

**PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES IN THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF  
RELIGION STUDIES IN THE  
SCHOOL CURRICULUM:  
A CASE STUDY OF  
NORTH DURBAN REGION IN  
KWAZULU-NATAL**

**Naran Rajbansi**

**2009**

**PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES IN THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF  
RELIGION STUDIES IN THE  
SCHOOL CURRICULUM:  
A CASE STUDY OF NORTH DURBAN REGION  
IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

**Research conducted by  
Naran Rajbansi**

**Submitted in Complete Fulfilment of the  
Requirements for the Degree**

**Magister Artium**

**In the School of Religion and Theology**

**In the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences**

**At the**



**Supervisor**

**Professor P. Pratap Kumar  
2009**

## **DECLARATION**

The Registrar (Academic)  
University of KwaZulu-Natal

Dear Sir/ Mme

I, Naran Rajbansi

Reg. No.: 206511242

Hereby declare that this dissertation titled, PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGION STUDIES IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM: A CASE STUDY OF NORTH DURBAN REGION IN KWAZULU-NATAL is the result of my investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any other University.

---

Student name

---

Date

# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Jai Sri Ram! It is only through the grace of God, the Almighty, who had given me the courage and strength in preparing me to present this thesis to the best of my abilities.

My heartfelt appreciation and gratitude goes to my wife, Savithri Rajbansi, for the encouragement, endurance and support given to me throughout the research process and the compilation of my thesis and for the sacrifices she made in allowing me to work consistently, hence for depriving her of quality time.

I also want to thank my children Shaista and Shamit Rajbansi, for their love, support and untiring assistance with their computer literacy skills.

I am greatly indebted to my Supervisor, Professor P. Kumar, for his professional guidance and encouragement given to me and in ensuring that all the needs leading to this thesis were met. “Professor P. Pratap Kumar, your supervisory sessions were most valuable as I could learn from your vast experience. Without your confidence in my ability, this thesis would not have materialized”.

I also want to thank Professor J.A. Smit, for your continued support, guidance and encouragement.

## **DEDICATION**

Situated on the hills, in the little town of Mayville stood a wood and iron house occupied by my grandparents and their extended family. The family, being supported by my grandfather's pittance of an earning through hawking, necessitated my dad, being the eldest son, to leave school and work to supplement the family income to provide for the very essential needs of the family.

My dad, having taken responsibility for the well-being of his parents and siblings together with his family of six, experienced much financial constraints which included placing high priority on education.

It was during this apartheid era that, with the implementation of the group areas act, that we were evicted and relocated to Chatsworth after having completed my primary school years in Mayville. This further compounded the financial constraints on my dad as his parents had passed on whilst living in Mayville.

I can fondly recall during my growing up phase from about six years until Matriculation, that my Dad used to say: "the only thing that I could give you is a good education which no money can buy". I have strived to fulfil his wish.

My mum too, had very high expectations for her children towards attaining excellent achievements. She used to say that "my children must become doctors, lawyers and teachers", as these were indeed very noble professions at that time. It is only recently that the essence of these wise words of my late Mum dawned on me. Having analysed this phrase I had come to understand that "one must strive for excellence; to achieve one's desired goals in life, we must reach for the stars, even though we might only reach the tree tops". Education was her priority.

This thesis is dedicated to my late Mum, Bhanmathi Rajbansi and my late Dad, Roopnarain Rajbansi. Mum and Dad, I am most indebted to you for all the faith

that you had in your children in ensuring that we make a success of our lives and in upholding your teachings. I watched the expressions of excitement and joy in your faces when I graduated with my Bachelor of Arts Degree – a wish fulfilled. Unfortunately, Mum, you were not there when I graduated again with my Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree, but I know that you were there in spirit as I felt your presence. It was at this graduation that Dad was with me and a proud Dad was he, but tears rolled down his eyes – tears of joy, excitement and happiness and tears of not having you at his side to share this joyous, precious and momentous occasion with him.

Thank you Mum and Dad, for instilling in your children, the meaning of true love, humility and compassion and in inculcating the good morals, norms, values and attitudes which are most acceptable to society. We are indeed proud to have had you as our parents. We do know that you are now in a better place enjoying eternal peace and rest. We also know that your spiritual guidance would be our guiding light in all our endeavours.

Jay Sri Ram.

Naran Rajbansi  
December 2009

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Definition of Title .....	4
1.3 Aims of Thesis .....	5
1.4 Background and Outline of the Research Problem .....	7
1.5 Challenges and Limitations .....	10
1.6 Literature Survey .....	13
1.7 Key Questions .....	23
1.8 Broader Issues to be Investigated .....	25
1.9 Objectives .....	27
1.10 Theoretical Framework .....	28
1.11 Research Methodology .....	35
1.12 Conclusion .....	38

## CHAPTER 2

### Defining Religion Studies

2.1 Introduction.....	39
2.2 Difficulties in Understanding Religion.....	41

2.3	Why Study Religion? .....	43
2.4	Further Reasons for Religion Studies in Schools .....	44
2.5	Aims and Objectives of Religion Studies .....	45
2.6	The Manifesto .....	47
2.7	Secularisation .....	48
2.8	A Critique of Secularism in a Democracy .....	50
2.9	Conclusion .....	51

## **CHAPTER 3**

### An Empirical Case Study for the Implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum: Analysis of the Data and Responses from Questionnaires

3.1	Introduction.....	54
3.2	Research Sites .....	55
3.3	Status of School .....	57
3.4	Problems Encountered in the Research .....	58
3.5	Questionnaires Issued .....	59
3.6	Qualifications in Teaching Religion Studies .....	60
3.7	Religion Studies as Part of the Curriculum .....	61
3.8	Current Situations in the Schools Regarding the Teaching of Religion Studies .....	61



3.9 Training of Religion Studies Educators .....	62
3.10 Availability of Resources Introduction .....	64
3.11 The Advantages in Implementing Religion Studies .....	64
3.12 Challenges and Benefits for Parents .....	68
3.13 Challenges Created for the Educator and the Availability and Suitability of Resource Material for Religion Studies .....	72
3.14 Challenges that Schools are Facing in the Implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum .....	77
3.15 The Nature of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum .....	80
3.16 The Objectives and Expected Outcomes of Religion Studies .....	84
3.17 The Models of Religion Studies .....	88
3.17.1 A Single-Tradition Approach .....	90
3.17.2 A Multiple Single-Tradition Approach .....	91
3.17.3 A Multiple-Tradition Approach .....	92
3.17.4 Findings for the Models of Religion Studies .....	93
3.18 Selected Interviews with Educators .....	96
3.18.1 Some of the Prospects of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum .....	96
3.18.2 The Challenges and Barriers in the Implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum .....	99
3.18.3 Benefits of Religion Studies .....	103
3.19 Conclusion .....	105

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **A Contextual Analysis of Religion Studies**

4.1	Introduction.....	107
4.2	Religion Education .....	108
4.3	Moral and Religious Education .....	110
4.4	Tolerance and Respect .....	112
4.5	The Role and Function of the Religion Studies Teacher .....	114
4.6	A Non-Discriminatory Approach to Religion Studies .....	115
4.7	The Ethical Stance of a Teacher .....	116
4.8	Conclusion .....	119

## **CHAPTER 5**

	Future Prospects of Religion Studies .....	120
	Bibliography .....	125

# TABLE OF GRAPHS

Figure 1 Status of School.....	57
Figure 2 Distribution of Questionnaires .....	59
Figure 3 Percentage of Questionnaires Received .....	60
Figure 4 Qualifications of Principals and Educators to Teach Religion Studies .....	60
Figure 5 Advantages in the Implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum - Learners.....	67
Figure 6 Advantages in the Implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum - Educators.....	67
Figure 7 Advantages in the Implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum - Principals.....	68
Figure 8 Benefits for Parents in the Implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum - Educators .....	68
Figure 9 Benefits for Parents in the Implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum - Learners .....	69
Figure 10 Benefits for Parents in the Implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum - Principals .....	71
Figure 11 Challenges Created for the Educator and the Availability and the Suitability of Resource Material for Religion Studies - Educators .....	74
Figure 12 Challenges Created for the Educator and the Availability and the Suitability of Resource Material for Religion Studies - Learners .....	74
Figure 13 Challenges Created for the Educator and the Availability and the Suitability of Resource Material for Religion Studies - Principals .....	75
Figure 14 Challenges that Schools are Faced with in the Implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum - Educators .....	79

Figure 15 Challenges that Schools are Faced with in the Implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum - Learners .....	79
Figure 16 Challenges that Schools are Faced with in the Implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum - Principals .....	79
Figure 17 The Nature of Religion Studies Curriculum in Schools - Educators..	83
Figure 18 The Nature of Religion Studies Curriculum in Schools - Learners....	83
Figure 19 The Nature of Religion Studies Curriculum in Schools - Principals..	84
Figure 20 The Objectives and Expected Outcomes of Religion Studies - Educators.....	87
Figure 21 The Objectives and Expected Outcomes of Religion Studies - Learners.....	87
Figure 22 The Objectives and Expected Outcomes of Religion Studies - Principals.....	88
Figure 23 Models of Religion Studies - Educators .....	95
Figure 24 Models of Religion Studies - Learners .....	95
Figure 25 Models of Religion Studies - Principals.....	89

# APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Research Questionnaire.....	130
Appendix 2 Confirmation of Registration .....	143
Appendix 3 Permission to Administer Questionnaires .....	144
Appendix 4 Granting of Permission to Conduct Questionnaire .....	145
Appendix 5 List of Schools.....	146
Appendix 6 Approval of Application to Conduct Research .....	147
Appendix 7 Letter of Appreciation .....	149

## PREAMBLE TO RESEARCH DESIGN

*“History of Education is an inexpensive laboratory for education policy development.” “...At the present time, when new [educational] proposals and reforms are being studiously mooted, it is instructive to know exactly why such schemes in the past have failed, and also to be reminded that there is very little new skin under the sun.” “Change ... is not synonymous with progress. Sometimes persevering good practice in the face of challenges is a major achievement, and sometimes teachers have to be wise to resist reforms that violate their professional judgment.”*

*“Schools can easily shift from panacea to scapegoat.”*

*(Kallaway 2002: 1)*

Since the coming to power of the nationalist government in 1948, education and South Africa were governed in accordance with apartheid's policy of separate development. Apartheid was being established and eventually well entrenched and this filtered down in schools, hence discrimination, inequality and segregation in the guise of education was enforced. (see Bruce 1996: 5; Gounder 2004: 30-32) Through this discriminative educational system, the ideology of Christian National Education was advocated and religious education also known as Religious Instruction, became, by law, a compulsory subject taught at all state-controlled schools. (Summers 1996: 7) The main objective of this system of education was to bring about massive conversions of students to Christianity as it was perceived by the powers that be that Christianity would guarantee to bring about and maintain law and order. Christianity was taught in all state schools. Learners were not given the choice of either accepting or rejecting this type of education. (Bryant 1992: 8-10; 36-37) Christianity was part of the curriculum. Religion Education has never been a subject in its own educational right, but taught in the form of Religious Instruction at all state-controlled schools. Its main

aim was to bolster the “Christian” aspect of Christian National Education. It was used to promote apartheid theology and apartheid education.

During the apartheid era Christian National Education determined the curriculum which was based on an ideology emphasizing racially and ethnically determined identity. Many scholars discussed and criticised the role that education played in stratifying the society in South Africa. (see Johnson 1982) Their intent and main objective was to develop schools with a Christian ethos having its foundations in the Bible. Educators seeking positions in institutions were obliged to follow and adhere to the requirements of Christian religious instruction.

South Africa has a very diverse religious society. Given the apartheid educational background, there is a dire need to identify and develop religious education that have a distinctive understanding and impact on the teaching and learning of religions as well as of the different ethnic groups. In recent years throughout the continent of Africa, there has been a move towards implementing Religious Education in state schools. (Bryant 1992: 36-37) This is the result of the widespread questioning of the Christian National Education systems that focused on Bible Education, and which were imported into Africa by European missionaries and colonists. If the religious diversity of society has to be catered for in education, then the religious education that pupils receive must reflect that objective. Hence, modifications to the school curriculum are inevitable. A great challenge, however, is that many educators might not want to teach in an integrated religious education programme and that many, even if they do teach in this programme, are not well equipped to do so. (Gounder 2004:46-51)

Taking cognizance of this fact, an assessment and evaluation of the school curriculum has been conducted and new curricula developed. Since 2003, Religion Education as an integrated multi-religious programme has become a reality. More recently, schools have started to offer Religion Studies as full matric

subject in public schools. The main aim is that these curricula should be educational rather than instructionally based. (Bruce 1996:38-45) An important principle is that these programmes are not to be used to proselytize learners in schools or to give priority to any particular religion or to elevate one religion over another. (Summers 1996: 12)

The educational mission of state or public schools in a democracy includes the responsibility to provide free open space in which learners can explore religion, religions and religious diversity in South Africa and the world. It concerns teaching and not preaching; and its focus is not to cultivate and educate persons of faith but persons informed about the facts of all the faith groupings in South Africa. With clear goals and objectives in place there would be an increase in the understanding, respect, knowledge of diversity and clarity of moral values of all religions. (Bruce 1998: 256-257)

.

Against the apartheid background, there has been a dire need for a renaissance in education and in particular, the integration of the study of Religion with Education. (Erricker 1993: 39-40) This whole process has to be guided by principles of equity and equality. These principles are aimed at acknowledging and recognising the religious diversity of the country. If this is done, the implementation of religion education can serve the interests of the nation as a whole. Adequate account needs to be taken of the rich and diverse heritage of the various cultures and religions of the country. All forms of religious discrimination in public education must be strongly resisted.



# CHAPTER 1

## *1.1 INTRODUCTION*

The laying to rest of the apartheid era and the birth of a new democracy in South Africa in 1994 saw the emergence of the reconstruction and development process, as well as the recognition of all the peoples of South Africa. One of the most important achievements of the new government in the field of education was the replacing of the National Christian Education system with an integrated multi-religious system. This system comprises of Religion Education as well as the subject religion Studies and incorporates content from all the major religious traditions practiced in South Africa. The ultimate objective for the study of Religion in schools in this system, is to teach and sensitize prospective educators as well as pupils to the diversity of South African society.

The introduction of Religion Education and the subject of Religion Studies in the school curriculum will foster a sense of appreciation and also attempt to develop skills that will empower society to live in harmony in a multi-cultural society. These subjects will afford educators and learners the opportunity to reflect on the religions and cultures of the whole society and not just a privileged group. Even so, many challenges to the introduction of Religion Studies in a large number of schools lay ahead. Among these are the developing of new and commonly acceptable, integrated methods, up-to-date resource materials, the relevant training of educators and more importantly, the preparation of pupils and their parents as well as the governing boards of schools for the implementation of these subjects.

It is essential to have a good understanding of the concept “religion” in order to teach religion in schools. To do this, and noting that we are dealing with a multi-cultural, multi-traditional, multi-religious and multi-racial society, we need to be open-minded in presenting the diverse religions in a secular classroom setting.

In our democratic society, all religions and their followers have a place and have the right to be respected by the state, by state institutions and by all citizens. Similarly, people who do not have a religion also have the right to the same kind of respect. The state’s policy on Religion Education and Religion Studies is an attempt to give that respect to all our citizens within the school environment.

In order to have a fair understanding of religion, we need to identify the similarities that exist among the major religions such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc., without forgetting that differences do exist. (Bruce 1996: 37-38) While students need to learn about the many religions in South Africa, they should also feel free to express themselves in terms of their own religions. In this sense, teachers will have to learn to work with learners in terms of their own existing worldviews. This will help them to grow as individuals and thinkers, making their own decisions.

According to the Bill of Rights of the South African Constitution, Religion Studies is a human right as well as a moral issue. The teaching and learning underlying issues of Religion Studies in South Africa are also determined by issues such as race, gender, ethnicity, citizenship and nationality. Adding to this is the tendency towards secularization as more and more people are becoming secular and part of our pluralistic society in their different ways of life. (Bruce 1996: 256-257) Many people are finding their own eclectic ways of bringing together beliefs and values, hence Religion Studies can also play a role here, by making people more informed about the different religions. Religion happens to

also be one of the ways through which one can inculcate good norms, values and morals among people.

As a democratic society with a diverse population of different cultures, traditions, languages and religions, we are duty bound to ensure that through our diversity we develop a unity of purpose and spirit that recognizes and celebrates our diversity. The National Policy on religion and education is applicable to all state and public schools. The spirit of the policy promotes respect for religious diversity of South Africa and must be applied at all levels of the entire education system since learning about themselves while learning about others, learners will surely discover their common humanity in diversity, and be both affirmed and challenged to grow in their personal orientation to life. (Bassinger 2002: 8-26)

According to Kumar (2006: 274), “urban social reality, such as the one in South Africa, not only forces one to take serious note of religious pluralism, but also take equal note of secularization”. He suggests that secularism and religious pluralism are two sides of the same coin. Multi-religious and multi-cultural realities impact at all levels of the education system. This makes it imperative that the education system proactively accommodate this diversity. As such, this requires a paradigm shift compared to apartheid education as schools become more accommodating in view of the multi-cultural and multi-religious communities they serve.

Even so, we need to be very cautious when implementing Religion Studies in the school curriculum, in that the schools should not become instruments of particular conditionings. This lies entirely in the hands of the educators who have to decide what they intend or attempt to do in Religion Studies, and to what extent they envisage contributing to the fostering of religious identity of the learner. In order to present this subject accordingly, there must be clear guidelines with clear objectives to direct educators in achieving success in their endeavours. Religion

Studies should also be taught with the intention that people understand the place and function of religion as an aspect of human activity and the significance it has upon one's life. In addition to learning about diversity, generally, Religion Studies also attempts to nurture and direct the learners in their respective cultures. This is in line with the emerging concern that education at all levels be transformative and hence community-related. For instance, Yusef Waghid (2002) recently argued in the context of higher education in South Africa that the knowledge produced in higher education institutions must be community-related and should meet the needs of the community. Introduction of Religion Studies in schools should also foster this community relatedness and can be developed through sustained training of teachers and research on this topic at higher educational institutions.

In this research I intend to examine some of the fundamental issues related to the inclusion of Religion Studies in the school curriculum in the Further Education and Training Phase (FET). I intend to explore the many prospects and advantages it will provide for the learners as well as for educators, the many challenges that the schools and educators would be faced with and the barriers and implications in achieving the intended objective, and finally to examine models of Religion Studies that can be used to help with its implementation.

## ***1.2 DEFINITION OF TITLE***

The title of this thesis is - "Prospects and Challenges in the Implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum: A Case Study of North Durban Region in KwaZulu-Natal." There are continuous processes of change for the subject of religion in society throughout the world. Taking into account National Christian Education, focusing especially on Christianity, that was implemented during the time of the Nationalist government, it was imperative that this be replaced with a system of education that would be more accommodating to all the

people of South Africa. It has come to be widely accepted that if learners in schools are to be prepared to take their rightful place in a multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-traditional democratic society, the teaching of religion they receive must reflect these realities. Hence, a whole new system of religion education was created. These changes have brought about many challenges to the many stakeholders in the school and education community. It is anticipated that the progressive implementation of Religion Studies in schools throughout South Africa, will bring about many more challenges and that many barriers would also surface in so far as educators may be unwilling or not educated and trained for the task. Many educators would be faced with the issue of whether or not to participate in the new programmes, specifically as they are of a multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-traditional nature.

### ***1.3 AIMS OF THESIS***

Religion, being an integral part of human endeavour, has found a plethora of existences within the various cultural and traditional facets of humanity and each is symbolic and significant to its particular adherent. As individuals existing within a diverse society, one needs to develop a fundamental understanding and appreciation for not just one's own peculiarities but for those of the fellow human beings. In pursuit of these objectives I have identified the aims of my research.

I hope to achieve three main aims with this thesis. Following my introductory chapter I first provide a provisional overview of some of the most important aspects that must be taken into consideration when we attempt to define Religion Studies. Secondly, this is followed by a chapter that reports on the empirical research I conducted with regard to the challenges schools are facing with regard to the implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum. Thirdly, I contextualise my research in terms of important issues we need to consider in the

broader context of Religion Education.

The first main aim include issues such as the difficulty to get a clear and adequate definition that would be universally acceptable, agreement on the main and secondary reasons for offering Religion Studies at school, an understanding of the aims and objectives of Religion Studies and how this is underpinned by the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy, from the Ministry of Education* (2001) as well as how we need to understand these aspects in respect of secularization and the critique of secularisation in a democracy.

The second main aim focuses on the empirical research which involved, teachers, learners and principals. The list of issues is available in the questionnaires as well as the discussions in this chapter. The main aim was to gather and interpret information that would be helpful in identifying the prospects and challenges for implementing Religions Studies in the school curriculum.

The third aim deals with the broader context of Religion Education, and involve issues related to the linking of moral education to Religious Education, issues of tolerance, respect, and the role and function of the Religion Studies teacher. This latter focus is very important for the non-discriminatory teaching of religions, as well as the development of an appropriate ethical stance of the teacher.

In pursuing these objectives, I hope to also meet some of the aims of Religion Studies such as to provide knowledge and to foster skills that will empower learners to live harmoniously in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society, to enable learners to take cognizance of the religious and spiritual beliefs, insights, practices and experiences that give meaning to people's lives, for them to gain knowledge, insights and understanding of their beliefs and practices in order to overcome the many trials and tribulations in life, that they achieve this by focusing on personal experiences of mystery and spirituality rather than on belief

systems and institutionalized traditions (Gellner 1992: 73), and to help the learner to understand the worldview and motivating power of the religious traditions most influential in the historical and cultural development of their country of residence. (Kellenberger 1993: 88-89)

## ***1.4 BACKGROUND AND OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM***

The history of the previous education system of South Africa goes as far back as 1948 when the Nationalist Government came into power, governing the country in accordance with a policy of separate development called “apartheid”. There was intense racial discrimination and inequality between the Black and White population groups. It was during this rule of the nationalist Government, that the intensity of racial disharmony and segregation was enforced. Religious Studies was implemented in South African schools since the rule of the Nationalist Government in line with the apartheid policies that were implemented. The Nationalist Government was of a Christian background, hence Christianity was taught in all public schools as well as in most private schools. Learners were not given a choice of either accepting or rejecting this type of education. Christianity was made part of the curriculum. Religious Studies has been used to bolster the “Christian” aspect of Christian National Education. It was used to promote apartheid ideology and apartheid education. This is not something new that the Nationalist Government had introduced<sup>1</sup>. It was in line with the previous British system of education. Johnson argues, “More importantly, the British established a system of education that they used for purposes of social control. They adopted a policy of deliberate “anglicization” with regard to the Afrikaners.” (Johnson:

---

<sup>1</sup> In the United States a similar approach was followed to dominate the African American people by using cultural domination. Culture was used as a powerful tool in the subordination of other cultural groups by the dominant group/s. Hillard suggests that, “The cultural problem is that the learner’s own or someone else’s culture is used against him/her.” (Hilliard 1978: 116)

1982: 215) It is ironic that the Afrikaner Nationalist Government followed exactly the same approach of “civilizing” rather than “fighting”. As Johnson says, “After coming to power, the Afrikaners moved systematically to consolidate their key power bases, one of which was the education system. The National Party restructured white education. CNE was introduced into English and Afrikaans schools.” (Johnson 1982: 218) In a further twist of irony it was the British who took objection to the Afrikaner cultural imperialism. It is this role of Christian National Education in shaping the society in South Africa that necessitates the need for the integration of Religion Studies in the school curriculum which would best serve the needs of the diverse population.

When South Africa gained democracy in 1994, the government recognized the need for freedom and equality of all religions for all the people of South Africa. Priority was given to the identification and recognition of the religious diversity of the country. Special preference for any particular group of people or religion was not seen as meaningful in the new democratic society. It was also brought to the fore that religious differences and intolerance was a feature of strife between the communities. To overcome these differences and intolerance, the state took a strong stand in introducing Religion Education and Religion Studies in schools with the intention of promoting mutual understanding and respect between the different religious groups, thus promoting national unity.

A committee to do a feasibility study on Religion Studies was set up by the State. The first National Education Investigation commenced as early as 1990. This was tabled for discussion in the national Education and Training Forum during 1993 – 1994 and thereafter extensively consulted around South Africa before introducing the South African Act of 1996. This was further developed by the Ministerial Committee on Religion Education in 1999 and the Ministerial Workgroup on Religion Education in 2000. The final result was the *National Policy on Religion and Education* (2003).



The Policy document for Religion Studies was then workshopped during 2004 and 2005. All the stakeholders were invited to be involved. During this period, packages for the school curriculum together with the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards were drawn up and readied for implementation in 2006 in the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase. Being introduced in schools for the first time, the success of its implementation needs to be planned, executed and monitored progressively. Through research, its implementation guidelines could be sought in regard to its prospects and challenges faced in schools.

Religion Studies have been introduced in state schools for the first time in 2006. One of the main objectives was to also use this subject to foster the respect and dignity of people in our multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-traditional country. It is hoped that it will add to the integration of the people of South Africa, by inculcating a sense of appreciation, respect and understanding of the diverse cultures and contribute towards building a future based on civic values whereby there is an increased understanding of the other religious and ideological traditions significantly represented in the general population. (see Stewart 1980: 256 - 257) Through this education process, it is also hoped that it will enlarge the ability of the learners to empathize with the way people who hold different beliefs from themselves see the world and are motivated by their beliefs. Religion Studies is also expected to help foster the capacity to dialogue with people in a non-defensive and non-threatening way about ultimate beliefs and values.

