the Transvaal.

There are no state-aided special schools for handicapped children in the Transvaal, although a care centre was opened in Coronationville at the beginning of the year. It was established on the initiative of local citizens and receives a small municipal grant, but not, as yet, state aid.

In most primary schools there are special "adaptation" and "adjustment" classes for the "less gifted" children and for those with learning problems. It has been possible to establish these by using in-service training courses.

The need for special schools and institutions to care for physically and mentally handicapped children is urgent.

Only 1,01 per cent of the total enrollment is in Std. X while 13,24 per cent of the total enrollment is in Sub A.

Only 20,49 per cent of the total enrollment is in secondary school classes. (A comparative figure was quoted by Mr. M. Corke in an address to the Witwatersrand Council of Education in December, 1972. This was that 32,53 per cent of all White pupils were in secondary classes while 11,4 per cent of Coloured pupils were in secondary classes.)

It has not been possible to calculate the dropout rate. The Coloured population has a national growth rate of 2,9 per cent (SAIRR "Survey 1972" page 63.) In addition many people are coming into the Johannesburg area every year. The Department of Coloured Affairs has steadily, though still much too slowly in our opinion, been making more classrooms available. All these factors should result in increased enrolment in the lower classes.

There are 13 times as many pupils in Sub A as in Std. X. We do not think that the factors mentioned could account for such a ratio.

That there is a severe and worrying dropout rate is not disputed. It was, in fact, discussed with concern by everyone consulted.

The main reasons suggested by officials were that families took their children out of

school so they could go out to work, or look after younger children at home.

Educationists and social workers of the Coloured community see it as a more broadly based problem, induced by the general social ills which afflict and enmesh the Coloured community.

To substantiate this they could quote cases where parents wanted children to continue at school, but the children dropped out despite high ability and parental encouragement.

This milieu encompasses largely poor, dilapidated and overcrowded homes, the highest illegitimacy rate in the country. SAIRR "Survey 1972" page 65), heavy drinking and alcoholism, poor job opportunities, unequal salaries, extremely limited freehold rights and no longer even indirect representation by Whites in the central Parliament.

This problem is not confined to lower income groups or government school pupils. Mr. Corke, Headmaster of St. Barnabas (the St. Johns of the Coloured people) said that by Std. 9 his pupils are disheartened. They tell him they begin to "realise what life is really like." Any lack of achievement in any particular field results in a generalised disillusionment, not only with themselves, but with what they call "the system."

Truancy is a problem at many schools, particularly those whose pupils come from poor, overcrowded homes.

The truancy rate is much higher among boys. Some social workers feel that the Coloured community is becoming a matriarchy. This they attribute to the low status afforded Coloured men in the professional and social structure of South Africa.

They reason that as a man's status has been lowered by the removal of certain political and freehold rights; by the housing shortage which forces young couples to live with parents; the narrowing of his educational choices and by other factors over the last few decades so he has become despondent.

As his despondency increases, so his sense of responsibility towards himself and his family decreases. His role is taken over by the mother. This, they argue, diminishes the father in his own eyes and in those of his son.

One Government official thought that job and professional status of Coloured women was improving more rapidly than that of Coloured men in Johannesburg. Women were

being employed more in clerical and commercial positions, while the majority of men are artisans or skilled factory workers.

Delinquency is high in the Coloured townships where much crime is attributed to gangs of young men and boys. Mr. Corke says, "It is certain that the activities of these elements not only contribute to the truancy rate, but also make many children frightened of the journey to and from school."

A senior official in the Department of Coloured Affairs told us of an academically able 14-year-old who had dropped out of school and had become a gang leader. A trained social worker said that in the Riverlea area one group was molesting and interfering with small girls. There have been rapes. Little girls of seven and nine years old now have VD.

What is being done to counteract this? The municipal community services assistants run social clubs in the afternoons at the recreation centres. We dropped in on one swinging session, but one social worker was looking after about 150 children aged between three and 18 years.

The Wits students run a supervised homework centre in the Witsco Centre in Riverlea. This, we are informed, is well attended by about 500 children daily. Students from all departments give time to tutor children. Maths and science tutoring is in great demand.

The South African Association of Youth Clubs organises camping trips, courses in group leadership, ballet and photography.

The sports facilities at all the schools seen appeared to be totally inadequate or non-existent, so that extra-mural activities which keep our children busy almost all afternoon are not available to most children of the Coloured community. Some individual teachers do run clubs, for example, chess. The choice is restricted by lack of equipment for many hobbies and sports.

The school library services are totally inadequate in our opinion. For example, a primary school with an enrolment of about 800 children receives about 12 volumes per year. These are mainly fiction, of the lighter kind. The titles are not chosen by the headmaster or his staff.

There is no library, or full-time or part-time librarian and no-one on the staff is trained to help the children in book selection.

The Department of Coloured Affairs has tried to encourage the schools to build up their own libraries. They will add to funds collected on a rand-for-rand basis. This type of scheme worked very well in TED schools where the population was affluent and book and library orientated. It did not work well in schools in poor areas. Only large library grants and courses to train teacher librarians have resulted in a tremendous improvement in TED libraries.

In Johannesburg the Johannesburg Public Library has branches in the recreation centres.

The stock of children's and young people's fiction and non-fiction in the branch we visited seemed adequate and of very good quality, but the reference section was extremely poor. We were told that any user might bespeak any book in the JPL stock, but I could not locate the catalogue and unfortunately no librarian was on duty when we were visiting. This system works well in the branches we use, but it is dependent on the librarians helping their users to become familiar with the catalogue and the book-stock.

The Department of Coloured Affairs employs nine trained social workers as probation officers who "render reconstruction and rehabilitation services".

Boys between the ages of 14½ and 17 who are uncontrollable but not criminal may, if the parents apply, be sent to youth camps for a basic training period of six months. They are then placed in employment under probation for a further six months."

The official who gave me these facts felt that the success rate was 80 per cent. There are three youth camps, all in the Cape Province. They can accommodate about 185 boys.

All Coloured men must register at 18. They are then interviewed by probation officers and "for behaviour deviates who do not comply with the Rehabilitation Act" there is a cadet training centre in the Cape. Young men between the ages of 18 and 24 may be sent there for "a basic training period of four months. After that they are placed in employment but are under probation for eight months."

This whole question of truancy and delinquency needs much more research.

There is a group of children of school-going age who do not qualify to enter any school in any community or area in South Africa.

These are children whose parents failed to register their births and who are awaiting registration. We feel that urgent representation should be made to the Minister of Coloured Affairs to allow these children to attend the nearest school while they are awaiting registration. Simultaneously we would like to suggest to the Government department that a publicity campaign on registration might prevent these cases in future.

Other children who do not qualify are those whose parents have applied to be reclassified. Others again, because of queries or complaints, have been declassified and are waiting to be reclassified. Such cases, we are informed can take several years before a final decision is reached. Again we feel that the child's education is of supreme importance and must not be interrupted for any reason other than illness.

The Chief Inspector explained that his Department had decided to implement compulsory education in three stages:

*Stage I:* Any child enrolled at the beginning of an academic year might not withdraw during that year. Now implemented.

*Stage II:* "Coloured children who have turned or will turn seven between July, 1973 and June 30, 1974, and who live within five kilometres of a suitable school or transport route must attend school from January 1 next year."

*Stage III:* The Chief Inspector explained that this will be an extension of stage II where the children who have to attend school when they turn seven will then have to stay at school for two years. Progressive steps from 1975 onwards will lead towards seven years of compulsory schooling. White children must remain at school until the end of the year in which they turn 16.

The Minister of Coloured Affairs referred to this as a major watershed in the provision of education for Coloured education. The leaders of the Coloured community gave the announcement "a lukewarm" reception.

Unless full compulsory education is implemented rapidly and energetically with all the resources that this country can make available nothing of educational value will have been achieved for the majority of the Coloured population, who were promised so much 11 years ago.