Revd Cedric Mayson of the ANC Commission on Religious Affairs mentions that Religion Studies include equity, tolerance, religious diversity, openness, accountability and social honour. He also makes mention of three basic features of Religion Studies, viz.:

- Educational knowledge, exposing learners to the richness and variety of religion in a well prepared and respectful manner;

- Education about diversity, in an environment which encourages the sense of acceptance and security for all, whatever their race or creed. It means that people should appreciate, and feel emotionally secure, in the field of religion;
- Education in traditional values: these are moral values which include the question of moral regeneration to which all religious and non-religious citizens adhere.

My main task will be to explore the teaching of Religion Studies in the Further Education and Training ( FET) phase and how it is being introduced and accepted by the stakeholders viz. the management, educators, parents and most importantly the learners. A programme in Religion Studies can facilitate constructive thinking as it provides an opportunity for learners to develop a disciplined imagination that will empower them to recognize a common humanity within religious diversity. Religion Studies will create a context in which learners can increase their understanding of themselves and others, deepen their capacity for empathy, and eventually develop powers of critical reflection in thinking through problems of religious or moral concern. By teaching learners the role of religion in history, society and the world, a unified multi-traditional programme could be an important part of world balance and complete education. In the context of the introduction of Religion Studies in schools within the new curriculum framework I want to explore the challenges, barriers, implications and opportunities that schools present in the implementation of “Religion Studies”.

## ***1.5 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS***

While all religions may find representation, some religions, on the other hand may not be given the same status of being covered under the category of “religion”,

e.g. the fast growing Pagan community – will it have the status of a religion in South Africa? While it is important to take note of plurality within each religion, often in the South African context, it is used to credit Christianity as the most dominant religion without acknowledging the great deal of diversity within this religion.

Every individual has the right to know who he or she is and what the purpose of his or her life is. It is only then that we treat the cause of the problem and eradicate the symptoms. The key to unlocking the youth for discovering their own potential in the face of the pressures of society, lies in Religion Studies. Customs and traditions provide a sense of home, community and belonging, even as they are dynamic and evolve with time. (Bassinger 2002:8-26) The youth need to be educated on the fundamental values that underline society irrespective of the religious, cultural or traditional differences. In a study conducted among the Birmingham (UK) South Asian young women it was revealed that there is a close correlation between religious and cultural values and education. (Abbas 2003) Another scholar, Hilliard, also argued in favour of the role of culture in attaining equality of educational opportunity. (Hilliard 1978)

The paradigm shift in teaching religion involves all the stakeholders of education. One challenge is to create a classroom climate in which teachers and pupils can get things done with minimum friction and misunderstanding. The adoption of a stance of exclusive partiality by an educator who might feel at liberty to promote one point of view while discouraging knowledge about other viewpoints is another challenge. (Hughes 1994:26-29)

Brian V. Hill (2004: 139), expressed the concern that “the teacher’s own partiality, i.e. the beliefs and values he or she holds about the subject will be taught. Where religious belief is concerned, an exclusively partial presentation is most likely to occur in a religious school which systematically hires teachers who

endorse the same belief system.” People, as human beings, may have a tendency for prejudice and bias. Nevertheless it is important for educators to understand their own faith or lack of faith in its depth and breadth and to acknowledge their own prejudices. Without this it would be extremely difficult to understand other faiths and traditions in a positive and meaningful way. It would be difficult to recognize similarities and celebrate the strengths and differences. (Bruce 1996:38) Whilst we note that parents abdicate their responsibility in the home to pass on wisdom and tradition, it is an undeniable right of every learner to expect the education system to affirm his or her linguistic and religious heritage. This is a challenge that needs to be addressed.

According to M.S. Amin (2005: 376), the introduction of Religion Studies “proved to be problematic and very few schools offered the subject”. Amin also indicated that “[i]n the Western Cape, teachers complained that they were intimidated by the Provincial Department. The Department maintained that it only wanted to know which schools were opting for multi-religious education and what they were doing.” There also seems to have been a misunderstanding between the concepts Religious Instruction/ Religious Education, Religion Education and Religion Studies. Chidester (1990: 30) explains the difference very succinctly:

In the old regime, religious education was directed towards compelling learners to make a confession of faith. According to a manual for Biblical Instruction published as recently as 1990, learners were expected to embrace a particular version of Christian faith. Not merely acquiring knowledge, Children must personally accept, and trust for their personal salvation the triune God introduced to them in the Bible.

The aim of Bible Studies was therefore to bring the light of God’s word to the learners. Religion Studies on the other hand, says Chidester (1990: 30), “is teaching and learning about religion, religions and religious diversity.”

Through the implementation of Religion Studies in the school curriculum, educators would be expected to study the *National Policy on Religion and Education* (2003) and be guided by the learning outcomes and assessment standards given. However, with no specialized training programmes for educators, the absence of orientation courses and workshops present many barriers and challenges to the implementation of Religion Studies. In addition to this is the fact that educators currently in the school system, have no formal training in Religion Studies and that the Policy Document, itself, recognises this. If Religion Studies is to take its rightful place in the school curriculum, all stakeholders, the Department of Education, Teacher Training Institutions and Universities need to come together and work as a single unit towards the advancement and success of the subject in the school curriculum.

## ***1.6 LITERATURE SURVEY***

South Africa is a land of diversity – diverse in its ethnicity, religions, traditions and culture and a land pregnant with the rich and diverse heritage of the people who inhabit it. The introduction of Religion Studies is expected to pave the way forward for this. Hence, my choice of this topic. Through this study, I hope to determine the prospects of Religion Studies in the school curriculum and thereafter to ascertain the challenges that will be presented in its implementation in the school curriculum. It is important to understand the place Religion Studies has in our schools and in society as a whole. Schools are the sites where Religion Studies is most appropriate in terms of educating the larger population of our society. This has been a feature of other African Countries. Mitchell et al. (1993) present an analysis of Religion Studies in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi. In their study, it also emerged that colonialism and a strong emphasis on Christianity had impacted greatly on the education system of these countries. However, after

these countries viz., Malawi, Zimbabwe and Zambia, had gained their independence, there was a significant paradigm shift from Religious instruction to Religion Studies taking into account the diversity of the population. The governments of these countries revised the school curriculum to cater for the needs of all their people. It was also found that politicians encouraged Religion Studies which was seen to instil moral and religious values together with the promotion of tolerance among the different ethnic groups having different religious and cultural and traditional background.

Their findings also reflected that if Religion Studies is implemented in its true sense, it must divorce itself from the church type of education that was advocated by the Christian National Education (CNE) and embrace one that is learner-centred. (Bryant 1992:36-37) This places emphasis on helping the learner to explore and articulate his/her own faith and at the same time appreciating other people's religious and cultural beliefs.

Religion Studies in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi, were taught at both primary and secondary school levels with the learners having to write national examinations. The reasoning behind this was to ensure that Religion Studies was taken seriously by both educator and learner. However, the challenge that was presented in these three countries was the unavailability of qualified educators to teach Religion Studies. It was recommended that teacher training courses be conducted to equip educators adequately to teach Religion Studies.

In the research by Mitchell et al. (1993: 34), the following were seen as the goals of Religion Studies:

- Appreciation of one's culture;
- Doing away with religious discrimination;

- Inculcation of good norms, values, morals and attitudes;
- Promotion of a culture of discipline;
- The creation of harmony between different religious groups;
- Preventing moral degeneration;
- Creating and providing one with a sense of tolerance, diversity or openness towards other religious beliefs;
- Promotion of social justice; etc.

All three countries were looking at the introduction of Religious Studies on similar lines. Some of the challenges that were focused on in the introduction of Religion Studies in schools were:

- The availability of qualified educators;
- The availability of resources;
- A practical non-discriminatory approach;
- The role of the Educator in teaching Religion Studies; and
- The inculcation of tolerance.

A Research Project on redefining the role of Religion Studies within South African multi-cultural and multi-religious context was conducted by Cornelia Roux (1998: 125 - 136). She found that the curriculum 2005 placed much undue pressure in the teaching of Religion Studies more so when the school was understaffed. She indicated that positive motivation and encouragement were imperative in helping educators towards a paradigm shift in teaching the subject. There is a dire need for qualified professional educators for this subject. Roux (1998: 130) also recommended that a well-designed programme be drawn up and

an in-service training program for schools be established. This will in turn redefine the role of Religion Studies in a multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-traditional school environment. She also suggested that educators develop their knowledge of other religions and value systems. (Hughes 1994:6-8) This will assist educators to understand the problem areas and the negative perceptions of learners and colleagues and parents.

The following is a summary of the results of the research conducted in schools in the Western Cape, Gauteng and the North West Province by Roux (1998: 131):

- 90% of the educators involved in religious education in the selected schools were from the Christian faith;
- 95% of the educators had no knowledge of the different religions in South Africa;
- Only 30% of the educators had specific training in religious education at tertiary level;
- Most of the educators (approx. 80% used the confessional approach in their classes; and
- All the educators felt that some form of nurturing in the child's own religion should take place.

She also recommended that educators should be empowered by means of new didactic approaches such as co-operative learning and thinking skills training be implemented.

In facilitating a paradigm shift, Roux (1998: 133) indicated that:



- It is vital for the educator to understand his or her own religiosity and frame of reference;
- Facilitators/educators in any religious education setting need to be academically informed with the meaning and purpose of multi-religious education and research. This gives them an opportunity to develop sensitivity for the needs and fears of the learners in implementing multi-religious content;
- One should have enough knowledge to understand the aims of a multi-religious education program; and
- In facilitating an in-service program it is important to be aware of the diversity within the perceptions of educators attending workshops.

Roux (1998: 133), in as far as in-service training programmes are concerned, recommended:

- The developing of knowledge of the approaches and different religious content;
- The developing of training material for educators to use in their religious education classes;
- The organising of practical sessions where new didactic approaches can be discussed and experimented with; and

- The compiling of programmes for their colleagues and their own school environment for introducing the new Religion Studies programme.

Some of the barriers or challenges that were identified by Roux (1998: 130-135) that could impede the process of the implementation of Religion Studies in schools were:

- The availability of qualified educators;
- Lack or shortage of resource materials;
- The understanding of learners for a multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-racial background;
- The dearth of workshops and In-service training programmes; and
- The empowering of educators by providing knowledge.

In the works of Summers et al. (1996: 56-58), it was found that apartheid policies, the mixing members of different religious groups had been greatly restricted. An individual's own religion was often considered more important and superior and that of others inferior. This was considered a recipe for intolerance. Since South Africa is a religiously pluralistic country, it is essential for learners from one religion and culture to understand and appreciate something about people from different religious and cultural backgrounds. Unfortunately, as Summers (1996: 58) puts it, "South Africans, in general, sadly, do not take advantage of the richness of the religious and cultural diversity found in the country!"

Summers also states (1996: 58),

Of importance for a subject which wishes to contribute to a policy of Reconciliation and Reconstruction is the need for people to be accepted and treated as equals. The Golden Rule, “do unto others as you would have them do unto you”, could be a starting point. Just as belief systems are studied, so too can the values, ethics, norms and concepts of morality emanating from those belief systems be analysed. Religion, it must be remembered, is more than doctrinal belief: a complex value system is an integral part of all religions.

Summers (1996: 58) further explains that “society is a human construct based on laws made *by people* and that laws, if unjust, can be changed *by people*.” To date Religion Studies in South Africa has been sadly lacking in constructively contributing to this area of social transformation.

According to Summers (1996: 67), in 1992, ICRSA (Institute for Comparative Religion in South Africa), had made valuable contributions. A 130 page report that was produced as part of the National Policy Investigation is a comprehensive analysis of Religion Studies and matches the challenges change in South Africa. This report called for a new “*religion*” education instead of “*religious*” education. This took into account South Africa’s multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-traditional society. The report states:

...religion education would have clearly-defined educational aims and objectives directed towards producing high school graduates who have a deeper understanding and appreciation of the whole range of religions that span the South African landscape. Such an educational purpose would be consistent with the aims of a new, non-racial, nonsexist and democratic society in South Africa. (Summers 1996: 67)

While not specifying content, the report stresses the need for a “democratic” approach to syllabus design which involves input from parents, teachers and students. The religion education envisaged would also be “educationally sound and pedagogically viable” and “sensitive to the religious interests of people in South Africa”. (Summers 1996: 67)

The thought of the introduction of Religion Studies in the school curriculum was seen as an instrument unifying the nation as a whole thus reflecting its true democracy. However, in researching Religion Studies, I hope to unpack the prospects and the many challenges and barriers in its implementation in the school curriculum. This study also understands that Christian National Education as was practiced during the apartheid era is now being placed on a par with those other religious practices which formed part of the school curriculum, and which have to be phased out finally.

Cognizance is also taken of the fact that, whilst much emphasis was placed on Christian National Education and other major religions of the world, marginalised, the African religions in our very own country were even more severely sidelined and ignored. The indigenous religions or traditions of South Africa like all other religions needs to be given its rightful place in the school curriculum. Hence, this study also hopes \*\* to give us some form of indication as to the status of African Religions in the Religion Studies curricula. Hopefully this study will pave the way for educators to choose Religion Studies as a specialist subject and to teach this as a subject in its true sense and not as a filler subject in the school curriculum. We need to ensure that the demographics of the country is taken into account and take care that all world-views and religious denominations are included in the school curriculum.

The amount of time allocated to Religion Studies since its implementation in the school curriculum in the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase

commencing from Grade 10 as an examination subject need to be evaluated. We also need to understand that schools should not become the instrument of particular religion-specific conditioning. Educators need to be trained well with regard to the aims, objectives and outcomes of Religion Studies. They need to also carefully consider to what extent they envisage contributing towards change or the transformation of the existing religious identities of learners. In this regard, educators teaching Religion Studies have a great responsibility regarding the future of this subject. (Race 2002:32-35) Taking cognizance of this, all educators concerned with this subject, must bear in mind the context in which they will be teaching, and the objectives they consider to be important.

Religion Studies must be consistent with human and civil rights to freedom of religion, conscience, thought and expression ensuring social benefits by facilitating mutual understanding, reducing prejudice and increasing civil toleration of human dignity. It should also be taught with the intention of understanding its place and function as an aspect of human activity and the significance it has upon one's life. Generally, Religion Studies should attempt to nurture and direct the learners in their respective cultures. In this research study I shall gather data through interviews and questionnaires. I hope to address the following issues:

- The advantages of implementing Religion Studies in schools;
- Considerations to the important factors to the teaching of Religion Studies;
- Identifying further challenges experienced by educators;
- The impact of Religion Studies in overcoming disciplinary problems;
- Need to know about other religions; and

- The difference that would be made in the lives of the learners in the implementation of Religion Studies.

Although some of these have been raised by other scholars such as Isabel A. Phiri, H.C. Summers, Gordon Mitchell, and Brian V. Hill, it is important that this research be conducted since it is the first time that Religion Studies in its true sense is being implemented in the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase.

In a recent study Cross (2004) focused on the issue of diversity in higher educational institutions. Cross argues that in South Africa, “both multiculturalism and diversity, particularly cultural diversity, have connotations and historical associations with apartheid that cannot be ignored.” (Cross 2004: 391) It is therefore associated with some negativity. However, he further argues that “Recent literature on diversity has widened the scope of diversity to embrace various characteristics such as age and physical traits, sexual orientation, ethnic and religious background, socio-economic status, birthplace and hometown, social and political affiliations, seniority and experience, education and training and so forth.” (Cross 2004: 391) Agreeing with other scholars, he seems to suggest that “‘engaging difference’ is essential to the success of a diverse democracy.” (Cross 2004: 392) It is within this framework that it is crucial to underline the importance of the recognition of religious diversity within the curriculum for Religion Studies.

In the international context, Eldering (1996) looked at “Multiculturalism and Multicultural Education”. She looked at it from three different levels—objective reality, ideology, official policy and practical implementation. She defines “Multicultural education ... as being education that takes into account in some way the ethnic/cultural differences between pupils.” (Eldering 1996: 318) She then suggests that “The most important objective is for pupils from all groups to become acquainted with each other’s cultures, learn to appreciate them, and learn

how to relate to each other (the human relations approach, also known as the intergroup approach or multicultural education).” (Eldering 1996: 320) It is assumed that Religion Studies has a similar goal. Taking multiculturalism a step further, Persell (1994) point out that while the state and the market economy tend to downplay the significance of religion within a secular state, other scholars such as Carter (1993) have shown that “civil society is the sphere in which ethnic, religious, and moral diversity can flourish best, if it is not squeezed too tightly by the state and economy. Civil society offers particularizing experiences that foster meaningful identities and moral alternatives.” (Persell 1994: 655) Nevertheless, one needs to take into account the precaution that Cross has underlined in his study: “However dominating the American diversity discourses were, the assumption that these issues could be addressed within the framework of multiculturalism, still seem part of a progressive politics. This is a highly contested assumption within the South African context where multiculturalism has been part of a strong legacy of reactionary politics in education. Stewart 1980:381) In South Africa, both multiculturalism and diversity, particularly cultural diversity, have connotations and historical associations with apartheid that cannot be ignored.” (Cross 2004: 391)

I hope to unpack the challenges and barriers that are posed to its implementation and also to look at its prospects in the interests of Religion Studies.

## ***1.7 KEY QUESTIONS***

Currently there is no indication of Religion Studies meeting the expected outcomes as envisaged in the Policy document on Religion Studies. (Cole 1988:81) However, this research is intended to shed some light on the actual happenings at the level of schools. Some of the most pertinent questions are as follows.

#### 1.7.1 What is the purpose of Religion Studies?

- (i) Should Religion Studies deal with religious and moral values?
- (ii) What then are the challenges and prospects of Religion Studies?

#### 1.7.2 Is there a need to know about other religions?

- (i) Why should one know about other religions?
- (ii) How will Religion Studies contribute to the inculcation of good morals, values and attitudes?
- (iii) Will Religion Studies reverse moral degeneration of our learners and our society?
- (iv) What Religion Studies succeed in supporting and effecting additional changes to our learners' quality of life?
- (v) Will Religion Studies sensitize learners to appreciate other cultures and religions?

#### 1.7.3 What are the factors impacting on the implementation of Religion Studies in schools?

- (i) What opportunities does the school offer in implementing Religion Studies.?
- (ii) Are educators adequately qualified to teach Religion Studies?
- (iii) What are the challenges presented in the implementation of Religion Studies in schools?
- (iv) Are resource materials for the implementation of Religion Studies easily accessible or available in schools?



- (v) Are the resource materials, if available, free of all biases and equal presentation of the religions being taught

1.7.4 What are the prospects of Religion Studies being implemented in the school curriculum?

- (i) What are some of its advantages?
- (ii) Will Religion Studies help curb disciplinary problems that are faced in many schools?

## ***1.8 BROADER ISSUES TO BE INVESTIGATED***

Whilst the introduction of Religion Studies seems to be heading in the right direction, there is the possibility that many barriers to its implementation could be experienced in so far as the parallel and the thinking from “within the box” mentality is concerned. However this needs to be very carefully, strategically and diplomatically implemented to allay the fears that may exist from some sectors of the community. To date in South Africa not many schools were able to implement Religion Studies in schools at FET level.

The study of religion could become a very contentious and controversial matter or aspect of the school curriculum. Many objections from parents and religious leaders could be placed fearing that learners could be led astray to other faiths. Hence, accusations could be made against the state for implementing a “biased curriculum” and forcing learners to accept such a curriculum. This research will therefore attempt to explore whether those preconceived fears and accusations are still valid or are the fears real, unfounded or imaginary.

According to Summers (1996: 1),

Religious Education is in a crisis. The subject, as taught in South African state schools, has tended to reflect the thinking of apartheid theology and, consequently, the subject has lost creditability in the eyes of the politically oppressed.

This type of instruction had thus alienated people of the different faiths and religions. Through a paradigm shift of Religious Education to Religion Studies, what assurance is there that Religion Studies in its implementation in schools will not be used to bolster the “Christian” aspect of the former Christian National Education?

In a multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-traditional society, whose faith becomes the norm and how does an educator deal with diversity? This brings me to the question of Religion Studies educators. Do educators have to conform to a particular lifestyle in order to teach this subject since the educator may be expected to practice what he/she teaches? How would educators of one religious persuasion get along with learners with opposing religious views? What would be the consequences if, for example, a Sunday School educator has to teach Religion Studies in a state school. The answer to this would most likely be that the educator having only a strong Christian or Hindu background would in all probability have a Christian or Hindu leaning to the subject and thus place more emphasis on Christianity or Hinduism as the case might be. The thoughts of indoctrination to a certain degree cannot be ignored. Having this in mind, would then the outcomes of Religion Studies be achieved? Lastly, can a professional educator teach all religions with equal objectivity?

Having this in mind, how can the outcomes of Religion Studies be achieved? The next point of interest is: Do we have educators qualified to teach Religion Studies

in public schools, and who would teach this new subject without any prejudice? Would the educator be able to handle controversial issues in the classroom whilst there is a lack of available professional models?

The availability of resource material is another very contentious issue. Are there sufficient resource materials to teach Religion Studies that is free of all bias and where all religions are given equal representations? If literature is available, what items of information or what topical issues would he/she use for a particular theme and how would he or she proceed with it. According to Sealey (1985: 2) there are “no clear answers in textbooks, official syllabuses and teaching guides. There are problems that cannot be resolved by the production of new information or procedures for teaching. They are problems that arise from the facts; problems of meaning and of justification. It is this area that constitutes the philosophy of Religion Studies”.

Another important aspect of the implementation of Religion Studies in the school curriculum is that of time allocation. The time allocation will depend upon the importance given to this subject and whether it is being implemented as a filler subject or as an examination subject.

## ***1.9 OBJECTIVES***

Firstly, the main objective is to find out the current status of Religion Studies and what challenges it is facing in a multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural context.

Secondly, to determine what opportunities do schools present in the implementation of Religion Studies, and would the implementation of Religion Studies in the school curriculum have a positive impact on the learners in as far as

the inculcation of good norms, values, morals and attitudes are concerned and in making a difference in the lives of the learners.

Thirdly, the implementation of Religion Studies thus far has been very uneven across schools both in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal and in South Africa as a whole and this study hopes to unpack why this implementation is so uneven whilst trying to identify some of the challenges such as the qualification of educators in teaching Religion Studies and the accessibility and availability of resource material.

### ***1.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK***

My research will draw from theoretical studies that have focused on commonality and differences of interventions, religious tolerance and respect for diversity, and the role of religion in social development. (see Race 2002:xv) All of these have been considered important elements in Religion Studies in schools.

With the premise that South Africa is pluralistic in nature—having a multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-linguistic multi-religious and multi-traditional society, it is inevitable and imperative that a policy pertaining to religion, embracing the people of the country be in place. Pluralism requires more than acknowledging or celebrating diversity. The ideal pluralism is a hopeful one for educators in South Africa as the growing heterogeneity gives reason to search for common ground as we prepare the citizenry of the future. (Race 2002:33) We have also taken cognizance of the fact that throughout history differences have been inordinately divisive. Improved cognizance of shared universals, on the other hand, can bring about mutual respect and empathy. Futrell (2001: 35), indicates that, “Accentuating and teaching about commonality as well as difference is a must for

educational endeavours that advance hope for pluralism as it applies to the religion domain.”

According to Chidester, et al. (1994: 10), an “option for the role of religion in public education would be to eliminate religion as a distinct subject from the school curriculum.” Hence if religion is taught in the public education system, its role and curricula need to be carefully defined. The role of religion in state schools must have clear educational aims and objectives in teaching students about religion rather than serving religious interests in the promotion of religion. This, approach, according to Chidester et al. (1994: 11), “promises social benefits by facilitating mutual understanding, reducing prejudice, and increasing civil toleration of human diversity.”

A vital aspect of any diversity movement is the careful examination of absent voices, hidden privileges, and underlying biases that can exclude and marginalize specific populations. It is easy to see, with some consideration, that students who are of other religious denominations are excluded and marginalized by religious and spiritual efforts. Our challenge is to examine and acknowledge the student populations that are marginalized, excluded, or disadvantaged by religious plurality and spiritual efforts. We must assume that religion is central to everyone’s life, even though this is not true for significant portions of the population. Likewise, pervasive calls for increased spirituality in higher education assume that religion or spirituality is the primary way to address the search for purpose and meaning, though most students are concerned with who they are, their purpose in life, and the development of values, regardless of whether they are spiritual, religious, or non-believing. Again, the veracity of such claim needs to be examined.

Shiman (1994:5) eloquently argues for teacher dedication to nourishing the pluralistic ideal:

While we should not expect to change the entire world, we can influence the development of students' social values and offer students alternative ways of thinking and acting. And we should not shy away from trying to do so. Although we might not want to impose our personal values on students, we must keep in mind that our schools are charged with the task of engendering democratic values, promoting egalitarian principles, and fostering humane relationships.

If we cherish these goals, we have a responsibility to communicate this to our students through the curriculum we choose and the issues we ask them to consider. By affirming this through our instruction, we will move a little bit closer to becoming a society where all our citizens are treated with respect and dignity and we live together as brothers and sisters.

Selinger (2004: 525) in his article, "Religion and Development", mentions that religion and development are rarely included in the academic literature within the development discourse. Through the limited literature available, the community views religion as:

- An institutional structure to be used to further the aims of a project;
- It is noted as an element of "culture";
- It is regarded as personal motivation; and
- Religion and development are often combined in the belief that development cannot exist without a spiritual dimension.

This research hopes to establish a fundamental paradigm shift from teaching religion as a private matter rather than a public phenomenon. We hope to

consider Religion Studies as part of an understanding of religion as a public matter.

My attempt through this research, while trying to recognize and move beyond biases which is difficult, is to commit ourselves to the educational experience of all students in a diverse democracy. We must reflect on whether our perspective on religion is inclusive of all denominations of our democratic country. Provisions must be made for all students to have healthy dialogues about purpose, meaning, morals and values.

According to Chidester, et al. (1994: 54) “[R]eligion Studies must be based on the premise that students need to learn about religion in their own country and the larger world in order to receive a complete education. It must respond to the social reality of religious pluralism within a single nation. It must be designed to serve certain desirable social goals, such as the transmission of common moral values, an increase in toleration, a reduction in prejudice, and a sense of national unity.” (see also Hamnett 1990:243; Erricker 1993:117-118)

Chidester, et al. (1994: 15), also acknowledges that “[b]y studying a people’s religion and philosophy as well as their folkways and traditions, we gain an understanding of their ethical and moral commitments. The study of religious beliefs and other ideological commitments helps explain both cultural continuity and cultural conflict”. In the research conducted by Chidester, et al. (1994: 70) on international developments, “religion education has the potential to cultivate respect for religion as a significant dimension of human personal and social life. By teaching about religion in an open, plural, comparative, and interdisciplinary way, Religion Studies represents a model for the role of religion in the school curriculum that is free from partisan control. In a religiously diverse society, Religion Studies may prove to be the best model for both the state and the school”. Robert Garner (2000) has shown in his research on Charismatic and

Pentecostal Churches in South Africa that religion can function as an important tool in social change. And this is an important dimension that needs to be taken into account in understanding how imparting religion through school curriculum could contribute to social change at large.

It is also essential that since we are living in a country with varying religious denominations, there should be some comparison of religions and inter-religious dialogue. The comparison of religions brings about a location of contrasts as well as the discovery of common patterns. Each participant of the respective religious denomination tries to understand the religious positions of the others at the same time that he or she seeks to explain his or her own religious beliefs and practices. One not only compares what one hears from others with what he or she is familiar with in his or her own experience, but must also struggle to express one's own convictions in a way that will help the others to make fruitful comparisons in their effort to understand one's position.

Owing to our nation's great diversity and distinct constitutional foundations, the interrelation between religion and state schools has been a strongly contested one. Kumar (2006: 274), in his article "*Religious Pluralism and Religion Education in South Africa*", overviews the complexities of the contemporary South African society and points out why the so-called Christian majority's call for a single approach to teaching religion in schools, will not make a great deal of sense within the parameters of the Bill of Rights of the South African Constitution. This is also a moral issue. He also mentions that the underlying issue of Religion Studies in South Africa involves the issues of race, ethnicity, nationality and citizenship which is complicated by the growing tendency of South African society towards secularization.

Kumar's (2006: 274) argument is directed to suggesting that urban social reality, such as the one in South Africa, not only forces one to take note of religious and



cultural pluralism, but also take equal note of secularism suggesting that religious pluralism and secularism are two sides of the same coin. As Bennett (2001) suggested, cultural pluralism was developed in the twentieth century and is central to multicultural education. (Bennett 2001: 173)

V.K. Gokak (1967: 21), Vice-Chancellor, Bangalore University in his report, questions the place of Religion Studies in social, moral and spiritual values for a national system of education. He emphasizes the concept of secularism which has been introduced in India to hold together a multi-religious society which brings about tolerance and understanding. However, he indicates that it is more negative than positive in its impact since religion, considering the way it is practiced, divides more than unites humankind. But by discarding religion, “we also court the danger of throwing away moral and spiritual values which are the formation of all civilized living.”

Gokak (1967: 24) further indicates that:

All education should be so orientated as to bring out the whole [person] in the student. The main aim in life is to cultivate through physical, intellectual, ‘vital’ and spiritual education, the four aspects of the human personality – the body, the mind, the ‘vital’ (or desire) – self in the [person] and the soul. [The person] is to be perfected in the way of service, knowledge, power and love. This is taken up and transformed into a bright and harmonious expression of the human personality.

It is in this context and in accordance with the case study conducted, that the implementation of Religion Studies in the school curriculum brings about an attitude of not only tolerance, but of positive respect for other religions which will consistently develop and be inculcated in the minds of our learners. Through all the vicissitudes of South Africa’s history, expression is given to a sense of

universality in religious as well as, racial, cultural and linguistic matters. It is therefore essential that the teachings of the principles of religion in our school curriculum, if properly planned and executed, bear the richest results which will have a salutary effect on the citizenry of our country as a whole. As Soudien and Baxen (1997) argued, “Education was central to the discursive process of racial and cultural segregation in the ‘old’ South Africa. What is called for in curriculum making in the new nation is a process that is more sensitive to the multiplicity of differences that have animated South Africa’s 300 year old history and an interrogation of those differences.” (Soudien and Baxen 1997: 358) However, as Moja and Muller (1996) have argued in the context of higher education in South Africa, a similar constructive cooperation between state and civil society has to be developed in implementing Religion Studies in school curriculum rather than state regulation. Such a sentiment has been expressed in the context of Indian society by Madan when he says that “The time is now opportune to argue forcefully that the best guardian of freedom of religion, and the most effective guarantor that unfair conversions, particularly on a collective basis, shall not take place, will be not the state but civil society, or, better still, the two in association.” (Madan 2003: 1034)

Similarly North and Gwin in their analysis of religious freedom in 59 countries concluded the following: “We find that both establishment of a state religion and constitutional protection of religion have significant (and opposing) effects. The existence of a state religion reduces attendance by 14.6-16.7% of the total population, whereas each decade of constitutional protection increases attendance by approximately 1.2% of the population.” (North and Gwin 2004: 103) Furthermore, the centrality of the constitution in the context of providing for religious diversity in Religion Studies curriculum in schools in South Africa has been strongly argued by Henrard (2001). Asmal and James (2001: 199) have argued in their paper, “The conclusion we draw is this: strong schools need a strong and strongly democratic civil society. Around every school should be built

an infrastructure of churches, voluntary associations, nongovernmental organizations, and the institutions of local governance. Schools are at the heart of a civil society and have therefore little choice but to get involved in community development.” In other words, what emerges in the literature is a strong support for the teaching of Religion in schools as a joint partnership between state and civil society. As Ontonti Nduka suggests, “Success in moral education in these circumstances calls for co-operation between the school, the home and society at large.” (Nduka 1980: 153)

### ***1.11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY***

The method to be adopted in the realization of the aims of this study will be a critical reflection and analysis of the ethical notion of the implementation of Religion Studies in the school curriculum and an objective evaluation of it against the backdrop of the principles of equality, freedom, justice and human dignity which inform social transformation.

Firstly, a general introduction for the implementation of Religion Studies in the school curriculum will be presented. Close attention will be paid to the learning area in regard to its prospects and the challenges that will be experienced by both the educators and the learners since it is a new learning area in the school curriculum. An attempt will be made to give a postmodernist view of Religion Studies as it avoids an essentialist approach to religion studies and takes into account the significance of each religious community in the context of diversity. (Bruce 1996:5)

In my research, I will conduct a case study of six Secondary Schools in the North Durban Region of KwaZulu-Natal taking into account the demographics, type of school such as public/state school with multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-

cultural background. The region of focus does not have private schools and hence this research excludes them and this research therefore acknowledges the limitations of the findings and their broader theoretical import in areas more further a-field. The subjects of this research would be the management of the school, the educators and learners. Another important methodological element (and limitation) of this study is the exclusion of parents from the case study. This is due to limitations of time, financial and other resources at my disposal. I therefore submit that the broader theoretical conclusions in this study need to be made in light of these limitations.

My case study information will be obtained through interviews and questionnaires. I shall follow a qualitative method of approach to study within the case study paradigm of the six schools and for this purpose I will conduct personal interviews to understand the issues from a qualitative perspective. Wilkinson (2004:78) indicates that interviews are one of the most significant ways of collecting data for qualitative research. In regular research, qualitative data 'include observations, interviews and life history accounts. They enable the voices of those being researched, to be heard.' (Wilkinson 2004:79) Struwig and Stead (2001:12 - 16) give a more comprehensive overview of qualitative research.

In the interview method I would interview the Principals of the selected schools. Questions relating to the implementation of Religion Studies in the school curriculum will be asked. The responses will either be tape recorded or recorded in an interview answer sheet. The data collected through these interviews would be analysed and tabled. In the interview method there would be a direct verbal interaction between me (interviewer) and the interviewee (the subject). In this interview an oral, in-person administration of a standard set of questions will be prepared in advance. This would be either structured or semi-structured. The questionnaires would on the other hand encompass a variety of instruments in which the subject will respond to written questions to elicit reaction, beliefs and

attitudes. I will construct a set of appropriate questions in line with my research topic and ask the subjects to answer them.

Having completed the data collection, the data would then be analysed, interpreted and a report of the findings drawn up.

The answering of questionnaires would be done by the educators and learners. The data collected would be studied, analysed and presented as findings of the research. Once the data has been captured it would be interpreted and structured within the theoretical field.

In the gathering of data through in-depth interviews, I would treat the data in the following ways:

- I would record the actual statements made by the interviewees – record the statement as verbatim and then provide a rephrasing of the same in good English; and
- My interpretation of what is said and how I would interpret the data would form part of my argument.

Once the data has been analyzed, the findings would be presented in a report form. Additionally, the purpose of using the questionnaires is to formulate a comparative pattern in the form of a table. This will also serve for statistical purposes. Through questionnaires, the responses are entered in the subject's own hand writing and in his or her own words. This also enables the researcher to quote the actual statement made by the subject/s through the questionnaire.

Once the questionnaire has been tabulated it would be compared and a general consensus of the subject/s would be ascertained. At the same time the areas of

concern would be identified. Furthermore, the purpose of my case study is also to develop a concept or model, as they are appropriate for more detailed theoretical discussion.

## ***1.12 CONCLUSION***

We have come to realize that South Africa has experienced a rebirth, whereby it left the old dispensation behind and embarked on a road leading into a new dispensation. With the advent of this new political dispensation, many changes in the education system have taken place whereby education has been transformed to serve the people. In this chapter I have outlined the aims and objectives and methods of this research project. A brief description of the title together with the aims of the thesis were given. I have also attempted to give an account of the background and outline of the research problem whilst also looking at some of the possible challenges and limitations that could be experienced in this research. A literature review that mostly focused on some of the developments prior to the advent of the establishing of Religion Education and the subject of Religion studies in 2003 was given to provide further insight into the background to the research. I have also looked at some of the broader issues to be investigated and how this research is to be conducted.

In Chapter Two I plan to give some attention to providing a definition of “Religion Studies” and identify some of the aims and objectives to its implementation. I also intend to shed some light on why Religion Studies is to be introduced into the school curriculum. A few brief perspectives on the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy, from the Ministry of Education* (2001) will also be given.

# CHAPTER 2

## DEFINING RELIGION STUDIES

### *2.1 INTRODUCTION*

Generally religion is considered to be a sacred engagement with that which is believed to be a spiritual reality as spirituality is closely related to religion. Religion is considered to be a worldwide phenomenon that has played a part in all human culture and so is a much wider, more complex category than the set of beliefs found in any single religious tradition.

The word “Religion” is derived from the Latin word ‘*religare*’ (*re: back, and ligare: to Bind*). Hence, the concept is associated with “being bound” and may indicate social bonds including relations with the sacred. It is a very complex phenomenon and its activities cannot be reduced to any specific aspect of human experience. However one considers religion, it is part of life, involves different kinds of group of dynamics and foster relationships and systems according to collective values. As such, religion includes patterns of behaviour, language and thought which are socially shared and impact on the production of often highly organized institutions that set themselves apart from other cultural institutions while still being part of that same culture.

The psychologist William James (1961: 42) understands religion in very individualistic way. He says religion can be defined as “the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend

themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine”. “Religion” can in this way refer to the beliefs and practices that put humanity in relation to the transcendent, the sacred, the spiritual, or the ultimate dimensions of human life. As such, it embraces the many religious traditions of the world.

“Religion” can also be regarded as a natural part of life and as an extension of ordinary life, art and science. It is a universal phenomenon that is found in all cultures. In this perspective, it also means that every individual has a religious capacity from the time of birth and that it accompanies human beings till death. Religion does not belong to any one particular group but in many different ways belong to all humanity.

Much academic discussion took place in the last several decades to define religion as a scholarly idea. Scholars are divided whether religion is available through objective and empirical methods or whether it is accessible only through faith and belief and hence their emphasis on participation in religion. In a recent article, Robert Ensign (2002) argued that Religious Studies as a discipline reduced religion to empirical scientific principles (what he calls the *Wissenschaft* approach) and ignored the value of what he calls the Religious Interpretation approach that takes into account religious faith and revelation. In South African context, the study of religion is being dominated by the insider’s approach or theological approach. This is similar to Ensign’s point, and may be worth bearing in mind. Within the context of Religion Studies in Schools, the learners, parents and the school governing bodies may be worried about their respective religious beliefs and practices being affected by learning about other religions. Therefore, it might be prudent to balance the teaching of Religion in schools with sensitivity toward the practitioner’s faith concerns.

In this regard, the MEd-study of J. Jarvis (2008) is an important study, providing information on schools and teachers’ perceptions of Religion in Education.



According to Wilson (1971: 1), the term “education” “involves initiating people into various forms of thought and activity in such a way that they are helped to become better informed, more understanding and more reasonable”.

“Religious Education” is described as “nurturing a religious consciousness which is generally done by religious organizations such as the church, the temple, the mosque,” etc. This differs from the educational approach which is common to “Religion Education” and “Religion Studies”. Educators in institutions or schools teach these disciplines in ways through which they provide knowledge about different religions to learners.

In this research the term “Religion Studies” refers to the full matric school subject which is offered in Grades 10 – 12. It has been designed to serve specific educational aims and objectives within the religion learning area. It facilitates teaching and learning about world religions. The subject of Religion Studies, as it is offered in public schools, is different from Religious Instruction or Religious Education as will be further defined in Chapter Four. These latter disciplines or subjects refer to courses designed to promote a particular or single faith, and are aimed at inculcating the values and beliefs of that specific religion.

## ***2.2 DIFFICULTIES IN UNDERSTANDING RELIGION***

The multiplicity of religions, cults, sects and religious movements make it difficult to understand the concept of religion. One needs to reflect on the geographic, social, racial, and linguistic diversity of the world if one wishes to understand the multiplicity of religious phenomena. As one studies this complex phenomenon, Religion Studies will afford the learners the opportunity to appreciate the differences as well as the similarities between the world religions

but also between the great variety of religious phenomena. (see Kellenberger 1993:88-89) Similarities and differences give one a better understanding of the different religions that exist in our society. For instance, if one studies Buddhism, one will notice that Theravada Buddhism for example may not fit one's understandings of "religion". Even so, and because it shares other similarities with the religions, Theravada Buddhism is included in any book on the world's religions, even though it is not theistic. It recognizes no sacred beings and does not encourage Buddha worship. It is rather a way of life that fosters techniques for self-purification and self-fulfilment.

When we detach religion from its cultural matrix and view it as a set of symbols, myths, rituals, or beliefs, we make an abstract comparison. In this way we tend to reduce religion to a set of meanings, principles or truths. In South Africa, we recognize that there is a good deal of religious diversity. However, a certain Christian cultural hegemony continues to prevail as many continue to think of South Africa as a predominantly Christian country. However, to think of Christian tradition as culturally homogenous will be misleading. Many African churches may be Christian in faith but culturally different from the European churches. Coupled with this scenario, the many other religions bring with them a great deal of cultural diversity. Therefore, Religion Studies within the context of schools must deal with cultural diversity. It is important to the new democratic South African context that religious pluralism underscores this cultural diversity and not just religious diversity. Underlining the dangers of the "assimilation" model in the context of religious pluralism, David MacHacek for instance, argues, that "the rejection of the ideology of assimilation and communitarian consensus and the acceptance of a culture of pluralism - is what is really new about the new religious pluralism." (MacHacek 2003: 158)

## ***2.3 WHY STUDY RELIGION?***

Generally people consider what is sacred to the community as important to them. The idea of sacredness is a value that given societies place on objects and spaces, and use to generate or elicit certain religious feelings among its members. Religiousness is therefore a function of social belonging. Studying religion is therefore no easy task as it is very difficult to actually define the concept “Religion” as explained above. The study of religion implies more than just “knowledge”, since religion has affective (feelings and attitudes) as well as cognitive dimensions (knowledge). This provides benefits to both individuals and society. In order to have a sound understanding of one’s own culture and history, the study of religion in all its dimensions is essential. Without some form of knowledge of religion and religious teachings in history, it would be difficult to understand art, law, ethics, literature, and other such matters. Religion Studies provides insight and understanding to these perspectives. (see Holley 1978:7-12)

By studying morals, values and religious attitudes, Religion Studies also contributes to the teaching and understanding of high moral values as these developed throughout history. Whilst the teachings of different religions differ in many respects, the central focus of values is to relate the individual to the society at large, hence, contributing to the development of personal ethics. The nature of the subject matter challenges one to construct an acceptable standard of morality, irrespective of whether it is based on theistic, atheistic, agonistic or secular-humanistic standpoints. Religions are expected to bring about character building and personal growth.

The study of religion also helps to bring about a sense of appreciation, an attitude of respect for and tolerance of people of different faiths. Thus it is easier to accept people of a particular religion as people no different from any others. By

sensitising learners about the diversity in the religions, one inculcates such values of respect and tolerance.

It is a known fact that the human mind is very complex and one cannot help but notice the seriousness of the ideologies and beliefs of human beings. Human beings have gone to great extents to defend their religions. If one looks at the conflict between the Sikhs and Hindus in India, the conflict between Iraq and Iran or the conflict between the Indians and Pakistanis, these are all because of their trends of thoughts and traditions and systems of meanings through which they create their own universes of understanding and through which they provide for their common ways of life. If we fail to recognize the religious convictions that direct the lives of people, the hope to resolve the problems seems very bleak. It will help to reconcile people to the fact of their existence here and now if they come to a better and clearer understanding of their own meaning and symbol systems. Religion Studies meet this objective in addition to the study of the realms of transcendence, mystery, or ultimate perfection and unity. (see Holley 1978:134-156)

## ***2.4 FURTHER REASONS FOR RELIGION STUDIES IN SCHOOLS***

Society today seems to be gradually deteriorating especially when we look at the escalating crime rate, the high rate of teenage pregnancies, hijacking and kidnapping not forgetting the incurable infectious diseases and illnesses. It is argued by many conservatives that these ills of society could be cured or prevented by returning to the type of traditional, authority-based moral religious education. Learners need to acquire knowledge about the understanding and appreciation of religion through study of their writings, people, forms and places of worship, festivals and celebrations and rites and rules. The acquisition of such

knowledge is often seen as a mode of appreciation and means of promoting understanding and tolerance in a multi-cultural and multi-faith society. In this context, however, Religion Studies can facilitate processes through which learners also learn values, rituals and practices from religions other than their own. This may enrich their lives and experiences.

Religion Studies also requires that learners should be enabled to reflect on and respond to human experience. Learners should also develop an understanding of their relationship with others in the personal, social spheres. It therefore does not only teach about diversity but also about the unity of the human experience, and this again may lead to an understanding of “unity in diversity” – our country’s motto. This will meet the objective set out in the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy, from the Ministry of Education*, where it says:

“Religion Studies” in schools can contribute to the values of diversity, tolerance, respect, justice, compassion and commitment in young South Africans. Schools have reason to provide learners with knowledge about the diversity of Religion .... And the morality and values that underpin them. Furthermore, it can teach students about a world of religious diversity, and at the same time, encourage them to think in terms of a new national unity in South Africa. (Manifesto 2001: 44)

## ***2.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF RELIGION STUDIES***

Following Cole (1988:89), Religious Education - which was a subject for matric levels in Britain - can be described generally as having the following aims:

2.5.1 To provide a more accurate knowledge about different religions to learners;

- 2.5.2 Through such knowledge, to remove misunderstandings about different Religions;
- 2.5.3 To understand the world-view and motivating power of the religious traditions most influential in the historical and cultural development of their country of residence;
- 2.5.4 To develop a national democratic culture with respect for the values of the people's diverse cultural, religious and linguistic traditions;
- 2.5.5 To contribute to interfaith tolerance and understanding and appreciation of their own faith; (see also Erricker 1993:12-13)
- 2.5.6 To underscore the values and morals rooted in the various traditions for the purpose of nation building and in the restructuring of a civil society;
- 2.5.7 To promote respect and be sensitivity to the different religious faiths;
- 2.5.8 To prevent indoctrination of learners to any specific faith;
- 2.5.9 To promote the spiritual outlook among learners;
- 2.5.10 To instil moral values and self-confidence in the learners; (see also Erricker 1993:39-40)
- 2.5.11 To encourage learners to reflect critically and appreciatively on the religious traditions most significant in their own upbringing; and
- 2.5.12 To empathize with the way people who hold different beliefs from themselves see the world and are motivated by their beliefs.

## **2.6 THE MANIFESTO**

The *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy, from the Ministry of Education* (February 2001) with information on the approach to and principles of teaching Religion Education and Religion Studies and facilitating assemblies, reads like a suggested policy on Religion Studies:

- 2.6.1 “Religion Education” - and consciousness about the role and effect of religion - will be integrated into the General Education and Training Band, specifically in Life Orientation and Social Studies.
- 2.6.2 “Religion Studies” will be introduced in the further education and training band for matriculation purposes as an optional, specialized and examinable subject.
- 2.6.3 “Religion Education” [and Religion Studies] should be motivated by educational outcomes and taught by trained professional educators rather than by professional clergy.
- 2.6.4 Because “Religion Education” [and Religion Studies] should be taught according to educational rather than religious outcomes, educators – particularly those in Life Orientation and Social Studies – will require significant retraining.
- 2.6.5 According to the Constitution, schools may be made available for religious observance so long as it is outside of school hours, association is free and voluntary rather than mandatory, and the facilities are made available on an equitable basis to all who apply.

- 2.6.6 School governing bodies need to be familiarized with these conditions.
- 2.6.7 Weekly assemblies are a long-standing tradition of many of our schools, and play an important role in bonding and unifying the school community. Nevertheless they should not be compulsory and should, under no circumstance, be used as occasions for religious observance.
- 2.6.8 Like the rest of the school's learning programmes, the assembly should be an occasion for affirming and celebrating unity in diversity.
- 2.6.9 Accordingly if religious materials are used in assembly, they should be presented in the framework outlined for "Religion Education" [and Religion Studies] as an educational exercise rather than as a religious ceremony. School governing bodies need to be empowered with ways of transforming assemblies from being occasions for imposing religious uniformity to being forums where diversity is celebrated, along with the values of our constitution. (Manifesto 2001: 33)

## ***2.7 SECULARISATION***

Having pointed to the importance of religion in society above, it is important to note that teaching of religion in schools should uphold a certain secular approach to religion, in that the secularism is not seen as opposition to religion but rather an inclusive approach to religion. (Bruce 1996:37) Secularists consciously promote an alternative worldview that is in opposition to the religious worldview which purports to be neutral with respect to the claims of the various religions. In a democratic society people support the stance of Political Liberalism since it defends the individual's right of dissent. (Stewart 1990:256-257) It treats religious activity as peripheral to public life. Secularists believe that science has superseded



religion and religious worldviews. Public schools and institutions of learning need to be “secular” if they want to contribute to the cohesion and evolution of a truly democratic society. In regard to sectional interests in areas such as religion, morality, ethnicity and politics, it has to be “secular” and inclusive in nature.

According to Brian V. Hill (2004: 166), the term “secular” has been widely adopted to describe “how modern democracy must operate in the sphere of values.” This implies that public institutions must stand aloof from the sectarian value-systems of the various interest groups and sub-cultures which together make up the populations of modern democracies and must maintain public institutions for the good of all. It must also be noted that no favours would be given to any particular group at the expense of others and the state must be a neutral role player in this regard bearing in mind sectarian disputes that may arise from other societies.

Hill (2004: 234) defines “secular” “as a term applied to activities or instructions in the public domain which do not give arbitrary preference to any particular religious or political group but operate in the interest of the whole society.” He also describes “secularism”, as “a contested term used to describe the process whereby societies formerly ruled in the interests of a particular religious establishment or worldview are progressing towards the maximization of a middle ground in which commercial and co-operative activities proceed on the basis of practical democratic agreements which do not obviously require the endorsement of any particular view.” (Hill 2004: 234)

According to Kumar (2006: 280), modern urbanization had brought about two important phenomena. Firstly, there is more than one religion practiced by people within the same neighbourhood, and secondly, the emergence of the modern phenomena called “secularism”. There seems to be a strong move by some Christian organizations to declare particular schools being of a Christian ethos. If

this is so then a precedent is being set and will be done likewise by other religious denominations such as Muslims and Hindus. This must be avoided by the state at all costs. South Africa has a multi-cultural and multi-religious society and as such must be secular in its implementation of Religion Studies.

In the context of Indian society, the Kothari Commission (Carman 1967:5) takes up the question of the implications of a secularist policy by the State towards religion and religious education. Carman states that:

The adoption of a secularist policy means that in political, economic, and social matters, all citizens, irrespective of their religious faith, will enjoy equality of rights, that no religious community will be favoured or discriminated against, and that instruction in religious dogmas will not be provided in the State schools.... It gives to every citizen the fullest freedom of religious beliefs and worship. It is anxious to ensure good relations amongst different religious groups and to promote not only religious tolerance but also an active reverence for all religions.

In this report there is clear distinction between “religious education” and “religion education” and the Kothari Commission hopes to see something to this nature as the value of Religion Studies for the inculcation of moral and spiritual values, as essential for the wellbeing of the nation. This will also allow and enable a diverse society to dispel their prejudices and cause people to live together amicably.

## ***2.8 A CRITIQUE OF SECULARISM IN A DEMOCRACY***

Having outlined the place of religion in a secular society, it is also important to caution against some of the extreme consequences of a skewed application of

secular views. In a democratic society such as South Africa, a secularist paradigm, although amicable to a democracy, should not be enforced. Secularism, basically implies indifference to religion, and in order to build bridges, people cannot remain unaware of their society's other members. Encouraging a secular outlook need not mean encouraging people to not concern themselves with developing an understanding of their fellow human beings. It is still, by the strictest definition, a form of segregation into those who are religious and to those who choose not to be religious. While the latter may be a democratic right it is not a universal value since to live in the world means to interact with all its communities across racial, cultural, religious and traditional divides. A secular government would elect to exclude religion as an integral part of its educative process and this would not help to break the cycle of stereotyping and opinionated prejudices of one community towards another.

Arguably, an indifferent approach by a government is the "less risky" option since involvement of any kind in public religious affairs could be seen as prejudicial. Even so, a government that truly concerns itself with the necessary process of creating global citizens who can easily adapt themselves to living in any social context will opt for a co-operative model. The Government is then in the position to facilitate the growth of tolerance through education whilst simultaneously setting the stage for the coming together of various religious communities. It can act as a mediator and begin the process of reform through structured integration.

## ***2.9 CONCLUSION***

In my opinion, Religion Studies will endeavour to present a reasonable expression of the lifestyles, beliefs, faiths and mindsets of the people living and growing up in the various social groups in a country. Religion is the fabric of which human

beings as individuals and communities weave the web of their social existence and through which human beings define their sense of belonging within the cultural environment. In the above discussion, I have tried to show the social significance of religion and why Religion Studies should be offered as a subject in schools.

In this chapter, using resources from as many scholars as possible, I have tried to identify some of the difficulties in offering a clear definition of the term “Religion”. I have further looked at some of the aims and objectives of Religion Studies and the positive impacts the implementation of Religion Studies would have on learners. I have also highlighted the need and reasons for the study of Religion Studies and the problems associated with the idea of secularism as a modern phenomenon. I have also pointed to the manifesto’s perspectives on Religion Education and Religion Studies, where it gives information on the approach to and principles of teaching Religion Studies within a school environment. A brief insight to the process of secularization in society and in state schools becoming secularist is also given.

In Chapter three I will give an empirical illustration of the case study of Religion Studies which I have conducted in secondary schools in the North Durban Region (including Phoenix and Verulam), and to determine whether its implementation was well received by educational institutions and if not, why. Cognizance would be taken of the underlying principles upon which Religion Studies was founded and reasons for the many challenges and barriers retarding its progress. Statistical analysis would be presented together with the status of the research sites. Some of the issues of concern that would serve as interest would be the qualifications of educators, the availability of resource materials, the challenges that educators and the schools would be facing and some of the barriers that would create retardation of its implementation. By the end of this process, I hope to have provided a much

clearer understanding as to how Religion Studies is to be implemented so that its progress could be accelerated.

# **CHAPTER 3**

## **AN EMPIRICAL CASE STUDY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGION STUDIES IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

### **ANALYSIS OF THE DATA AND RESPONSES FROM QUESTIONNAIRES**

#### ***3.1 INTRODUCTION***

The purpose of this case study is to determine whether Religion Studies is being implemented in schools or not. The data was obtained with the co-operation of the selected school communities of the North Durban region after conducting interviews with school principals, whilst educators and learners were asked to complete questionnaires to ascertain its status. Only public schools are available in this area and no private schools exist and therefore are not included in this case study. The title of my research project is “*Prospects and Challenges in the Implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum: A Case Study of North Durban Region in Kwa Zulu-Natal*”. Principals, educators and learners

were requested, through qualitative guided questionnaires, to reflect on the prospects, challenges, barriers and issues pertaining to the implementation of Religion Studies in the school curriculum. The variables of gender were excluded from this research as this would not have made any difference to this research as many of the respondents were predominantly females. It is hoped that the findings of this empirical study will serve as a yardstick in identifying some of the challenges and barriers that are being or will be experienced by the various role players in the implementation of this subject. Additionally, the research is intended to assist the schools and the Education Department to come to a better understanding of the issues involved at the level of the implementation of the Religion Studies policy. The results of the research will be workshopped in public forums that include both the academic and the lay community, and will be made available for public and other relevant institutions.

### ***3.2 RESEARCH SITES***

Three areas, namely North Durban Region, Phoenix and Verulam, were targeted as my research sites. Education institutions in these areas are characterised by religious diversity, and situated in communities which are multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-traditional. The schools also cater for people coming from different economic environments and represent at least two language groupings, i.e. people speaking English and isiZulu. As mentioned above, only public schools were available in this region and therefore private schools are not part of this case study. There was careful and thorough planning of the questionnaire and consultation with stakeholders, so as to encourage principals, educators and learners to participate in this research project. The principals, educators and learners were also informed of the significance of the nature and purpose of this case study in its implementation in the school curriculum in the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase. The information supplied in the questionnaires by

interviewees were treated as strictly confidential and purely for statistical purposes. However, it must be acknowledged that notwithstanding the planning and prior distribution of information to relevant stakeholders, only a third of the questionnaires were returned and hence I wish to caution that this limits the results with regard to the broader application and generalisation of the findings.

All the schools where the research was conducted were co-educational state schools. A total of 6 principals, 75 educators and 35 learners participated in this process. My general perception of the research is that the majority of educators and learners had given a positive feedback regarding the inclusion of Religion Studies in the school curriculum.

The following schools per region, were used as my research sites.

- Verulam Region: Research was conducted in four schools in this region:
  - School A: This school has a staff of 8 management members, 45 educators employed by the state with a learnership of 1 200. This school has already introduced Religion Studies in its curriculum.
  - School B: This school has a management of 7 with 31 educators employed by the state and 3 educators employed by the School Governing Body and had a learnership of 986.
  - School C: This school has totally black learnership of 450 with a mixed staff comprising of 5 management members and 15 educators employed by the state. The learners of this school hail from the low-socio economic sector of Verulam.



- Phoenix Region: School D. This school is situated in the suburb of Phoenix with a predominantly low to an average socio-economic population. The school has a staff of 7 management members, 45 educators employed by the state, 5 educators employed by the School Governing Body and a learnership of 1 560.
- North Durban Region: School E. This school is a state school in a high socio-economic area with 7 members in management, 36 educators employed by the state, 32 educators employed by the School Governing Body and 1050 learners.
- Verulam Region: School F: This school is situated in an average socio-economic area. It has a management of 8 with 30 educators employed by the state and 4 educators employed by the School Governing Body with a learnership of 1100.

### **3.3 STATUS OF SCHOOL**

The following table illustrates the composition and status and statistics of the respective research sites:

**Figure 1: Schools and Statistics by Region**

SCHOOL	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F	Total
STATUS	State	State	State	State	State	State	
TYPE	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	
DIVERSITY	Mr/mr/mc	Mr/mc/mr	Mc	Mr/mc/mr	Mr/mc/mr	Mr/mc/mr	
LEARNERS	1 200	986	450	1 560	1 050	1 100	<b>6 346</b>
EDUCATORS	45	31	15	45	36	30	<b>202</b>
MANAGEMENT	8	7	5	7	7	8	<b>42</b>
SGB ED.	0	3	0	5	32	4	<b>44</b>

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1 253</b>	<b>1 027</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>1 617</b>	<b>1 125</b>	<b>1 142</b>	<b>6 634</b>
--------------	--------------	--------------	------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------

Mr=Multi-racial; mc=multi-cultural; mr = multi-religious

### ***3.4 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE RESEARCH***

In my attempts in conducting this research many barriers were encountered.

- It was difficult to conduct my research in the schools as I needed the permission of the Superintendent General of the Department of Education of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal. I had to wait for approximately six months before permission was granted;
- While some principals were very co-operative and willing to assist me in the conducting of the case study others were not;
- It was disappointing to note that the only school, to my knowledge, in the Province of Kwa Zulu-Natal that had implemented Religion Studies in its curriculum was very uncooperative in assisting me in my research;
- By the time I was in a position to begin my research data collection, the learners and educators were engaged in the Final Examinations process and this inhibited to a certain extent the undertaking of the research;
- Educators were unable to differentiate between “Religion Studies” and “Religious Education” assuming that both are one and the same;
- In so far as “Religion Studies” was concerned, most schools that were included in this research were neither informed about this new subject nor was there any Policy Document issued to schools in this regard. Hence, the management and educators were uninformed in this aspect;

- Educators had in the past enrolled for courses in “Religious Studies”, “Science of Religion”, “Biblical Studies”, etc. and this was being misconstrued as being the same as Religion Studies. Hence, some educators were uncritical of the opinion that they were qualified to teach the subject; and
- Aspects on religion taught during the Life Orientation lessons were misrepresented as “Religion Studies”.

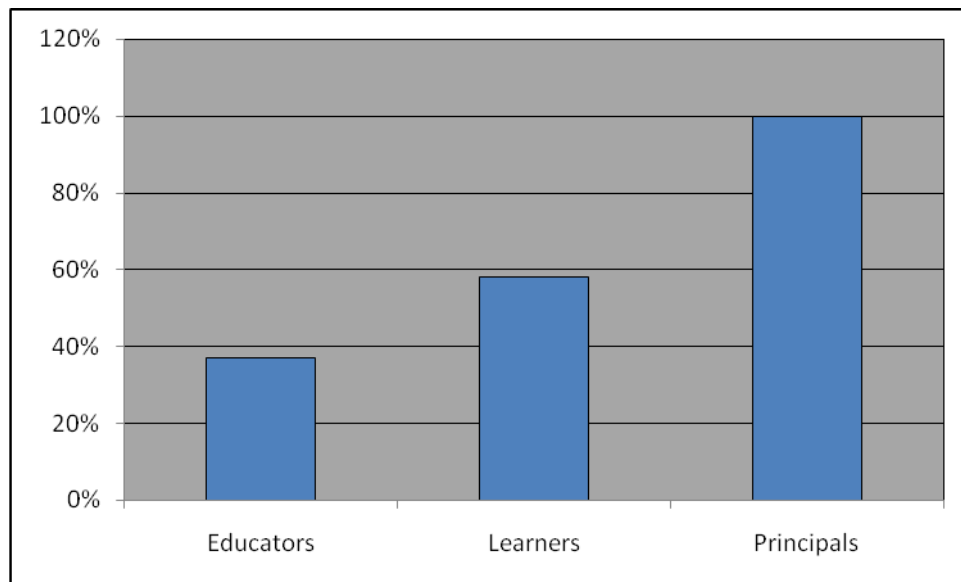
### 3.5 QUESTIONNAIRES ISSUED

Figure 1 above reflects the statistical analysis of the schools that were used as the research sites. Of the questionnaires issued to schools, 75 educators, 35 learners and 6 principals have responded by completing and returning the questionnaires. Of the total of 286 questionnaires, 116 were received (close to 24% - see figure 2 below). Figure 3 below gives a graphical representation of the percentage of total number of questionnaires received.

**Figure 2 – Distribution of Questionnaires**

School	Educators		Learners		Principals		Total	
	Issued	Received	Issued	Received	Issued	Received	Issued	Received
School A	45	8	0	0	1	1	46	9
School B	31	12	30	18	1	1	62	31
School C	15	11	30	17	1	1	46	29
School D	45	19	0	0	1	1	46	20
School E	36	10	0	0	1	1	37	11
School F	30	15	0	0	1	1	31	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	202	75	60	35	6	6	268	116

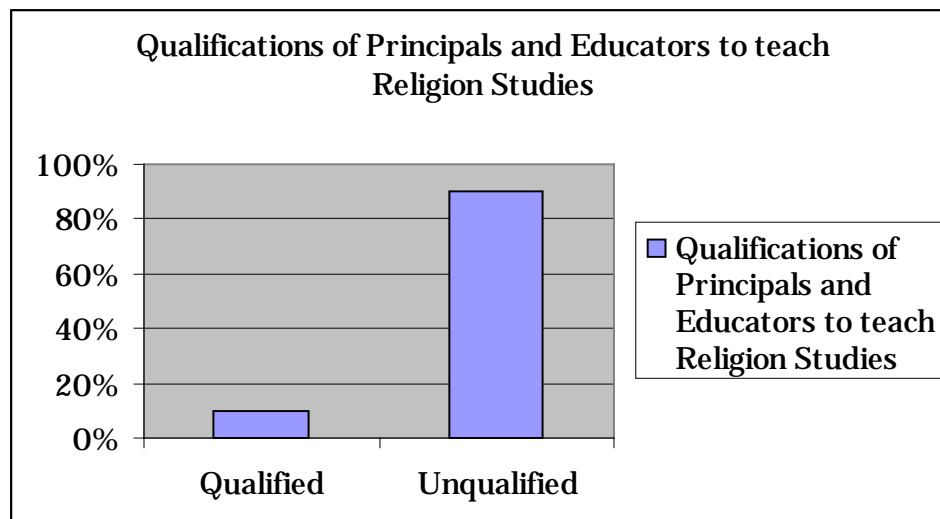
**Figure 3 – Percentage of questionnaires received**



### ***3.6 QUALIFICATIONS IN TEACHING RELIGION STUDIES***

Most of the educators, including the principals i.e. (90%), had indicated that they are not qualified to teach Religion Studies while 10%, had indicated that they are qualified to teach this subject as they had some qualifications in Religious Studies, Biblical Studies or Science of Religion or Religious Instruction.

**Figure 4 – Qualifications of Principals and Educators to Teach Religion Studies**



### ***3.7 RELIGION STUDIES AS PART OF THE CURRICULUM***

“Perhaps the greatest wrong we have done to our children is not the fractured families or the scarcity of jobs, but the creation of a culture that gives them nothing beyond themselves to believe in. It is a culture whose main effects are to encourage demoralization, cynicism, and self-centredness. It is imperative to create a culture (through parenting, education and the media) that gives people, especially the young, faith in themselves, hope for the future, and meaning and purpose to their lives.”  
(Hill 2004: 44)

The above comment, fits the current situation in our schools. It challenges educators to review priorities in the school curriculum notwithstanding the fact that our present curriculum is continuously under revision and there is much talk of its desired outcomes.

Whilst we note that some educators had indicated that Religion Studies was being taught in the schools, this was not actually so. What was actually being taught were general aspects on religious activities and culture during the Life Orientation lesson.

### ***3.8 CURRENT SITUATION IN THE SCHOOLS REGARDING THE TEACHING OF RELIGION STUDIES***

Of all the schools surveyed, only one school had offered Religion Studies as an examination subject. It was found that only 10% of the educators were qualified

or given training through workshops to teach Religion Studies as stipulated in the Policy Document on Religion Studies. Although in principle the state has initiated the process to introduce Religion Education and or Religion Studies in all the state schools in 2006, however, neither orientation courses nor workshops were conducted by the relevant education departments to empower educators to implement Religion Studies as a subject in the Further Education and Training Phase (FET). It is found that the schools surveyed did not have any exposure to workshops on Religion Studies. In the absence of such workshops bringing an understanding about Religion Studies, it was found that educators conflated their view of Religion Studies with Biblical Studies, Religious Instruction, Religious Education or Science of Religion.

### ***3.9 TRAINING OF RELIGION STUDIES EDUCATORS***

There were clear indications that there is an urgent need for the training of human resources for the effective implementation of Religion Studies in the school curriculum. Observing from the statistics obtained through the research, only 8 Educators (10 %) had indicated that they have been trained to teach Religion Studies while none of the 6 principals (100%) and 67 educators (90%) had indicated that they had received any formal training or orientation courses or workshops for teaching Religion Studies in schools. This scenario calls for some serious action from the state to actually initiate such training programmes as would be necessary for the implementation of Religion Studies.

It is imperative that educators who are currently teaching Religion Studies be offered regular courses to reskill them with the necessary knowledge for a successful facilitation of the subject. Roux (1998: 125), mentions that “knowledge of other religions and value systems will encounter negative perceptions and will also help educators to understand areas and the negative perceptions of students,

colleagues and parents”. As the case study has revealed that their earlier training included only the religion of their personal faith, it is imperative that these teachers are exposed through sustained training to the major religions practiced in South Africa. There is also the need for educators to be well trained without being biased when teaching Religion Studies as there are strong possibilities of educators having a leaning towards a particular faith. This issue of bias was difficult to assess as most teachers were unwilling to disclose their personal interactions in the class room when they introduce learners to different religions. My sense is that a sustained supervision of the actual delivery of the lessons in the schools is necessary. It is not enough to provide the educators with the curriculum. They should be also given opportunities to develop critical thinking and skills and sensitivity in the methods of teaching religion. Adding significance to the teaching of Religion Studies, there is a need to use new, creative didactic approaches, hence the models and approaches that are to be used must be carefully looked at before implementation. This could be done through pilot studies using designated schools and institutions as control and experimental centres. It is indeed necessary that well researched methods and approaches, in-service training, workshops and orientation programmes be conducted for prospective Religion Studies educators to ensure its success. At the moment in all the schools surveyed no pilot study was conducted to introduce Religion Studies.

My research confirms that we need to take cognizance of some of the recommendations made by Roux (2004: 20) through her research which could be used for the in-service training or orientation programmes for educators:

- Educators need to know the differences between the kind of religious education that is monoreligious and confessional and the kind that is inclusive of all religious orientations, that is formative and educational;

- It is necessary to provide both teachers and learners with tools to enable them to move confidently beyond their individual, sometimes exclusive positions (religious or secular) towards an understanding of religions or beliefs other than their own; and
- Training in facilitation skills to enable teachers to deal with conflicting worldviews and value orientations and to design learner-centred activities is essential.

It is indeed important to take note of the above recommendations since educators will be faced with an audience of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds, as I became aware in all the schools that I surveyed.

### ***3.10 AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES***

My research has shown that in so far as resources were concerned, resource materials on specific religions only were available. Resource materials that had a comparative overview of religions were of a very biased nature and not well balanced thus having much leaning towards a particular religion. There is an urgent need for resource material that is well balanced and free of any bias or leanings to any particular religion and for the doctrines of the relevant religions as adopted by the respective institutions to be taught fairly and justly.

### ***3.11 THE ADVANTAGES IN IMPLEMENTING RELIGION STUDIES***

Global change is taking place at a bewildering rate and is felt at a personal as well



as communal levels. Changes in schools and institutions are taking place rapidly and the pace of change is breathless. Religious communities are of the opinion that they can keep up with reality amid the pressures of life. The validity of this could be called into question in the light of my research.

It is in this respect that justifications were advanced in giving Religion Studies the fullest recognition in the school curriculum. Whilst some of my interviewees have argued that there is no need for Religion Studies and have indicated its irrelevance in their view, a broader consensus from the interviewees has convinced me of the need to justify the implementation of Religion Studies and focus our attention on the current trends which seem to challenge its relevance.

From the analysis of the data collected the following responses were calculated from the responses by educators, learners and principals.

3.11.1 RS will stimulate the learners to reflect and to come to a deeper and more mature understanding of their own religious ideas, morals and values.

EDUCATORS			LEARNERS			PRINCIPALS		
AG	DIS	UNS	AG	DIS	UNS	AG	DIS	UNS
73	1	1	33	0	2	5	1	0
97.3	1.3	1.3	94.3	0	5.7	83	17	0

3.11.2 RS will help learners develop skills in understanding religious ideas, concepts and the meaning and importance of religious practices for those who practice it.

71	0	4	30	0	5	5	0	1
94.7	0	5.33	85.7	0	14.3	83	0	17

3.11.3 RS will have a positive impact in curbing disciplinary problems in schools

60	5	10
80	6.7	13.3

19	3	13
54.3	8.6	37.1

3	1	2
50	17	33

3.11.4 RS will help learners to reflect critically and appreciatively on religious traditions.

67	1	7
89	1.3	9.7

26	2	7
74.3	5.7	20

5	0	1
83	0	17

3.11.5 RS will help to develop the capacity to identify and evaluate religious truth claims and values.

63	4	8
84	5.3	1.7

25	3	7
71.4	8.6	20

5	0	1
83	0	17

3.11.6 RS will help Learners to empathise with the way those who hold different beliefs from themselves see the world and are motivated by it.

65	5	5
86.3	6.3	6.3

20	5	10
57.1	14.3	28.6

4	1	1
67	17	17

3.11.7 RS will help to foster the capacity to deal with people in a non-defensive and non-threatening way about ultimate beliefs and values.

63	4	8
84.2	5.1	10.7

22	5	8
64	14.3	28.7

5	0	1
83	0	17

Responses -  
units  
Responses -  
total

600

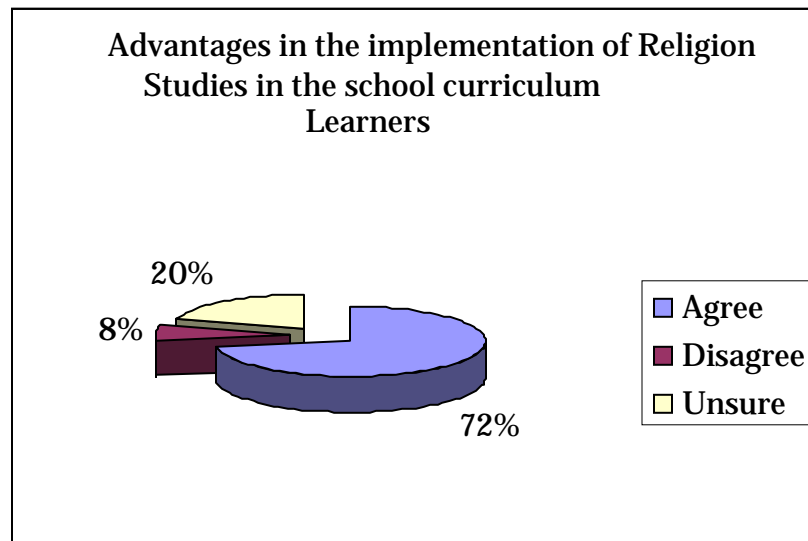
280

48

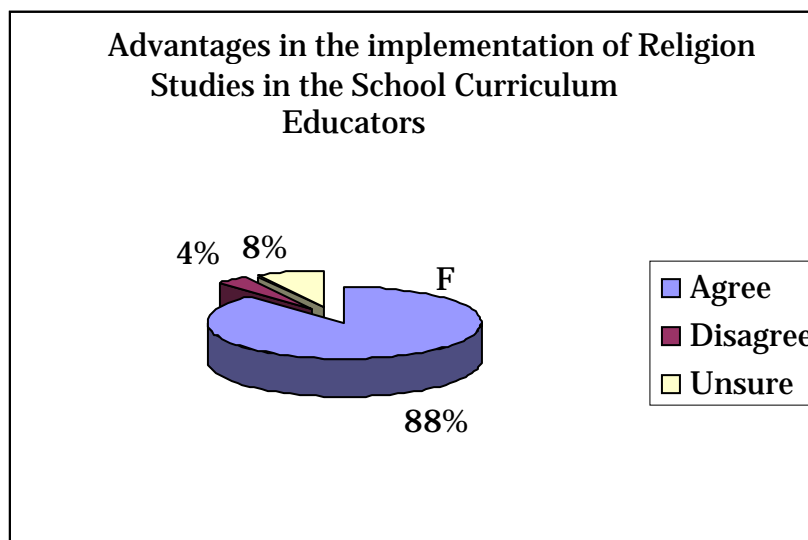
928

A significant average of 88% educators, 72% learners and 77% of principals had agreed that the above advantages of Religion Studies would bring about transformation in the learners thus bringing about a holistic development in so far as skills development, stimulation of moral values and a fostering of the appreciation of fellow human beings of whichever religious denomination they may belong to, are concerned.

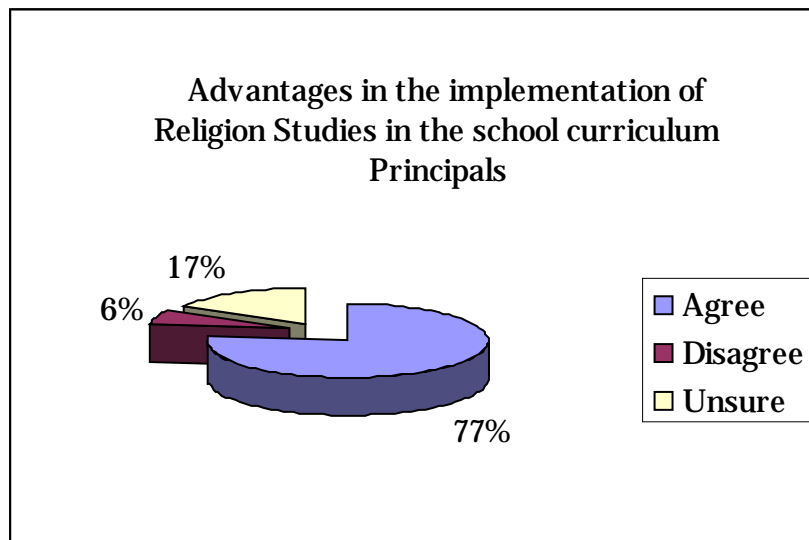
**Figure 5 – Advantages in the implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum (Learners)**



**Figure 6 - Advantages in the implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum (Educators)**



**Figure 7 – Advantages in the implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum (Principals)**



### ***3.12 CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS FOR PARENTS***

One of the biggest challenges for the implementation of Religion Studies in the school curriculum is to determine “how to live in communities characterized by a pluralism of faith traditions” (Hill 2004: 24). According to Hill (2004: 24), other countries in regions such as the Middle East, Asia, and Africa more broadly speaking are facing similar challenges. Religions seem to provide their adherents with a view of the world, and an account of reality, which assures them that they are personally significant in the scheme of things. Since believers suppose that their own tradition is based on truth, or more true than those of others, there is potential conflict in this area of social life. For most parents, if they thought that the belief of members of other faiths were just as valid as their own, this would lessen the motivational power of their own faith. According to Hill (2004: 25), “The implications for religious education are that it should be either left out of the

public curriculum altogether or, alternatively, be taught in a bland descriptive way.”

However, precautions must be taken to ensure that teaching Religion Studies within the school curriculum with a “value-neutral” or non-judgmental attitude approach is adhered to.

From the analysis of the data collected the following responses were calculated from the responses by educators, learners and principals.

3.12.1 **RS** will help parents to develop the capacity to identify and evaluate religious truth claims and values.

EDUCATORS			LEARNERS			PRINCIPALS		
AG	DIS	UNS	AG	DIS	UNS	AG	DIS	UNS
53	3	19	21	7	7	4	1	1
70.7	4	25.3	60	20	20	67	17	16

3.12.2 **RS** will allow parents to reflect critically and appreciatively on religious traditions.

50	7	18	18	8	9	4	0	2
66.7	9.3	24	51.4	22.9	25.7	67	0	33

3.12.3 **RS** helps parents to understand the world and motivating power of religious traditions.

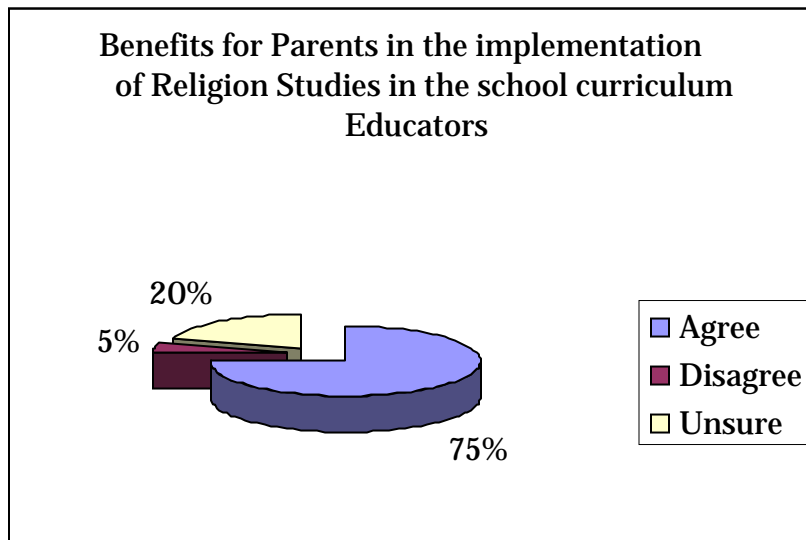
52	5	18	23	3	9	4	0	2
69.3	67	24	65	8.8	25.7	67	0	33

4.4 **RS** helps to increase the parent's understanding of some of the other religions and ideological traditions significantly represented in the Community.

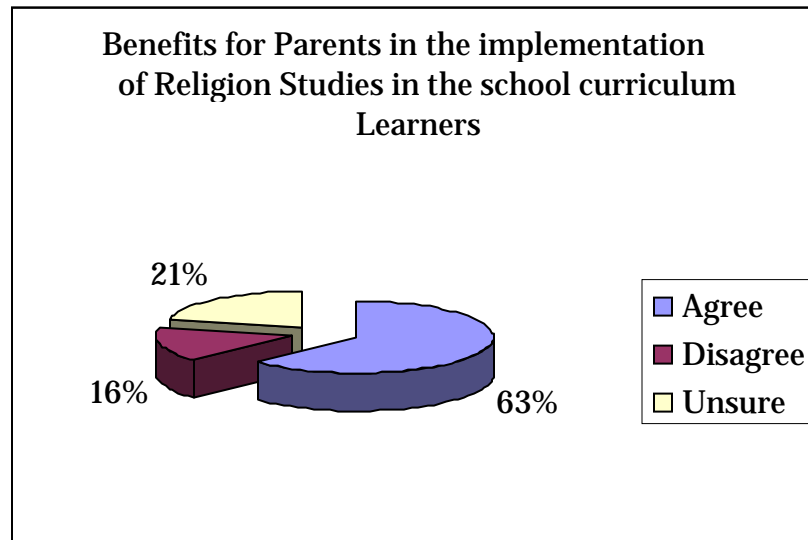
	70	0	5	26	4	5	5	0	1
	93.3	0	6.7	74.3	11.4	14.3	83	0	17
Responses - units									
Responses - total									

It was quite encouraging to note that of the surveys conducted in state schools, 75% of the educators, 63% of learners and 65% of principals had indicated the following benefits for parents in the implementation in the school curriculum.

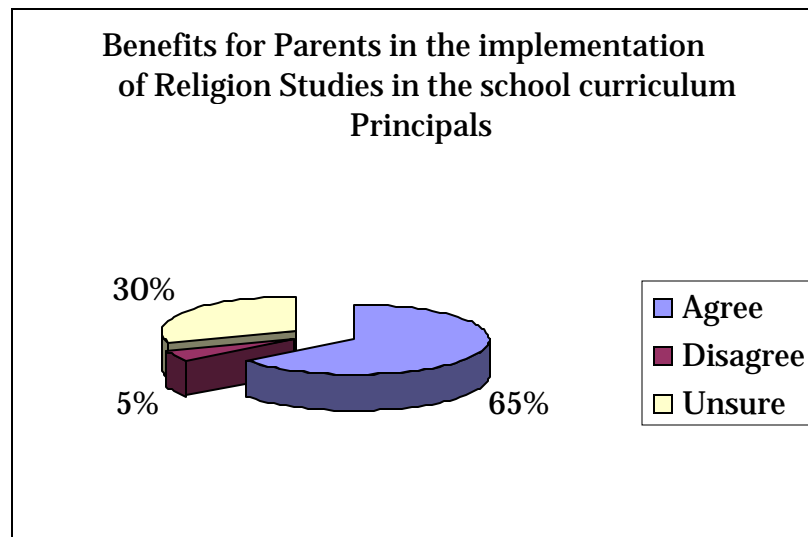
**Figure 8 – Benefits for parents in the implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum (Educators)**



**Figure 9 – Benefits for parents in the implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum (Learners)**



**Figure 10 - Benefits for Parents in the Implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum (Principals)**



Noticeably, relatively smaller percentages are registered in this category which reflects the cautious responses when it comes to the benefits of Religion Studies from the parental side. It must be admitted, as noted in the research methodology section in chapter 2, that this case study could not include parents directly as it

was beyond the scope of my research in terms of time and financial and other factors. However, with some caution one could see the reservation all three groups could have about the broader benefits from the parental perspective. Whilst this is so, there may be the possibility that parents may, with a religious bias feel threatened and thus object to its implementation fearing that it may lead the learners to adopt or embrace religions other than their own. The possibility of indoctrination by educators in trying to promote their own beliefs could also not be ruled out. Parental objection may be a major challenge as many parents would not want their children to be exposed to other religions for fear of being influenced to conversion or re-conversions someday.

Hill (2004: 25) indicates that “some go further and oppose providing Religion Education of any kind in state schools. They argue that it is likely to have a divisive effect and should not be treated as an area of knowledge and understanding on par with other school subjects”. This is a debatable issue indeed since the inclusion of Religion Studies in the school curriculum has its merits also insofar as a critical and divergent trend of thought is concerned. If one has to think purely with a parallel viewpoint of his/ her own religion only, his/ her views on other religions would be severely restricted, hence appreciation of other religions will be basically negative. In this same light, the learners would be disadvantaged in making positive critical understanding of other religions when comparing with his/her own religion.

### ***3.13 CHALLENGES CREATED FOR THE EDUCATOR AND THE AVAILABILITY AND SUITABILITY OF RESOURCE MATERIAL FOR RELIGION STUDIES***

Educators could most possibly see an emergence of controversial issues in the



classroom as a diversion. This may threaten the tenor of didactic teaching and learning and evoke some fears among the many stakeholders such as the educators, learners and principals.

From the analysis of the data collected the following responses were calculated from the responses by educators, learners and principals.

3.13.1 Resource materials for the implementation of RS must be more accessible and available in schools.

EDUCATORS			LEARNERS			PRINCIPALS		
AG	DIS	UNS	AG	DIS	UNS	AG	DIS	UNS
71	3	1	30	3	2	6	0	0
94.7	4	1.3	85.7	8.57	5.71	100	0	0

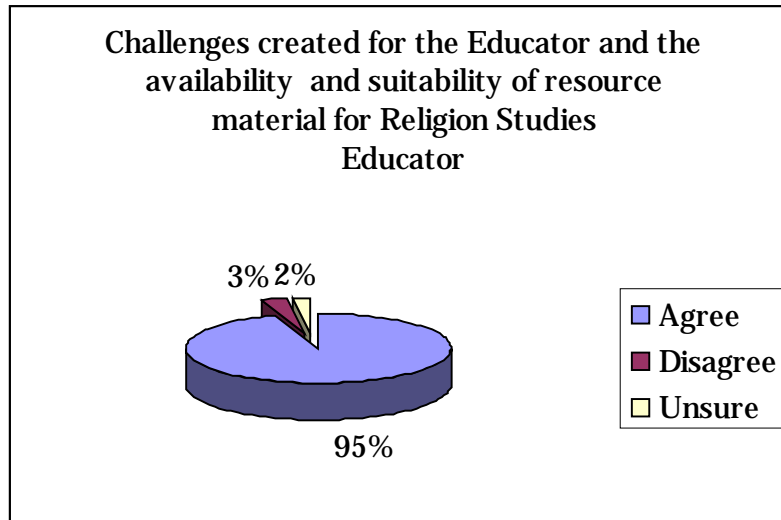
3.13.2 Resource materials for the teaching of RS must be well balanced, free of all bias and representative of all religious denominations of the community.

70	3	2	28	2	5	6	0	0
93.3	4	2.7	80	5.7	14.3	100	0	0

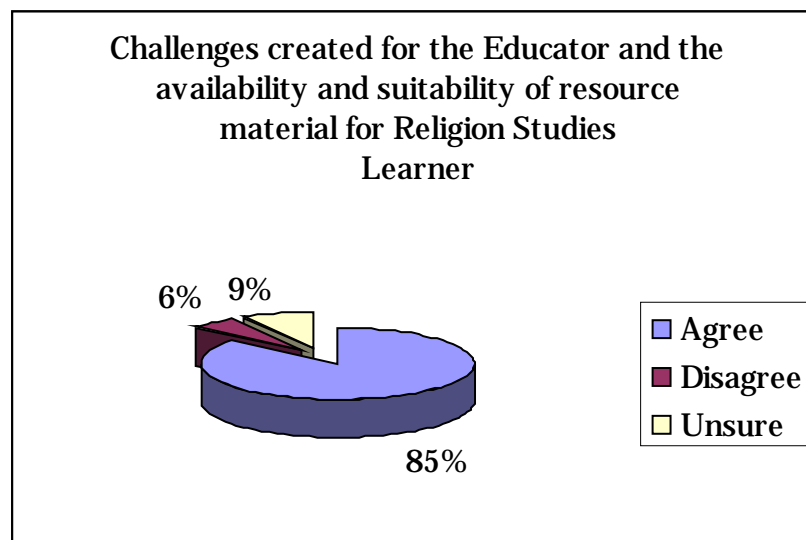
3.13.3 Educators must be well trained and unbiased when teaching RE as there is a strong possibility of them having a bias towards a particular faith.

	72	1	2	28	2	5	6	0	0
	96	1.3	2.7	80	5.7	14.3	100	0	0
Responses - units	225			105			18		
Responses - total									

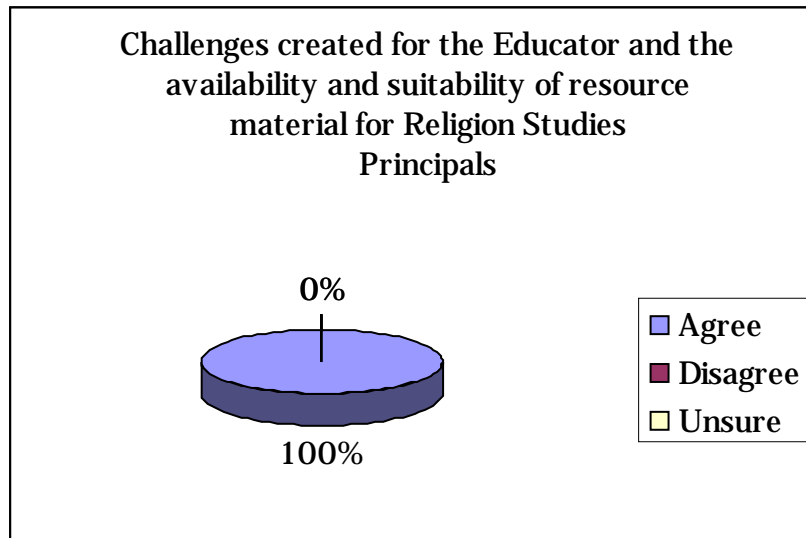
**Figure 11 - Challenges created for the educator and the availability and the suitability of Resource Material for Religion Studies (Educators)**



**Figure 12 – Challenges created for the educator and the availability and the suitability of Resource Material for Religion Studies (Learners)**



**Figure 13 - Challenges created for the educator and the availability and the Suitability of Resource Material for Religion Studies (Principals)**



Taking note of the challenges, 95% of educators, 85% of learners and 100% of principals agreed on this issue.

Apart from the above it is clear that much time would be required for the training of educators as there are a very limited number of qualified educators to teach Religion Studies. The challenges underscore the need for the Educators to be well equipped. They need to be tolerant and have an understanding of other faiths though they may not agree with some of the beliefs and practices in these faith traditions and faith communities. They need to be sensitive to all faiths and avoid negative criticisms and be very positive and empathetic in their approach when answering questions. Whilst the above challenges were recognized other challenges need to be noted also. Whilst some educators had indicated that they are qualified to teach Religion Studies, both the study as well as my personal conversations indicated otherwise. An anticipated difficulty with the implementation of Religion Studies is that an inclusive understanding of religion that teaches about religion may be difficult for all role players to accommodate.

A major challenge for the educator is the attempt to bring learners to acknowledge and appreciate the religious beliefs, customs, and traditions of religions other than their own. One cannot rule out the possibility that sometimes an educator might begin treating a lesson as if it was a Religious Instruction lesson rather than Religion Studies. This could happen when an educator from one faith tries to promote a religion or set of beliefs by propagating or “preaching” the virtues of one or other ritual in his or her religion. In the existing structures, there are no oversight facilities for such things to be monitored. This is all the more the reason to have a professional training for educators in this field so that they are able to approach teaching Religion Studies in schools with a professional ethic. The resource material that is being used may also have a religious bias and leanings to a particular faith or religion.

It is therefore necessary that properly qualified university personnel are tasked with the compilation of course materials for the Religion Studies in schools. In effect, a two pronged plan is necessary, first, the providing of professional training for the educators both as part of their teacher training as well as an ongoing training as part of continuing education. Second, a simultaneous effort should be made to task professors of Religious Studies in the Universities to prepare the necessary teaching materials and text books for various levels in schools.

Such materials must be workshopped with all the stakeholders so that any fears of indoctrination and other such negative perceptions of the effects of the subject could be allayed. Already there are some efforts made by some concerned educators at various universities in South Africa. But the Department of Education needs to engage these efforts through proper coordination and by providing the necessary funding.

### ***3.14 CHALLENGES THAT SCHOOLS ARE FACING IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGION STUDIES IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM***

The following challenges were found in the case study for the implementation of Religion Studies as far as curriculum issues are concerned. Schools have their own expectations of what Religion Studies should achieve. The following are the quantified responses from educators, learners and principals. Note that the challenges impact on these expectations.

3.14.1 RS should provide a basis for personal development, shared moral values and a spiritual foundation upon which a new nation can be built.

*Please place an  
“X” below in  
the appropriate  
block*

EDUCATORS			LEARNERS			PRINCIPALS		
AG	DIS	UNS	AG	DIS	UNS	AG	DIS	UNS
70	2	3	24	3	8	4	2	0
93.3	2.7	4	68.6	8.6	2.8	67	33	0

3.14.2 RS creates a challenge in building a new nation to activate the positive, constructive values of the great religious traditions.

67	2	5	27	3	6	3	1	2
89	3.3	7.6	77	8.6	17.4	50	17	33

3.14.3 RS lessons require some pedagogical standards of clarity of purpose, communication, interest and enthusiasm in the teaching of other areas of the school curriculum.

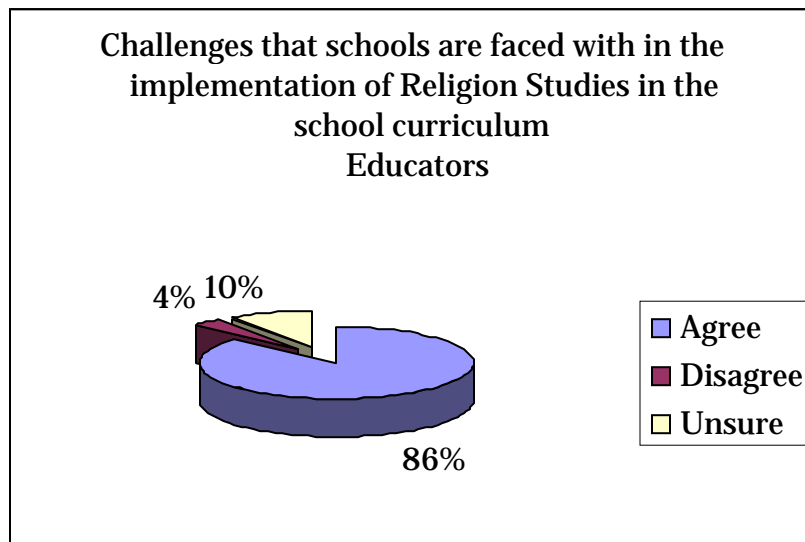
64	2	9	22	1	12	4	0	2
85.3	2.7	12	62.9	2.9	34.2	67	0	33

3.14.4 Cultural analysis for curriculum purposes is extremely difficult and fraught with the risk of accusations of value bias.

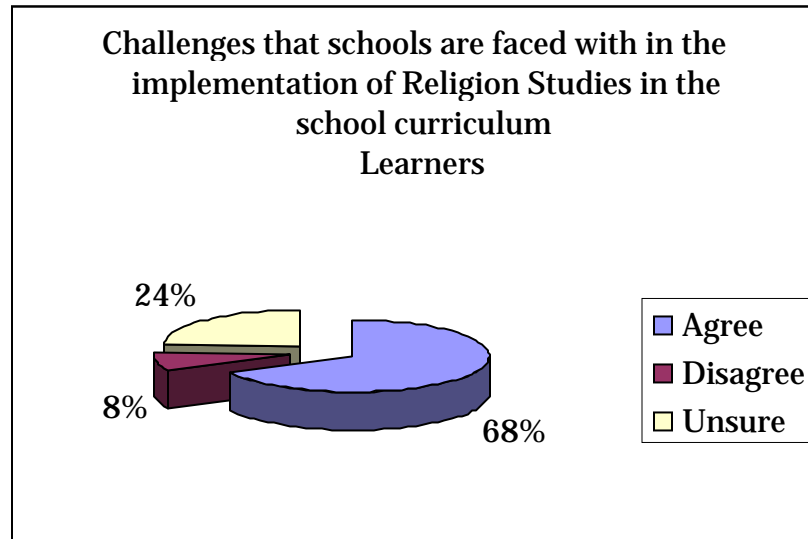
	<table><tr><td>58</td><td>4</td><td>13</td></tr><tr><td>77.3</td><td>55.3</td><td>17.4</td></tr></table>	58	4	13	77.3	55.3	17.4	<table><tr><td>22</td><td>5</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>62.9</td><td>14.3</td><td>22.8</td></tr></table>	22	5	8	62.9	14.3	22.8	<table><tr><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>50</td><td>17</td><td>33</td></tr></table>	3	1	2	50	17	33
58	4	13																			
77.3	55.3	17.4																			
22	5	8																			
62.9	14.3	22.8																			
3	1	2																			
50	17	33																			
Responses - units	<table><tr><td>299</td></tr></table>	299	<table><tr><td>141</td></tr></table>	141	<table><tr><td>24</td></tr></table>	24															
299																					
141																					
24																					
Responses - total	<table><tr><td>464</td></tr></table>			464																	
464																					

Collective data is as follows.

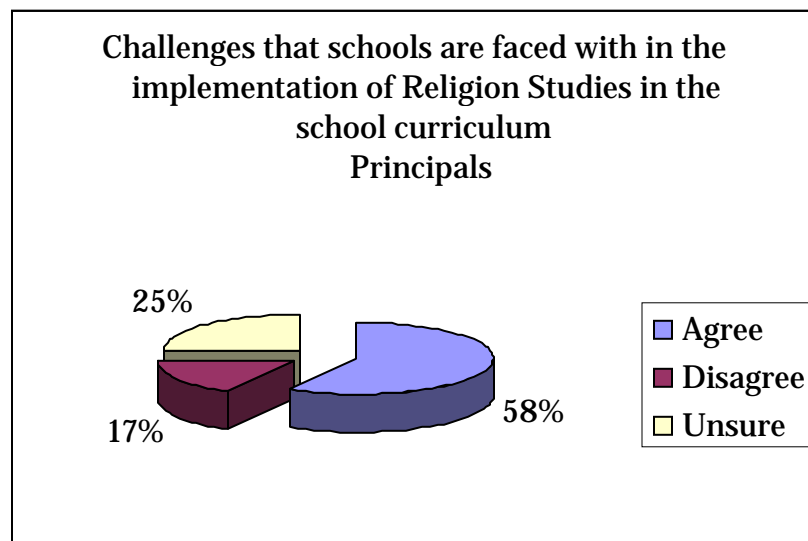
**Figure 14 – Challenges that schools are faced with in the implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum (Educators)**



**Figure 15- Challenges that schools are faced with in the implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum (Learners)**



**Figure 16 - Challenges that schools are faced with in the implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum (Principals)**



It was noted that 86% of the educators, 68% of the learners and 58% of the principals agreed that there are serious challenges in implementing Religion Studies.

Some challenges that schools may face in their implementation of Religion Studies is firstly, to determine whether a Religion Studies programme can actually deal with religious diversity in the context of a multicultural, multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-traditional society and secondly, whether the curriculum can be designed to redress forms of social injustices, such as racism and sexism, in education. In order to address these challenges, coordinated efforts in providing educators with effective syllabi, sample lessons, textbook materials, handbooks, teaching methods, systems of assessment, and other educational pedagogical resources are necessary. The education and in-service training of educators will also need to be addressed. (Chidester 1994: 94)

According to Chidester (1994: 96), instead of treating cultures as if they were fixed, separate compartments occupied by different “ethnic” groups, multi-cultural education explores the rich diversity of cultural resources that human beings have drawn upon in being human. Similarly, by exploring religious ways of being human, Religion Studies can become a type of multi-cultural education. As it works to create a clear, open space for the free investigation of religious diversity, Religion Studies can, in fact, contribute to a multi-cultural curriculum. In this regard, Religion Studies shares with multi-cultural education the aim of encouraging students to think, both imaginatively and critically, about the personal and social implications of human diversity

### ***3.15 THE NATURE OF RELIGION STUDIES IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM***

Taking into account the multi-cultural, multi-traditional, multi-racial and multi-religious diversity of South Africa, careful thought and consideration must be given to the nature of Religion Studies in the school curriculum. It is a known fact



that religion does play an important role in the lives of most societies. A vast majority of South Africans practice some or other form of religion. The religious milieu and the ethos of South African society thus involve a real experience and recognition of diversity. Hence, sensitivity must be adopted. In terms of the new South African constitution, South Africa is an explicitly secular state in that it does not favour any particular religion. The post-apartheid project of nation-building involves the attempt to bring together in a fruitful contact all that apartheid kept apart. If properly structured and offered Religion Studies could play a role in uniting all the people of South Africa. Every individual, irrespective of his/ her race, religion or creed must be given an equal opportunity to practice his/ her religion and teach their children about their rich traditions and culture. The relationship between religion and education should be based on constitutional values such as citizenship, human rights, equality, free of discrimination and freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion. Religion Studies must aim to develop a national culture with respect for the value of one's own personal cultural, religious and linguistic traditions and beliefs whilst affirming one's own identity without the need to undermine the religious identities of others. This will eventually lead to the development of respect for diversity, reduced prejudice and increased civil toleration.

From the analysis of the data collected the following responses were calculated from the responses by educators, learners and principals.

3.15.1 RS must be consistent with human and civil rights to freedom of religion, conscience, thought and expression.

EDUCATORS			LEARNERS			PRINCIPALS		
AG	DIS	UNS	AG	DIS	UNS	AG	DIS	UNS
67	5	3	26	2	7	5	1	0
89.3	6.7	4	74.3	5.7	20	83	17	0

3.15.2 RS must ensure social benefits by facilitating mutual understanding, reducing prejudice and increasing civil toleration of human diversity.

72	1	2
96	1.3	2.7

25	1	9
71.4	2.9	25.7

4	0	2
67	0	33

3.15.3 RS must give Learners the opportunity to reflect critically and constructively on the function of religion in their personal and interpersonal lives.

70	2	3
93.3	2.7	4

28	2	5
80	5.7	14.3

4	0	2
67	0	33

3.15.4 RS is essential for the building of character and making of proper citizens.

59	5	11
78.7	6.7	14.6

24	2	0
68.6	5.7	25.7

4	1	1
67	16.5	16.5

3.15.5 RS, taking into account the demographics of the country, must ensure that all religions are included in the school curriculum.

71	1	3

21	1	13

4	1	1

3.15.6 RS must ensure that the indigenous religions or traditions of South Africa, like all other religious, be given their rightful place in the school curriculum.

63	2	10
84	2.7	13.3

30	3	2
85.7	8.5	5.7

4	0	2
67	0	33

Responses -  
units

450
-----

210
-----

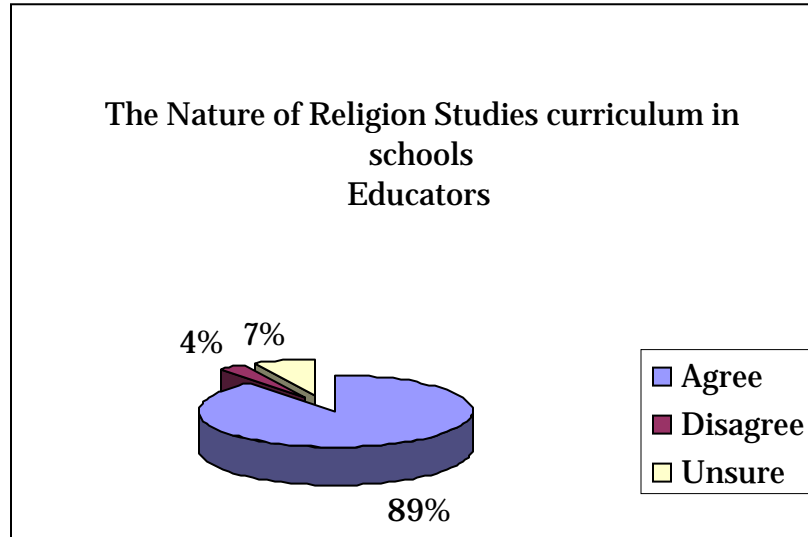
36
----

Responses -  
total

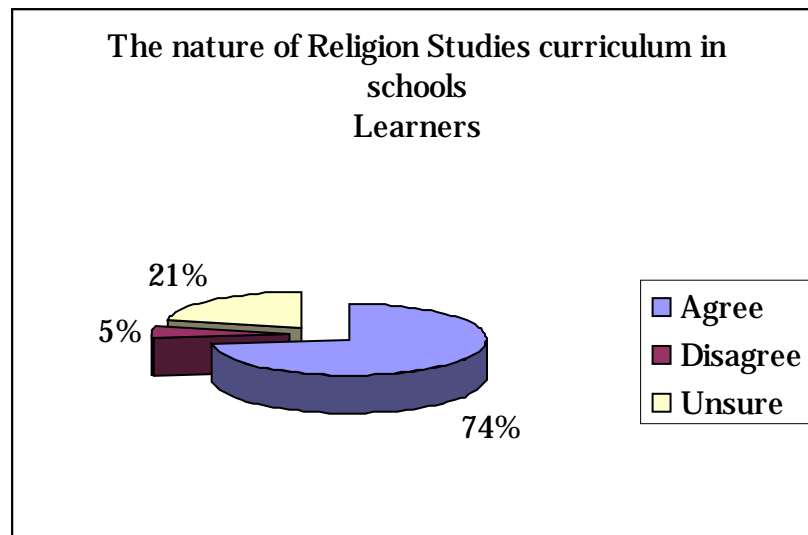
696
-----

Statistics taken from the case study in schools revealed that 89% of educators, 74% of learners and 67% of principals had agreed with these statements on the “nature” of Religion Studies and its implementation.

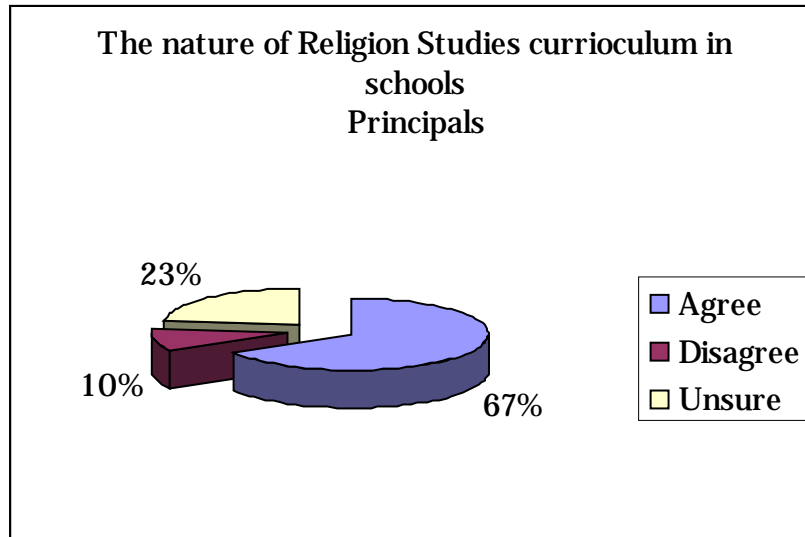
**Figure 17 – The nature of Religion Studies Curriculum in Schools  
(Educators)**



**Figure 18 – The nature of Religion Studies Curriculum in Schools  
(Learners)**



**Figure 19 – The nature of Religion Studies Curriculum in Schools  
(Principals)**



It is interesting to note that the agreement to the above statements by management (principals) amounted to much less (67%) than that of the educators (89%). The difference seems to be due to the fact that the management has to deal with issues that are different from those that are experienced by educators in the classroom. It is also likely that the educators are more idealistic than the principals whose managerial responsibilities bring other variables into play when dealing with the overall implementation of Religion Studies. The managers are seemingly burdened with the weight of parental concerns and the broader societal issues.

### ***3.16 THE OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF RELIGION STUDIES***

According to Summers (1996: 58), South Africa is predominantly a religiously pluralistic country. It is essential that learners from one religion and culture understand something about people of different religious and cultural

backgrounds. An individual's own religion is often considered "superior" while that of others "inferior" – a recipe for religious intolerance. In Religion Studies, the value, ethics, norms, and concepts of morality emanating from belief systems can be analysed. Religion is more than doctrinal belief: a complex value system is an integral part of all religions.

In the survey conducted in secondary schools, the following statistics were calculated for the objectives and outcomes.

3.16.1 It is realistic to think that the teaching of RS can counter undesirable influences.

EDUCATORS			LEARNERS			PRINCIPALS		
AG	DIS	UNS	AG	DIS	UNS	AG	DIS	UNS
50	10	15	13	5	17	3	2	1
66.7	13.3	20	37.1	14.3	48.6	50	33	17

3.16.2 In view of the conflicts that are occurring between and within faith communities, a deinstitutionalised form of RS should be promoted which will focus on personal experiences of mystery and spirituality rather than on belief systems and institutionalised traditions.

52	5	18	21	3	11	3	1	2
69.3	3.7	24	60	8.6	31.4	50	17	33

3.16.3 RS helps to understand the world view and motivating power of the religious traditions most influential in the historical and cultural development of their country of residence.

62	1	12	29	1	5	5	0	1
82.7	1.33	16	82.9	2.9	14.2	83	0	17

3.16.4 RS helps to increase the understanding of the other religious and ideological traditions significantly represented in the general population.

65	0	10
86.7	0	13.3

31	2	2
88.6	5.7	5.7

5	0	1
83	0	17

3.16.5 RS helps to develop capacity to identify and evaluate religious truth claims and values, including those of the tradition they know best.

67	1	7
89.3	1.3	9.3

29	1	5
82.9	2.8	14.3

3	2	1
50	33.4	16.6

3.16.6 RS helps to enlarge the ability to empathise with the way people who hold different beliefs from themselves see the world and are motivated by their beliefs.

61	0	14
81.3	0	18.7

28	3	4
80	8.6	11.4

4	0	2
67	0	33

3.16.7 RS helps to foster the capacity to dialogue with people in a non-defensive and non- threatening way about ultimate beliefs and values.

61	3	1
81.3	4	14.7

22	4	9
62.9	11.4	25.7

4	0	2
67	0	33

3.16.8 The study of **RS** is important insofar as it provides support for the spiritual values that must be imparted to Learners to arrest the decline of discipline and character.

64	2	9
85.3	2.7	12

26	4	5
74.3	11.4	14.3

3	1	2
50	17	33

Responses - units

600

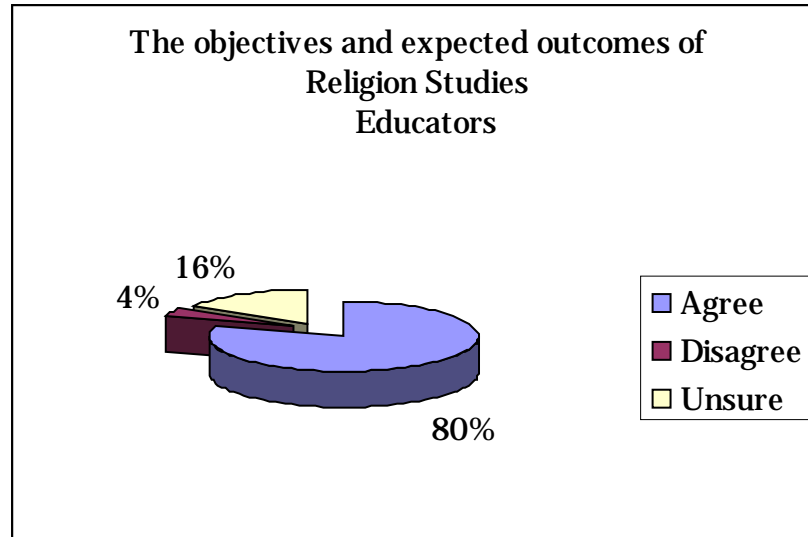
239

17

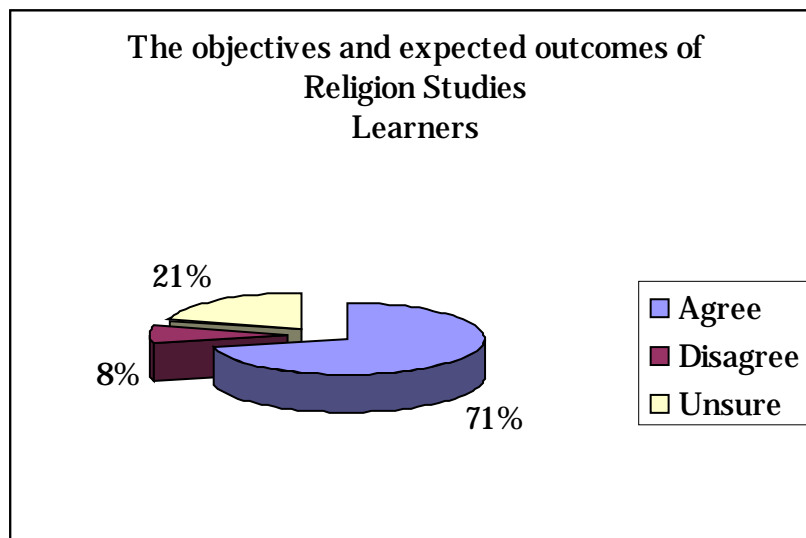
Responses - total

856

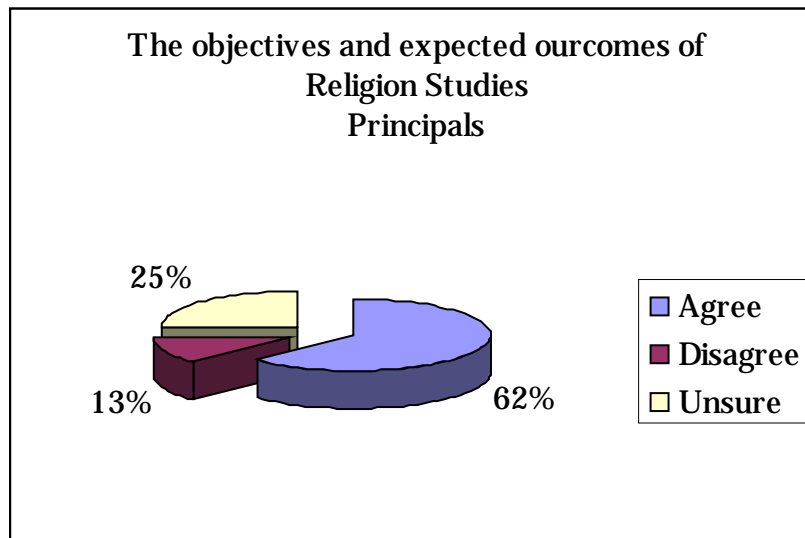
**Figure 20 – The objectives and expected outcomes of Religion Studies (Educators)**



**Figure 21- The objectives and expected outcomes of Religion Studies (Learners)**



**Figure 22 - The objectives and expected outcomes of Religion Studies (Principals)**



About 80% of educators, 71% of learners and 62% of principals had agreed with the above statements. It seems clear that the educators are more optimistic about the outcomes of Religion Studies than the principals. If this is true then more sustained efforts from the Department of Education must be made to bring greater commitment from all stakeholders as far as Religion Studies is concerned. Underlying the reservations of the principals may be the concerns of parents with regard to Religion Studies and what it could achieve in a school environment.

### ***3.17 THE MODELS OF RELIGION STUDIES***

When implementing Religion Studies in the school curriculum, careful consideration needs to be given to the different models for teaching. According to Chidester (1994: 16), “Religious and Moral Education is a subject in which learners will be given the opportunity to reflect critically and constructively on the function of religion and morality in their personal and interpersonal lives....” In



order to achieve such critical reflection on Religion, a monolithic approach to Religion Studies may not work in South Africa. Therefore, it might be useful to explore different models that might suit different school environments.

In any teaching-learning situation, cognizance must be taken of the composition of the learners before any form of approach or model is to be used. The racial composition and the diversity of the religious background of the school community must be acknowledged and taken into account. The *National Policy on Religion and Education* had looked at four possible models for structuring the relationship between religion and education, namely: “a theocratic model, a repressionist model, a separationist model and a co-operative model.”

The South African Draft Policy on Religion and Education 20 June 2003, paragraph 23, mentions that:

Unlike a single-faith approach to religious education, which provides religious instruction in one religion, and unlike a multiple single-faith approach, which provides parallel programmes in religious instruction for an approved set of religions, a multi-traditional approach to the study of Religion Education does not promote any particular religion. It is a programme for studying about religion, in all its many forms, as an important dimension of human experience and a significant field in the school curriculum.

According to Kumar, (2006: 284), the “South African Department of Education attempted to structure Religion Studies on the “co-operative model”. It rejected the “theocratic model” where state and religion become indistinguishable. It rejects the “repressionist model” which eliminates religion from public life. It also rejects the “separationist model” in which the state and religion are strictly separated. It affirms the “co-operative model” which combines the idea that state

and religion are separate constitutionally with the idea that the state be the synergy between the two”.

Thus far we have come to realize that for effective teaching of Religion Studies to take place, educators need to have a reasonable knowledge of religion. It is however imperative for the educator to learn more and gain knowledge about how to teach religion in terms of the co-operative model. Since we come from a history where this was not done, the developing and training of teachers who will be able to teach in this model will take time. Because of its nature and complexity as the religions represent such a vast diversity of life experiences, this will remain a daunting but important task. For Religion Studies to be successfully taught, will require an approach that matches the co-operative model. This is addressed in the next section.

### ***3.17.1 A SINGLE-TRADITION APPROACH***

This type of approach was advocated by the Christian National Education during the apartheid era and was used to promote apartheid theology or so called “Christian, Bible-based instruction.” The aim was to convert learners to Christianity, to win “souls for Christ”, or alternatively, to “nurture the growth of students already claiming to be Christians.” (Summers 1996: 18) This approach is not apologetic in character as learners were taught to look less critically at their own religion if they came from a Christian background. However, learners from other faith traditions have experienced it differently, and this has made them more apologetic about their own religions.

In a Single-Tradition approach, one of the greatest fears is that one’s own religion or beliefs might be misrepresented and the faith in its principles undermined if it were presented to learners by someone who were not himself or herself a

committed adherent of that particular religious community. In a democratic society, this approach to the teaching of Religion Studies will not be applicable as this will sow the seeds of bitterness, antagonism and resentment among the diverse population and religious groups of our nation. The principles of the Christian National Education would be pushed onto the other religious groups, and will by default be seen as a continuation of apartheid. If this route was followed, it would act totally against the grains on which our democracy is built.

### ***3.17.2 A MULTIPLE SINGLE-TRADITION APPROACH***

While this approach is a little more accommodating than the Single-Tradition approach, the principles are similar to that of Christian National Education. The only difference is that in the Multiple Single-Tradition Approach, all religious people are given an opportunity to learn about their own religions. This is more of a compartmentalized type of teaching and learning whereby all the relevant religions of the respective schools or institutions will run parallel programmes to accommodate all religions or single-tradition approaches in different schools. For those who have suffered religious exclusion and discrimination under the system of Christian National Education, the prospects of a parallel approach, offering separate, but supposedly equal, programmes in Religion Studies for the different faith communities, might initially appear attractive as an opportunity to redress past grievances. This form of “parallel” or the “Multiple Single-Faith Approach” cannot be entertained as it would counter the fostering of mutual understanding of the religions, and which should then lead to increased tolerance and reduced prejudice. This approach would also entrench separation along religious lines in the state schools.

### ***3.17.3 A MULTIPLE-TRADITION APPROACH***

The Multiple-Tradition Approach in Religion Studies carries the entire multicultural dimension of the school curriculum. This gives the impression that educators see issues of culture, race, and pluralism as directly dependent upon world faith systems. This approach according to Chidester et al (1994: 20-21), “gives much consideration to the benefits of a single, unified, and academically coherent programme in the study of religions. This is an open, plural, crosscultural, and interdisciplinary study of religion in public schools and is consistent with international developments in Religion Studies”. This approach fulfils the aims and objectives of the National Policy on Religion and Education, as it is unlikely to be achieved in the Single-Tradition and Multiple-Single Tradition Approaches. It caters for the diverse religious and cultural groups without any prejudice to any one religious group. It encourages a programme for studying about religion in all its facets in the school curriculum with emphasis on respect, acceptance, tolerance, understanding and appreciation and above all, living in harmony with each other in a democratic society.

In the light of the Policy Document of the DoE and the models of Religion Studies that it articulates, the following models were presented in the questionnaires to elicit as to which model the participants of the survey would choose:

- Religion Studies should follow a faith based approach;
- Religion Studies should follow a multi-faith based approach;
- Religion Studies should follow a non-faith based approach;
- There should be no particular dominant religious ethos in public schools;

- Religion Studies should allow all religions and secular views to be taught; and
- A curriculum with “life experience” themes should be used as points of Religion Studies rather than religious stories.

The data was as follows.

### ***3.17.4 FINDINGS FOR THE MODELS OF RELIGION STUDIES***

3.17.4.1 RS should follow a faith-based approach.

*Please place an “X” below in the appropriate block*

EDUCATORS		
AG	DIS	UNS

LEARNERS		
AG	DIS	UNS

PRINCIPALS		
AG	DIS	UNS

28	29	18
37.3	38.7	24

19	8	8
54.3	22.9	22.8

3	1	2
50	17	33

3.17.4.2 RS should follow a multi-faith based approach.

51	11	13

21	4	10
60	11.4	28.6

2	2	2
33.3	33.3	33.3

3.17.4.3 RS should follow a non-faith based approach.

24	39	12
32	52	16

10	19	6
28.6	54.3	17.4

3	0	3
50	0	50

3.17.4.4 There should be no particular dominant religious ethos in public schools.

60	12	3
80	16	4

21	7	7
60	20	20

5	1	0
83	17	0

3.17.4.5 RS should allow all religions and secular views to be taught.

65	2	8	23	10	20	83	17	0
86.7	2.6	10.7	65.7	28.6	5.7	83	0	17

3.17.4.6 A curriculum with “life experience” themes should be used as points of RS rather than religious stories.

44	7	24	19	4	12	4	0	2
58.7	9.3	32	54.3	11.4	34.3	67	0	33

Responses –  
units

399

210

36

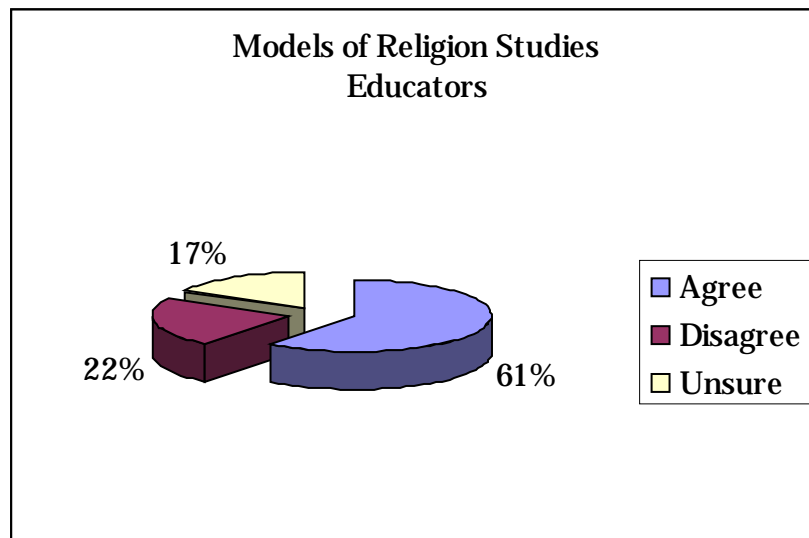
Responses - total

645

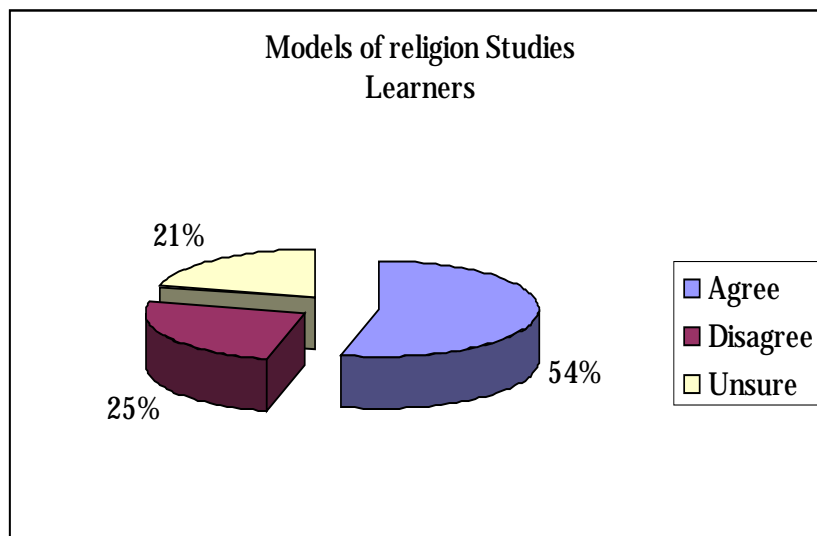
In analyzing the data obtained from the questionnaires, 61% of the educators, 54% learners and 61% of the principals had indicated that the multi-faith based approaches and secular views should be taught whilst there seemed to be some doubts about a non-faith based approach. Most of the interviewees had indicated that “no particular dominant religious ethos be taught in public schools.” It is notable that the percentages that disagreed are relatively higher – 22% educators; 25% learners and 11% principals. This reflects the fact that the shift from the previous system of teaching Religion in schools to the new approach of inclusivity will perhaps take much longer time than one would expect. It is for this reason, a combination of different models that might be suitable to each school environment might be the way forward. In other words, schools perhaps need to determine what model or models work for them within the broader framework of the policy document on Religion Education. What is necessary though, is that the broader constitutional goals together with the Religion Education policy directive must be upheld. We cannot go backward but rather endeavour to move forward towards greater inclusiveness.

The collated responses are as follows.

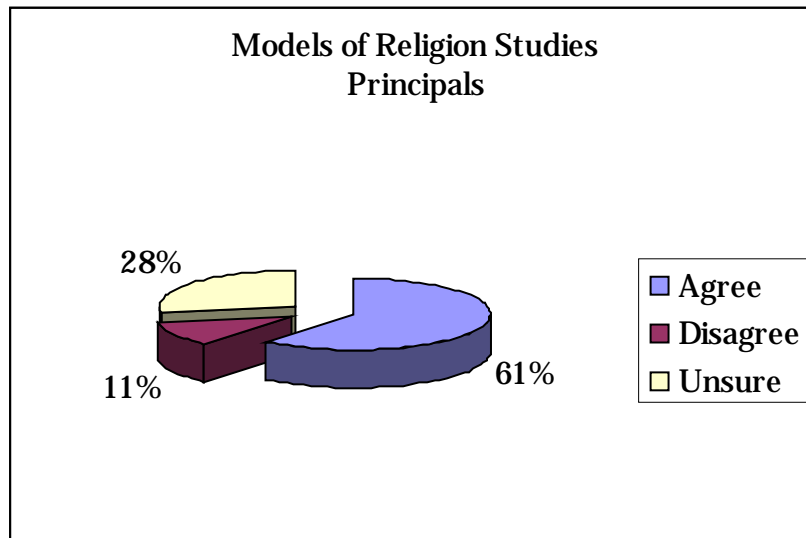
**Figure 23 – Models of Religion Studies: Multi-faith including Secular Views (Educators)**



**Figure 24 - Models of Religion Studies: Multi-faith including Secular Views (Learners)**



**Figure 25 - Models of Religion Studies: Multi-faith including Secular Views (Principals)**



### ***3.18 SELECTED INTERVIEWS WITH EDUCATORS***

In addition to the questionnaires that were issued, Educators were randomly selected and interviewed regarding some of the aspects relating to the implementation of Religion Studies in the school curriculum in the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase. The analysis of the qualitative research data collated, provided better indication of teacher attitudes, both positive and negative, towards the inclusion of Religion Studies in the school curriculum. Some of the questions asked and the responses given are summarized below:

#### ***3.18.1 SOME OF THE PROSPECTS OF RELIGION STUDIES IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM***

- *“It is good.*
- *Parents and learners would benefit from it.*



- *Religious beliefs and values are controversial issues and Religion Studies will allow all stakeholders to value, understand and appreciate all religions.*
- *There is a dire[sic] scope and need for Religion Studies.*
- *Children need to be multi-faceted and multi-religious education is the way.*
- *All religions ultimately have the same teachings.*
- *There will be religious tolerance.*
- *Learners will follow the more righteous path and be more disciplined and compassionate.*
- *There is no need to burden children with extra lessons like Religion Studies as they already have enough to do.*
- *Almost every child learns about their religions from their parents and religious institutions they attend.*
- *Children are aware and do show respect for all religions as we educators make them aware of all religious occasions during Life Skills teaching.*
- *Religion Studies will impact positively on the holistic development of the learner.*
- *It will also allow for religious tolerance and curb many social ills. Religion Studies will bring unity amongst learners of different faiths because they now will be able to understand each other in cultural activities and lowering the disciplinary problems.*
- *The learners as well as their parents learn about their own as well as other religions.*
- *It is a great idea but must be well thought out when the curriculum is devised so that no room for conflict is encountered.*
- *The introduction of Religion Studies will help in discipline.*
- *It will allow learners from other cultures to be educated on beliefs, traditions and celebrations of others other than their own.*
- *There will be more discipline.*

- *Religion Studies will allow learners to interact with aspects of their own faith as they may not be exposed to this at home.*
- *There would be peace and harmony among people due to different religions.*
- *It will succeed if it is introduced from primary school and then offered as an examinable subject.*
- *It would be welcomed by educators and parents to counter social problems, disciplinary and sexual misconduct.”*

Most of the responses given by educators augur well for the introduction and implementation of Religion Studies in the school curriculum. One educator seemed very pessimistic about the introduction of Religion Studies in the school curriculum as he felt that there was no need to burden the learners with extra lessons like Religion Studies, as they already have enough to do. He was of the view that the learners should learn this subject from their parents and religious institutions.

However, most educators felt that it was beneficial, in that it gives the learners a better understanding of the multifaceted society or country that we live in. It gives the learners the opportunity to appreciate the values of the different religions that exist in their society through their different traditional and cultural practices which is further enhanced by the respective celebrations of significant festivals of the respective religions. The educators were also of the view that the learners would be given an opportunity to know more about their religion and in understanding its doctrines and ethics, and also in following a disciplined path and by inculcating good norms, values, morals and attitudes to life. It allows the learner to be more disciplined and compassionate towards others. Through this type of life, a much more disciplined environment in the classroom conducive to learning would be created. The social ills that are currently plaguing the society, such as drugs, alcohol, substance abuse, hijackings, and indulging in sexual

activities outside acceptable social frameworks, will to a large extent be curtailed as the learners would be in a position to make good and sound judgments about their own life styles. This will also instil in the learners a sense of belonging, and bring about peace and harmony between the different people in society, thus leaving no room for conflict. Religion Studies will also assist in contributing to the holistic development of learners.

Such a positive attitude expressed above by the educators will surely encourage the Department of Education to put in place the necessary structures to implement Religion Studies in schools. However, one has to be realistic about the extent to which religion could play a role in the moral life of pupils. While there may be some indirect relationship between teaching religion in schools and the resulting moral standards among pupils, the debate about whether the goal of Religion Studies is to impart morals and ethics in schools is one that needs to be considered. There are those who see Religion Studies having a direct responsibility in moral education in schools, and there are those who see Religion Studies as primarily dealing with religious diversity and affording the opportunity to pupils to become more sensitive to the issues of pluralism. Furthermore, in the light of some parental concerns that their children might be influenced by other religious beliefs and practices, it would be difficult to link moral and ethics education to Religion Studies. A link between Religion Studies and moral education could conflate the educational goals of Religion Studies with moral education or Religious Education.

### ***3.18.2 THE CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGION STUDIES IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM***

- *“There are shortages of trained educators for the teaching of Religious Studies.*
- *Some people are fanatics of their religion.*
- *The young learners may be easily influenced by beliefs and values of religions other than their own thus leading to conflict of ideas.*
- *The educators teaching Religion Studies must guard against being biased.*
- *There is a lack of teaching resources for this subject.*
- *As educators, one must take into account the diversity of cultures that exist in our country.*
- *Some parents may not see the need for it.*
- *There may be resistance because some may be of the view that they are able to provide Religious Studies for their children adequately.*
- *In the teaching of Religious Studies at home, this may result in dogmatism and narrow-mindedness.*
- *The various religious bodies would not want any other religion to be taught besides their own.*
- *Children may not be happy to do another extra subject.*
- *Some parents are rigid in their beliefs and may not want their children to learn about other religions.*
- *It may also be very difficult to find an educator qualified to teach all religions without any bias.*
- *There is a lack of trained educators and the unavailability of resources.*
- *There would be no challenges when relating to learners if we get an educator who is fair and qualified.*
- *The training of educators will depend upon the finance that is available.*
- *The learners might mock the beliefs and teachings of other religions.*
- *Many might disagree with religious trends and customs.*
- *Depending on some kinds of rituals, people may look down on certain rituals and even laugh at them.*
- *There could be a clash of religions.*

- *There could be potential for conflict between learner and learner, learner and educator, educator and educator.*
- *Educators must be sufficiently empowered to teach in an unbiased way.*
- *South Africa has many religions and faiths – however Christianity is dominant.*
- *There is fear that the other religions would be marginalized.*

In analyzing the data obtained from the responses through interviews, it was not surprising that most educators were of the opinion that many challenges would be presented in the implementation of Religion Studies in the school curriculum and it would be very interesting to note how these challenges would be faced. One of the greatest challenges would be to change the mindset of both educators and parents to set aside the prejudices that already exist in their religious faith or belief that it is the only acceptable one, and to do away with parallel thinking. At the same time they need to identify their religious faith or religious belief with the commonalities that exist in other world-views so no points could be scored in laying claims that “my religion is better than yours”! This would enhance in paving the way forward to living together with acceptance and harmony with all the people.

During a workshop conducted by Roux (2004: 10), “discussion session allowed participating educators to share with other participants their personal positions in relation to religiously diverse classes and levels of self-confidence in handling materials on different religions. The teachers also shared their fear, prejudices and biases in presenting content about religions other than their own. For many of the teachers, the fears or prejudices were associated with misconceptions of beliefs, such as God concepts in Hinduism or the figure of the diviner in African religions”. This is a clear indication that educators need more information on the world-views/ religions so that the facilitation of Religion Studies is looked on from a broader perspective.

Further, it was quite evident that educators had reservations about the implementation of Religion Studies as they felt that it was the parents' as well as the respective religious institutions' responsibilities to ensure that religious values be taught to the learners. However, some educators felt that if Religion Studies is left to the parents and religious institutions, the fear that dogmatic principles and narrow mindedness would be inculcated in the minds of the learners which would lead to a mentality of "thinking from within the box" instead of "out of the box". If Religion Studies is to be implemented in its truest form, then broadening of the horizon of learners as well as parents and educators is essential as this would encourage the learners to think positively and optimistically in their life.

Educators also felt that the possibilities of the Religion Studies educator in steering the subject towards a single-faith approach cannot be ruled out. This would gradually lend itself to mockery and ridicule by learners of other faiths with the belief that only his religious beliefs are authentic. This could lead to clashes with learners of the differing religious faiths. If Religion Studies is to be implemented successfully, there must be a certain distancing of personal ideologies and thoughts by educators, learners as well as parents so that a renaissance of goodwill in respect of appreciation, tolerance and values of all religions is created while adopting a positive and a harmonious relationship with the pupils.

In so far as the barriers in the implementation of Religion Studies are concerned, the greatest concern is that there are virtually no educators that have the pedagogical training and experience in facilitating this subject hence, the fear that the educators would have a leaning towards their own religious beliefs and teachings. The survey revealed this shortage of educators in the teaching of Religion Studies at the moment. The educators also felt that there might be resistance from the parents in that the parents would be able to provide religious

studies quite adequately and would prefer a single-faith approach. However, this is more of a challenge rather than a barrier for the educators of Religion Studies.

Further to the above barriers, the unavailability of human and learning resources is a major concern. Much research is needed to ensure that the learning resources that are filtering into the schools for Religion Studies are representative of all the religions and that they are free of bias.

### **3.18.3 BENEFITS OF RELIGION STUDIES**

- *“Religion Studies will provide opportunities for learners to learn about a variety of religions and their values.*
- *It also helps in the development of the individual.*
- *Learners would understand their religion better and hence appreciate other religions.*
- *They would develop a sense of belonging and identity. Teach learners to respect other religions.*
- *It needs to be implemented in schools.*
- *A multi-faceted religious approach is imperative since we are living in a democracy.*
- *The rainbow nation is multi-faceted and Religion Studies should be so, hence mirroring the multifaceted dimensions of our country and the whole world.*
- *It is an excellent idea especially since the youth don’t understand what their religious beliefs are.*
- *There will also be more peace and tolerance in our country.*
- *It does create more awareness and respect for other religions.*
- *Children will be less ignorant.*

- *Religion Studies should be introduced and integrated in the school curriculum so that the learners learn good values and morals.*
- *It will be of great benefit in curtailing disciplinary problems.*
- *I believe that this is a great idea.*
- *This would bring about unity amongst learners and educators.*
- *They will have a better understanding of their own beliefs and will learn to be tolerant of other religions.*
- *It allows you to compare similarities and differences thereby becoming more open minded, respectful and knowledgeable.*
- *It helps you to learn more about your own religion.*
- *It is a great idea as long as it is free of propaganda and discrimination.*
- *If the curriculum is well thought out and decisive structures in place, I think every child would benefit.*
- *It brings about understanding of the different people.*
- *Religion must be brought and taught to the community to bring about change in people's views.*
- *Religions will be able to solve problems.*

It was very encouraging to note the overall positive perceptions of educators for the implementation of Religion Studies in the school curriculum. Educators strongly felt that there was a dire need to accommodate learners from different belief systems of the world and to be more understanding and to create an awareness of everyday situations in the lives of the learners. We must take cognizance of the fact that we are living in a pluralistic and democratic society where every individual, irrespective of race, sex, colour, creed or religious belief, is expected to adopt attitudes of tolerance, appreciation and respect for all. Hence the willingness to accept Religion Studies into the school curriculum was most encouraging. Amongst other views expressed, educators indicated that this would give the learners the opportunities to learn about a variety of religions, bring about understanding as well as developing a sense of identity and belonging and above all a sense of unity. Since South Africa is a multi-faceted nation, Religion Studies



will enhance the mirroring of the multifaceted dimensions of the country. The educators also felt that it would create awareness among children and should be introduced in the school curriculum so that the learners are bestowed with good values, morals and attitudes thus benefiting and curtailing much of the disciplinary problems that are being encountered in schools.

Some pertinent questions that have surfaced are: Should educators give their own views and opinions whilst disseminating information to a class or learners? Will the educator deliver this lesson in a fair manner without prejudicing any other religious denomination? Will the contribution of his/ her views and opinions create an impact in the minds of the Learners? Will propagation of a specific religion be forthcoming? These are some of the many questions that continue to plague the implementation of Religion Studies. It is quite possible that if learners are exposed to nothing but the religious views of their educator, they will be left with a limited understanding of the subject. The learners must be given the opportunity to give their own views and opinions. There must be no imposition upon the learners of any one particular set of beliefs.

It is generally an accepted fact that the educator is the central figure in the class and their opinions and views are often the gospel truth to the learners. Therefore due consideration must be given to the learners' abilities in understanding the intentions of the educator. A descriptive approach to teaching religion education in schools is to give learners the opportunity to explore their own traditions and develop their own skills in articulating how and why they relate to other worldviews.

### ***3.19 CONCLUSION***

This chapter attempted to provide an overview of the findings of my research in schools. The survey broadly covered the following areas of concern as to how the

various stakeholders viz., educators, learners and principals or management understood them. '1) Advantages of Religion Studies; 2) Challenges to the implementation of Religion Studies; 3) Objectives and outcomes of Religion Studies; 4) Different models of Religion Studies and finally 5) some selected verbatim responses of interviewees on the issues that were covered in order to gain further insight into their questionnaire responses.

The data from this research was collated, analysed and presented. Various aspects ranging from the diversity of the school, the challenges and barriers presented such as resource materials and the availability of qualified teaching personnel to the advantages and views and opinions of the various stakeholders were ascertained. It was quite notable that educators commented on a greater awareness of the beliefs of others, an improvement in social interaction among learners and a general increase in tolerance, appreciation and respect. The survey indicates that the acceptance and acknowledgement towards one another could be achieved through the inclusion of Religion Studies in the school curriculum. Nevertheless, it is the opinion of the researcher that the responses of the survey participants indicate a more conservative outlook toward the implementation of Religion Studies. Although responses varied from a significant enthusiasm for the implementation to certain reservations about it, this study shows more concern for challenges that the government needs to address before implementing the Religion Studies in schools.

In the light of the above analysis, some broader issues related to the Religion Studies in schools and the nature of the enterprise has come to the surface. These deal with the relationship between Religion Studies and ethics and morality in society and the assumption that Religion Studies would play a role in dealing with problems of discipline in schools. The following chapter will provide a contextual analysis of Religion Studies gearing towards the successful implementation of Religion Studies in schools.

# **CHAPTER 4**

## **A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF RELIGION STUDIES**

### ***4.1 INTRODUCTION***

In the light of the survey reported in chapter 3 which dealt with challenges presented to the implementation of Religion Studies, some pertinent issues also emerged in addition to the challenges mentioned. It is therefore appropriate to deal with those issues in an effort to further clarify the nature of the implementation of the teaching of the subject of Religion Studies as part of the curriculum. These issues focus on intra-personal developments such as morality and ethics, tolerance and respect and spiritual guidance.

South Africa is a pluralistic country in which every type of religious and secular viewpoint is represented. The form of Religious teachings and instructions that is presently being implemented in some schools, carries its tainted past of the apartheid era under the name of the Christian National Education (CNE) system with it. South Africa is faced with the problem of redefining the teaching of religion in a multi-faith context as learners and educators from different linguistic, cultural, racial, political, social and religious backgrounds find themselves together in the classroom. There is a dire need to remove the fears and suspicions of those who mistrust the role of Religion Studies in schools. So, the question is whether Religion Studies will attempt to contribute and bridge the gap towards minimizing of friction between cultures, religious and political standpoints, thus playing a reconciliatory role in bringing the people of South Africa together.

In what follows, I shall attempt to emphasize the moral dimension of Religion Studies. There might be a debate whether Religion Studies should involve moral education. Other models of Religion Studies might emphasize different approaches. However, in the context of South Africa and given the state of our civil society, I am inclined to emphasize the idea that Religion Studies could play an important role in developing good citizens with moral character. In other words moral education could certainly be part of Religion Studies. This sentiment in favour of cultivating moral and ethical values as part of the subject of Religion Studies has come up in my interviews time and time again from both educators and the managements of schools. As such, some sections of the community do wish to see Religion Studies being inclusive of moral education. Nevertheless, such moral dimensions must be explored both from the various religious traditions that exist in South Africa and also from secular worldviews that many people adhere to. As such, my emphasis on the moral dimensions of Religion Studies need not be seen as promoting religious views, but rather using religious resources to explore a common moral discourse that enhances moral character and good citizenship in South Africa. In an effort to engage in this discussion let me first clarify the distinction between various terms used in regard to Religion in Schools.

## ***4.2 RELIGION EDUCATION***

The policy document uses the term Religion Education. According to the policy document, Religion Education is a curriculum programme with clear age and appropriate educational outcomes for teaching about religion, religions, and religious diversity in South Africa and the world. It places emphasis on values and moral education which falls under the responsibility of the school. It is part of the school curriculum and taught during the Life Orientation lesson from Grade R to Grade 9. Religion Studies on the other hand has the same definition as Religion

Education except for the fact that it is an examinable subject and is included as a subject in the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase. Religious Instruction refers to a programme of instruction, which is aimed at providing information regarding a specific set of religious beliefs with the viewpoint of promoting adherence thereto. This falls under the responsibility of the home, family and religious community. This is not part of the school curriculum. However, this could be permitted by schools through the use of their facilities for such programmes, in a manner that does not interfere with the core educational programmes of the school.

The policy document also refers to Religious Observances. These are activities and behaviours, which recognize and express the views, beliefs and commitments of a particular religion and may include gatherings of adherents, prayer times, dress and diets. According to the constitution, the South African Schools Act of 1984, and rules made by the appropriate authorities, the Governing Bodies of state schools may make their facilities available for religious observances, in the context of free and voluntary association, and provided that facilities are made available on an equitable basis. This responsibility falls under the ambit of the School Governing Body who will determine the nature and content of religious policy and applicable legislation is ensured. Furthermore, the policy document makes reference to Spiritual Guidance and Moral Regeneration. As Shukla has commented, “Deterioration, degeneration and decadence have set in society and much space and time of the South African media was devoted to issues of moral regeneration. A dire need for the protection from the dangers and pressures of life is being felt today. There is an urgent need for individual transformation”. (Shukla 2003: 42) She further notes that society is being infested and riddled with crime and criminal activities at its peak. Our society, according to Shukla (2003: 42) is plagued with crime, violence and atrocities in the form of wars, racism, murders, suicides, child molestations, incest, corruption, robberies, hijackings, kidnappings, exploitations and adultery as well as diseases such as HIV/AIDS together with the

degradation of the environment. Hence a bleak picture is presented of our country. Communities all over the world are experiencing violence, inequalities and injustices in some form or another because of moral and ethical transgression for selfish gains. Moral degeneration is a reality. Thus one needs to find ways to curb this moral degeneration of the society and a way forward. According to some the introduction and implementing Religion Education in schools may play a positive role in addressing these social challenges. It is assumed that this subject will also in all probability bring about an inner sense of transformation in individuals, hence enabling them to think and make the right decisions as they assume responsibility for their own lives and become masters of their own destinies.

### ***4.3 MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION***

The essence of moral education is to present in the form of stories and anecdotes, moral ideas that will become real and part of the learner through personal experience. We, as human beings, live in society together with a diversity of other human beings. As such there is by definition, a clash of interests and a moral struggle between self-interest and duty. In reality, there is that existence of evil selfishness among human beings and if not curbed in some way, can lead to the most excessive forms of violence and exploitation. It is here that moral and religious education may play a positive role in curbing the potential moral, social and cultural decay in society. (see Stewart 1980:381)

According to the case study conducted in schools, 97% of Educators and 94% of the learners had agreed that Religion Studies would help them to reflect and come to a deeper and more mature understanding of their own religious ideas, morals and values and will have a positive impact as far as discipline is concerned. Morality is natural and it is the external manifestation of the inner goodness of humanity. Moral ideals bring about efficiency in work through a feeling of

equality. Summers (1996: 9), indicates that “some education authorities feel that religion should be taught to ensure suitable moral and ethical behaviour. Morality is seen as a by-product of religion and, if one is truly religious, it is felt that this must lead to the emergence of a moral person and, consequently, to a more moral society. For some people, the moral aspect of religion is regarded as more important than the doctrinal aspect.” Religion Studies provides religious and ethical training which bring about co-operation and responsible work without any supervision.

Moral and religious education also provides support for the moral and spiritual values that must be imparted to learners to arrest the decline of discipline and character, the loosening of social mores in relationships, and the increased materialism in society. (Holley 1978:134-156) Further, it is essential for learners to understand other religions than their own in order to avoid prejudices. Hence, it is essential for the building of character and the making of proper citizens. The only cure for this is the deliberate inculcation of moral and spiritual values from the earliest years of our lives. Proper education presupposes the conception of personality. Religion Studies can bring about the development of their physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual potentialities while creating a challenge in building a new nation to activate the positive, constructive values of the great religious traditions. In order to inculcate higher virtues, it is important to stimulate the very mind and soul of the learner. (Stewart 1980:256) The expanding knowledge and the growing power at the disposal of modern society must, therefore, be combined with the strengthening and deepening of the sense of social responsibility and the keen appreciation of moral and spiritual values and the need for the inculcation of the right values in the learners at all stages of education. Moral education will teach learners the qualities of tolerance, respect, temperance and purity and how to live with people in a society. By such education, educators in Religion Studies will realize that there will be an element of contentment and happiness and a rejuvenation of our learners.

The general principles of personal morality and social ethics which are conducive to the well-being of the learners and the society should be inculcated in the minds of all learners in schools. It is imperative that from early childhood, lessons of morality and social conduct be taught. This will then pave the way and equip our children with intellectual as well as a spiritual wealth of knowledge together with the religions' aesthetic components. These can then be experienced as a major asset for them throughout their lives.

It is hoped that religion and moral education must also be done in consistency with human and civil rights, in line with the upholding of freedom of religion, conscience, thought and expression. It would ensure social benefits by facilitating mutual understanding, reducing prejudice and increasing civil toleration of human diversity. Moral and spiritual values in state schools will lend dignity and direction to whatever else the learner will learn. (Stewart 1980:381) According to proponents of moral education as part of Religion Studies, moral responsibility and self-discipline are signs of maturity and these can be fostered in the subject of Religion Studies. To equip our learners to adapt to society, one must clarify essential values of one's own life. These values need not be rooted exclusively in any one religion since they are found in all religions in various ways. Learners need to be exposed to the variety of religious views on morality and ethics and in this way, be opened up for greater personal growth and the realisation of their own unique potential.

#### ***4.4 TOLERANCE AND RESPECT***

Living in a diverse multi-cultural and multi-religious country like South Africa, being previously predominantly Christian, it is important for one to understand the people of other cultural backgrounds. The implementation of Religion Studies



in schools certainly will enhance a positive attitude of respect for and tolerance of the people of faiths different from their own. According to Summers (1996: 50),

“once the essence of a particular religion is understood, it is far easier to accept people of that particular religion as people no different from any other. The other can be seen as people who are also struggling to find meaning in life and who are not in any way a threat to one’s own religion”.

Summers (1996: 50), also goes on to inform us that,

“... the subject helps to clarify the beliefs and customs of different cultures.... While a study of religion may be enriching for its own sake, it also has the effect of creating a sense of tolerance of those who believe and live in a different way. In situations where ignorance of different customs and beliefs can lead to friction, knowledge of these religions will enable the student of religion to see things in a different light.”

In this way one can live in peace and harmony and would counter undesirable influences. Religion Studies would accelerate the understanding of the world-views and motivating power of the religious traditions most influential in the historical and cultural development of their country of residence. Religion Studies would now help to enlarge the ability to empathize with the people who hold different beliefs from themselves and would foster the capacity to dialogue with people in a non-defensive and non-threatening way about ultimate beliefs and values. It is thus imperative that people be accepted and treated as equals. Just as belief systems are studied, so too can the values, ethics, norms and concepts of morality emanating from those belief systems be analysed.

Religion, it must be remembered, is more than doctrinal belief. A complex value system is an integral part of all religions. Religion Studies must be educational and must contribute to the personal development of each learner. (Bruce 1996:37-38)

#### ***4.5 THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE RELIGION STUDIES TEACHER***

In the light of the data collected, it would be fair to summarize the role of the Religion Studies teacher in the following way. First and foremost, it became evident in the interviews that the educator must be a role model and a mentor to his or her learners. The educator must control student learning – both to exercise social control over the learners and to direct and guide their learning activities. The Religion Studies teacher must persevere to commend to the learners the desirability of being rounded, and being ethical people who are sensitive to the spiritual dimension and integrated in their purposes around a set of beliefs which for them make sense of life. He or she has the responsibility of modelling such a person. The educator also needs to conduct himself/herself in an ethical manner towards other people. He or she needs to resist the temptation to adopt a stance of exclusive partiality by feeling at liberty to promote one point of view exclusively, discouraging knowledge about or honest inspection of any other view points. (Butler 1957:240-247)

Initially the educator could present his/her own interpretation of beliefs and values of the subject being taught. It is also the task of the Religion Studies educator to facilitate an understanding of pluralism, and, together, discuss and explore those values which lead to wholeness of the individual and help them live in peace together. The Religion Studies educator must help learners understand the beliefs and values of others and to reflect on their own. Teachers are

professional educators with skills that can enable them to teach the subject in a less doctrinal way than, for example, a Sunday School teacher. Since religion is an important aspect in one's life learners should be equipped with a deeper sense of understanding of the people they are likely to associate with in the classroom or in society as a whole.

Furthermore, as became evident from the data, since Religion Studies is an important subject of multi-cultural and multi-religious education, learners need to be taught about the religious values and practices of their community. They need to understand and appreciate the traditions and beliefs as practiced by other members of the community. Educators should not proselytize or mould their learner into their own religious understandings and beliefs. An educator's religious belief should not be propagated at the expense of other religions. The teaching of Religion Studies in schools must give the learners a sound understanding of the beliefs of people of their community. However, it must also be admitted that the belief and faith of an educator does have an impact on the life of the learner since it communicates a positive attitude towards the subject whilst providing a well-articulated example of a particular religious tradition.

#### ***4.6 A NON-DISCRIMINATORY APPROACH TO RELIGION STUDIES***

The study of religion could become a very controversial aspect of the school curriculum if it is not managed carefully. Many objections from parents and religious leaders could be raised fearing that learners could be led astray from their own faiths. Accusations could be made against the state for presenting a biased curriculum and forcing learners to accept such a curriculum.

It is therefore imperative to opt for the views of the majority of stakeholders. The state needs to take cognizance of the religious beliefs of the community or society it is dealing with. (Holley 1978:161-166) Nevertheless, the State cannot be seen to encourage any particular religious or secular ethos, notwithstanding the fact that in some schools the majority of the community belongs to a particular worldview. In any event, such a society in our present day democracy is hard to be found as we live in a multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural country. A possibility of further dispute could arise. A classic example is that in South Africa alone, there are over a hundred Christian denominations with diverse doctrines and practices. The greatest challenge for a single religion education would be to determine the religious denomination of every single learner. Will a single religion education be able to meet these requirements in satisfying every learner? We therefore come to realize that a single-faith education is not workable in state schools.

Even so, living in a multi-tradition society, and having a multi-cultural and multi-religious curriculum, does not guarantee lack of bias. Greater challenges lie ahead. How does an educator deal with diversity in society? It has become necessary for educationists to continuously explore alternatives to the outdated single-faith approaches of the past. By doing this, they will succeed in overcoming religious discrimination in schools.

#### ***4.7 THE ETHICAL STANCE OF A TEACHER***

As mentioned above, first and foremost the educators need to be role models as well as mentors to the learners in their care. The educators need to behave in an ethical manner towards learners. An important issue of concern is for teachers to take their responsibility for values-education seriously. And that is how the

teacher's own personal belief-stance should be handled in the classroom. How should teachers behave towards learners when it comes to teaching them about beliefs and values of those that they do not practice? One preliminary task for the educator is to invent devices to assure learners that they may have complete liberty to make their own decisions, while putting persistent pressure for accurate knowledge and logical procedure without working under the handicap of prejudice and closed-mindedness. (Butler 1959:240-247) Educators should aim to build a rationale and a philosophy of Religion Studies, equipping learners with values of life. The study of Religion can serve this aim by:

- An evaluation of human personality which places emphasis on realities and providing a basis for respect for oneself and one's fellow human beings.
- An attitude of religious tolerance which overcomes the concerns about the co-operative search for truth; and
- A spirit of courage in facing the task of moral and social reconstruction.

It is imperative that a free environment for discussion be created. Educators are naturally elected role models and if they display an attitude of tolerance by encouraging learners to strive to learn about all the cross-sections of the society through Religion Studies, the learners would assimilate their behaviour. Different educators might adopt different stances in the classroom. Yet, if they are open to discussion and sharing of views and information, they can create a dynamic environment of engagement which would be conducive to the inculcating of critical yet inclusive perspectives.

It is more than likely that some educators may adopt a stance of exclusive partiality and so promote one point of view exclusively, discouraging knowledge

of others viewpoints. (see Erricker 1993:109-118) The viewpoint presented will obviously be the educator's own personal perspective, that is the beliefs and values the educator holds about the religion or the moral values being taught. Such exclusive partiality needs to be engaged with by fellow educators on a continuous basis. Regular assessment of the teaching methods and the contents and goals of the Religion Studies subject offered in a school may also assist in this case.

It is also possible that an educator might deploy a stance of exclusive neutrality by keeping the controversial areas of study of religious, social and political values out of the curriculum. Neutrality is not necessarily achieved through total exclusion of controversial and difficult topics. Many educators have expressed concern that if they teach anything other than publicly defensible facts, there will be angry parents on their doorsteps threatening legal action. The stance of exclusive neutrality can neither be defended nor sustained. It could also contribute to unanticipated negative consequences for the learners in the school.

In neutral impartiality, the educator is expected to remain impartial, providing informational resources and encouraging rational discussion, while performing a neutral umpiring function which inhibits educators from revealing their own personal views and commitments. This position recognizes the importance in real life of people's religious beliefs and value systems and allows the school to provide learners with a more valid picture of how our neighbours in the pluralistic society see the world. It thereby reduces any suspicion of indifference. An educator adopting the stance of neutral impartiality may also be unintentionally reinforcing certain implicit values. Neutral impartiality obliges the educator to refuse an answer. The stance of neutral impartiality acknowledges that values matter and that the learners are thinking beings.

The word “committed” entitles educators to reveal which religious stance they are personally committed to. The word “impartiality” warrants the educator to maintain impartiality in their dealings with learners and their choice of subject matter.

## **4.8 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter a contextual analysis of Religion Studies is proffered. A more differentiated form of definition to Religion Education, Religious Instruction and Religious Observances was illustrated. Various aspects leading to the enhancement of the learners’ growth as individuals in accordance with acceptable norms, values and morals of society were emphasized. A brief elucidation of the role and function of the educator, a non-discriminatory approach, views and opinions and ethical stance of the educator were also provided. The following chapter is intended to provide some further reflections on the future of Religion Studies in the light of the above research findings, and discussions that highlighted the challenges in implementing Religion Studies.

# **CHAPTER 5**

## **FUTURE PROSPECTS OF RELIGION STUDIES**

In a democratic country such as South Africa, there is a need to understand the social reality of religious pluralism. A democratic country comes into existence with the sole purpose of giving power to the people and instilling a sense of “unity in diversity” among the general population. The research thus far has suggested that such unity is impossible without first developing an attitude of tolerance and a desire for understanding the various forms of diversity in society.

As South Africa is constituted by such a wide diversity of cultures and their related religious traditions, it is of paramount importance that it also seeks to define their relationships with the world religions and their various religious traditions. These found themselves to be neighbours in our country. For South Africans this means that they can not just regard themselves in terms of their own cultures and religious traditions to the exclusion of others, even of secular commitments. Kellenberger (1993:xi) says in this regard:

An issue of ever more pressing concern in today’s world of comingled cultures is the relationship between the religions of the world. Increasingly often in the late twentieth century, members of the various religious traditions find themselves to be neighbors. It is no longer true that those in religions other than our own can without reflection be dismissed as ‘heathens’ or ‘infidels’, for we daily look into the eyes of those in other religions, either in person or through the vicarious experience of



television. 'How, then', we find ourselves asking, 'does my religion relate to the religions of other persons?'

This is an important question as South Africa has embarked on the including of Religion Studies in the school curriculum.

Another important question to raise is our relationship to the 'Real' in the midst of a diversity of religions. John Hick says in this regard that we need to also factor in the fact that the human mind makes a positive contribution to what we perceive as the real, in that we postulate the real

... to satisfy (a) the basic faith that human religious experience is not purely projection but is at the same time a response to a transcendent reality or realities; and (b) ... that Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism etc, which are communal responses to these different gods and absolutes, seem to be more or less equally effective contexts for human transformation from self centeredness, with all the evils and miseries that flow from this, to a recentering in the Transcendent as experience within one's own tradition.

A society has its schools and education system as its epicenter and hub through which its citizens can study and imbibe educational values. The education system is therefore an ideal starting point for the inculcation of values of dignity, freedom, equity, understanding, tolerance and respect. A programme such as Religion Studies will lay the foundation by handling what has been one of the most sensitive issues surrounding human existence. If society can be understood within a pluralistic context, it would appreciate their people and foster a spirit of goodwill and tolerance while also becoming more reasonable in their search to discover the true essence, both of their own and of other's religions in dignity, freedom and equity. Such an individual could prove to be more easily integrated into the global society than the one who has come through a limited worldview.

Ultimately, understanding between people is a universal principle and those who are equipped with it will find themselves relating to other people in a stronger capacity since even language barriers can be overcome through a genuine display of humanity. As such, our common humanity is the basis on which Religion Studies could be founded.

In the implementation of Religion Studies in the school curriculum and ensuring that learners attain the maximum benefit from this course of study, an integrated methodology through workshops and in-service training programmes are essential for a successful transition to Religion Studies. This could assist the educator to refrain from indoctrinating learners and from presenting real-life issues in a clinical manner, hence contributing towards fostering a pluralistic society. Having learners from a multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-traditional background is a motivating factor to implement Religion Studies in our schools with trained Religion Studies educators. The advantage of this would be to teachers as it would become a publicly examinable learning area and thus eliminating all bias and religious indoctrination. This will empower educators to take control of the class with regard to emotions and outbursts of anger from those who cannot tolerate opposition to their viewpoints. Active participation through positive thinking with much cultural insights would be realized and experienced if the class is under direct control of the educator. This will enhance good values, and norms to be firmly imbedded in the minds of the learners without prejudice or discrimination.

As pointed out in this thesis, many attempts were made to define “Religion Studies” and “religion”. However no conclusive definitions have yet been established. It is assumed that religion consists of “beliefs about” various things. In fact, adhering to a religion can be on a spectrum from the most gentle to a ferociously conscious and deliberate taking-up of positions and practices when people locate themselves on that spectrum.

Although the *National Policy on Religion and Education* (2003) warrants the implementation of Religion Studies in the school curriculum and that there is some interest, the future of Religion Studies as a state or public school subject remains uncertain. While a new day is dawning for education in South Africa, given both the dubious history and the nature of the past attempts to teach Religious Studies, it is still not absolutely certain that the subject will find a place in the curriculum although it most probably will. There are many challenges in the implementation of Religion Studies. This research attempted to explore some of those challenges.

Some of the challenges facing educators are the appropriate resources such as text books, availability of trained professional teachers, willingness of managements and parents to engage this subject, the possible bias from educators, fear of conversion and indoctrination as well as finding suitable approaches to the teaching of the subject which will satisfy all those currently opposed to either its retention in state schools or to the introduction of a particular type of religious education. While this is a great challenge, it is anticipated that Religion Studies will take its rightful place in the school curriculum. However, its link with the outcomes-based education system will be one of its main challenges. When there is lack of clarity as well as agreement as to what exactly should Religion Studies achieve in schools, locating Religion Studies within the curriculum of OBE would be a difficult task. However, despite its particular limitations, this study has tried to contribute towards this process. More studies involving the relevant role players will doubtlessly make more contributions in this direction.

Nevertheless, before the implementation of Religion Studies, schools need to agree on the purpose of Religion Studies. Its main objective could be to study this subject in order to understand its place and function as an aspect of human activity and its importance in life. This study could draw on material from a variety of religions, using most appropriate examples available. Religion Studies

must be seen to be the study of many dimensions and facets of religion – practices, beliefs, customs, traditions and historical developments.

Notwithstanding some of the challenges identified in this study, it is hoped that Religion Studies as a subject can most definitely play an important role in contributing to transformation in South Africa in line with the perspectives in the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy, from the Ministry of Education* and the *National Policy on Religion and Education*. This can be done by the inculcation of good morals, attitudes, values, tolerance and respect and educating society on the significance that religion could play in building a society based on trust, justice and equality. This, however, will only be realized if all the major stakeholders such as the educators, parents, community leaders and non-governmental organizations get together and design strategies for implementing these changes. We are living in a democratic society. History can never be forgotten and the past can never be forgiven. Nevertheless, we need to transform and redevelop our society along broader values drawn from all the communities that live in South Africa. Perhaps in this sense, Religion Studies could be one of the main building blocks to construct a society wherein all the people of our rainbow nation can live together in peace and harmony.

Ultimately the implementation of Religion Studies will continue to be a contentious issue although it explores matters of relevant and ultimate concern to human becoming. We hope that even though still partial, and also pointing to the prospects and challenges, this study made an important contribution on the way forward for the Implementation of Religion Studies in schools. It has also pointed to the valid reasons for implementing Religion Studies in schools and researched a sample of opinions from educators, learners and principals.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbas, T. 2003. The Impact of Religio-Cultural Norms and Values on the Education of Young South Asian Women. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 24, No. 4: 411-428.
- Amin, M.S. 2005. *From Religious Instruction to Religion Education. Alternation, Journal Of the Centre for the Study of Southern African Literature and Languages Special Edition No 2*. CSSALL: Durban.
- Asmal, K & James, W. 2001. Education and Democracy in South Africa Today. *Daedalus*, Vol. 130, No. 1: 185-204. Why South Africa Matters.
- Bassinger, D. 2002. *Religious Diversity. A Philosophical Assessment*. Ashgate Publishing Co. Aldershot.
- Bennett, Christine. 2001. Genres of Research in Multicultural Education. *Review of Educational Research*. Vol. 71, No. 2: 171-217.
- Bruce, S. 1996. *Religion in the Modern World. From Cathedrals to Cults*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Bryant, M.D. 1992. *Religion in a New Key*. Wiley Eastern Limited: New Delhi, India.
- Butler, Donald J. 1957. *Four Philosophies and Their Practice in Education and Religion*. Harper and Row: New York.
- Carman, J.B. 1967. *The Study of Religion in the Indian University*. A Report of the Consultation held in Bangalore in September, 1967.
- Carter, S L. 1993. *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialise Religious Devotion*. Publisher: Basic Books, New York.
- Chidester, D. 2002. *Global Citizenship, Cultural Citizenship and World Religions in Religion Education*. Compress: Cape Town.
- Chidester, D. Mitchell, G. Omar, A.R. Phiri, I.A. 1994. *Religion in Public Education. Options for a New South Africa*. UCT Press, University of Cape Town.

- Cole, Owen W. (ed). 1988. *Religion in the Multi-faith School*. Hulton Educational: Amersham, Bucks.
- Cross, Michael. 2004. Institutionalising Campus Diversity in South African Higher Education: Review of Diversity Scholarship and Diversity Education. *Higher Education*, Vol. 47, No. 4: 387-410.
- Eldering L. 1996. Multiculturalism and Multicultural Education in an International Perspective. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3: 315-330.
- Ensign, R. 2002. "Religion or Religious Studies? What difference does it make?" *Journal of Religion and Society*, Vol. 4: 1-13.
- Erricker, C. (ed). 1993. *Teaching World Religions. A Teacher's Handbook*. Heinemann: Oxford.
- Gadari, U. 1996. *Ancient Afro-Hindu Ethos*. India: Director International Centre for Cultural Studies, India.
- Garner, R.C. 2000. Religion as a Source of Social Change in the New South Africa. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 30, Fasc. 3: 310-343.
- Gellner, E. 1992. *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*. Routledge: London.
- Gokak, V.K. 1967. *Inaugural Address*. Study of Religion in Indian Universities. A Report of the Consultation held in Bangalore in September, 1967.
- Gounder, L. 2004. *An Analysis of Religion Education for Children in the 11–15 year age group with a view to Incorporating Hindu Values*. Doosi: South Africa.
- Govender, S. 2004. *The Challenges of Multicultural Education and the Promotion of a Culture of Learning and Teaching*. Doosi: South Africa.
- Hamnett, I. (ed). 1990. *Religious Pluralism and Unbelief. Studies Critical and Comparative*. Routledge: London.
- Henrard, Kristin. 2001. The Accommodation of Religious Diversity in South Africa against the Background of the Centrality of the Equality Principle in the New Constitutional Dispensation. *Journal of African Law*, Vol. 45, No. 1: 51-72.

- Herbert, D. 2003. *Religion and Civil Society. Rethinking Public Religion in the Contemporary World*. Ashgate Publishing Co. Aldershot.
- Hick, John 1997. The Epistemological Challenge of Religious Pluralism. *Faith and Philosophy* 14, July: 283.
- Hill, B.V. 2004. *Exploring Religion in School. A National Priority*. Openbook Publishers: Adelaide.
- Hilliard, A. G. 1978. Equal Educational Opportunity and Quality Education. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 2: 110-126. New Perspectives on Black Education.
- Holley, R. 1978. *Religious Education and Religious Understanding*. Routledge & Kegan Paul: London.
- Hughes, E. 1994. *Religious Education in the Primary School. Managing Diversity*. Redwood Books: London, Cassell.
- Jarvis, Janet 2008. The Voice of the Teacher in the Context of Religious Freedom: A KwaZulu-Natal Case Study. MEd Thesis, submitted at the University of Stellenbosch.
- Johnson, R. W. 1982. Education Keystone of Apartheid. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3: 214-237. African Education and Social Stratification.
- Kallaway, P. 2002. *The History of Education under Apartheid 1948-1994: "The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall Be Opened"*. Maskew Miller Longman (Pty) Ltd.
- Kellenberger, J. (ed). 1993. *Inter-Religious Models and Criteria*. St Martins Press, New York:
- Kruger, JS. 1994. *From One to Many. The Challenge of Religious Pluralism*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Kumar, P. Pratap. "Religious Pluralism and Religion Education in South Africa" in *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* (Journal of the North American Association for the Study of Religion), Vol. 18:3, 2006, pp. 273-293.
- MacHacek, D.W. 2003. The Problem of Pluralism. *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 64, No. 2: 145-161.

- Madan,. T.N. 2003. Freedom of Religion. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 38, No. 11: 1034-1041.
- Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy, from the Ministry of Education.* February 2001 – see <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/712208/Manifesto-On-Values-Education-and-Democracy-in-South-Africa>.
- Marshall, K 1999. *Development and Religion: A Different Lens on Development Debates*, (Articles and Talks from Internet). United Kingdom.
- Mitchell, G., Mndende, N, Phiri, I.A. & Stonier, J. 1993. *The End of the Tunnel. Religion Education for a Non-Racial South Africa*. Cape Town: ICRSA.
- Moja, T. et al. 1996. Towards New Forms of Regulation in Higher Education. The Case of South Africa. *Higher Education* Vol. 32, No. 2: 129-155.
- Mumford, C. 1980. *Young Children and Religion*. London: Edward Arnold.
- National Policy on Religion and Education* (2003). <http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=70211>
- Nduka, O. 1980. Moral Education in the Changing Traditional Societies of Sub-Saharan Africa. *International Review of Education*, Vol. 26, No. 2: 153-170, Problems of Teaching Moral Values in Changing Society.
- North, C.M. & Grin C.R. 2004. Religious Freedom and the Unintended Consequences of State Religion. *Southern Economic Journal*, Vol. 71: 103-117.
- Persell, C.H. 1994. Taking Society Seriously. *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 9, No. 4: 641-657. Special Issue: Multiculturalism and Diversity.
- Race, A. & Ingrid, S. (eds). 2002. *Religions in Dialogue. From Theocracy to Democracy*. Ashgate Publishing Co. Aldershot.
- Roux, C.. 1998. *Paradigm Shift in Teaching Religion. Journal for the Study of Religion, Volume 11, No 2*.
- Roux, C. 2004. *Teaching and Learning about Religions in Schools: Responses from a Participation Action Research Project. Journal for the Study of Religion. Volume 17 Number 2*.
- Schumacher, S. et al. 1993. *Research in Education. A Conceptual Introduction*. Harper Collins: New York.



- Sealey, J. 1985. *Religious Education: Philosophical Perspective*. George Allen & Unwin: London.
- Selinger, L. 2004. *The Forgotten Factor: The Uneasy Relationship between Religion and Development*. Social Compass. London, United Kingdom.
- Shiman, D. 1994. *The Prejudice Book*. Anti-Defamation League Publishers.
- South African Draft Policy on Religion and Education* 20 June 2003 (Produced by the Department of National Education, South Africa).
- Soudien, C. & Baxen, J. 1997. Transformation and Outcomes-Based Education in South Africa: Opportunities and Challenges. *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 66, No. 4: 449-459. (Education in a New South Africa: The Crises of Conflict, the Challenges of Change.)
- Stewart, D. 1980. *Exploring the Philosophy of Religion*. Prentice Hall: Engelwood Cliffs, New Jersey.
- Struwig, F.W. & Stead, G.B. 2001. *Planning, Designing and Reporting Research*. Cape Town: Pearson Education.
- Summers, H.C. & Waddington, R.R. (ed). 1996. *Religion Education for Transformation*. Kagiso Tertiary: Pretoria.
- Ulich, Robert. 1968. *A History of Religious Education. Documents and Interpretations from the Judaeo-Christian Tradition*. New York University Press: New York.
- Ver Beek, K.A. 2002. *Spirituality: A Development Taboo: Development and Culture: Selected Essays from Development in Practice*. Oxford: Oxfam GB in association with World Faiths Development Dialogue.
- Waghid, Yusef. 2002. Knowledge Production and Higher Education in South Africa: Towards Reflexivity in University Teaching and Community Service. *Higher Education*, Vol. 43, No 4: 457-488.
- Welman, J.C. & Kruger S.J.. 2001 *Research Methodology*. Oxford University Press: Cape Town.
- Wilson, J.1970. *Education in Religion & the Emotions*. Heinemann: London.
- William, J. 1961. *The Variety of Religious Experience*. Collier Books: New York.
- Wilkinson, David. 2004. *The Researcher's Toolkit*. RoutledgeFalmer: London.

## **Appendix 1**

**MR N. RAJBANSI**

STUDENT NO.: 206511242

**UNIVERSITY OF KWA ZULU-NATAL  
HOWARD COLLEGE CAMPUS**

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE (HUMAN SOCIAL SCIENCES)**

**FOR**

**MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE**

**TOPIC**

**THE PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES  
IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
RELIGION STUDIES  
IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

**2008**

**SUPERVISOR  
PROF. P.P. KUMAR**

# **QUESTIONNAIRE TO THESIS ON RELIGION STUDIES**

## **TOPIC**

**THE PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
RELIGION STUDIES  
IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM:  
A CASE STUDY OF NORTH DURBAN REGION  
IN KWA ZULU-NATAL**

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The purpose of this survey is to obtain information on the views and opinions of all stakeholders on their understanding of Religion Studies and its Prospects and Challenges in its implementation in the School Curriculum in the FET Phase.

The information supplied in this questionnaire is strictly confidential and will be used purely for statistical purposes only.

**You are requested to complete this questionnaire voluntarily.**

## DECLARATION

I, ..... (full name/s of Participant), hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of The research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire

.....  
SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT DATE

## QUESTIONNAIRE

INTERVIEWEE STATUS

NO.

*Please place an "X" below in the appropriate block*

Educator	Learner	Principal

PS. In this questionnaire, "Religion Studies" is referred to as:

"a curriculum program with clear and age-appropriate educational outcomes for teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religion diversity in South Africa and the world. It places emphasis on aloes and moral education".

**Religion Studies, however, must no be misconstrued for Religious Education, Religious Studies or Science of Religion.**

**DEFINITIONS:**     **RS**     : RELIGION STUDIES  
                             **FET**    : FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**This questionnaire consists of two sections. Section A must be completed by Principals only.**

**Section B must be completed by all interviewees, including the Principals.**

**SECTION A**  
**FOR PRINCIPALS OR PERSONS ACTING FOR PRINCIPALS ONLY**

1.1 Status of School:  
(Please place an “X” in the appropriate block)

State School	
Private School	
Semi-Private School	
Ex-Model C School	

1.2 School Population:  
(Please place an “X” in the appropriate block)

Number of Learners	
Number of Educators	
No. of Management	
No. of SGB Educators	

1.3 Type of School:  
(Please place an “X” in the appropriate block)

Secondary School	
Single Gender School	
Co-Educational School	
Private School	

1.4 Diversity of the School:  
(Please place an “X” in the appropriate block)

Multi-Cultural School	
Multi-Racial School	
Multi-Religious School	
Single Faith School	

1.5 Please place an “X” in the appropriate block

1.5.1 Is “**Religion Studies**”, as defined in this questionnaire, being taught in your school?

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

1.5.2 If **NO**, why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

1.5.3 Have you attended any **Religion Studies** workshops?

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

1.5.4 If **YES**, what was the nature of the workshop(s) and what is your opinion of the challenges and opportunities for **Religion Studies** in the school curriculum?

---

---

---

---

1.5.5 Are any Educators in your school trained to teach Religion Studies as defined in the Policy Document on RS in the FET phase?

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

1.5.6 Are resource materials for the teaching of Religion Studies adequately available?

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

1.5.7 I “Yes”, are the resources well balanced and free of all bias?

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

1.5.8 If “NO”, please express your opinion.

---

---

---

---

1.5.9 What are your views and opinion on the introduction of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**SECTION B**  
**FOR PRINCIPALS OR PERSONS ACTING FOR PRINCIPALS ONLY**

**2 THIS SECTION NEEDS TO BE ANSWERED BY ALL RESPONDENTS INCLUDING PRINCIPALS**

2.1 Name of institution/ school

--

2.2 Gender

MALE	FEMALE
------	--------

2.3 Qualifications

Below M+3	
M+3	
Above M+3	
Other	

2.4 Teaching experience

Under 5 years	
6 – 10 years	
11 – 15 years	
Over 15 years	

Are you qualified to teach Religion Studies as defined above?

YES	NO
-----	----

**3. ADVANTAGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGION STUDIES IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

*Please place an “X” below in the appropriate block*

AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE
-------	----------	----------

3.1 **RS** will stimulate the Learners to reflect and to come to a deeper and more Mature understanding of their own religious ideas, morals and values.

--	--	--

3.2 **RS** will help Learners develop skills in understanding religious ideas, concepts and the meaning and importance of religious practices for those who practice it.

--	--	--

3.3 **RS** will have a positive impact in curbing disciplinary problems in schools.

--	--	--



3.4 **RS** will help Learners to reflect critically and appreciatively on religious traditions.

--	--	--

3.5 **RS** will help to develop the capacity to identify and evaluate religious truth claims and values.

--	--	--

3.6 **RS** will help Learners to empathise with the way those who hold different beliefs from themselves see the world and are motivated by it.

--	--	--

3.7 **RS** will help to foster the capacity to deal with people in a non-defensive and non-threatening way about ultimate beliefs and values.

--	--	--

#### 4 BENEFITS FOR PARENTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGION STUDIES IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

*Please place an "X" below in the appropriate block*

AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE
-------	----------	----------

4.1 **RS** will help Parents to develop the capacity to identify and evaluate religious truth claims and values.

--	--	--

4.2 **RS** will allow Parents to reflect critically and appreciatively on religious traditions.

--	--	--

4.3 **RS** helps Parents to understand the world and motivating power of religious traditions.

--	--	--

4.4 **RS** helps to increase the learner's understanding of some of the other religions and ideological traditions significantly represented in the Community.

--	--	--

5 CHALLENGES CREATED FOR THE EDUCATOR AND THE AVAILABILITY AND SUITABILITY OR RESOURCE MATERIAL FOR RELIGION STUDIES

*Please place an "X" below in the appropriate block*

AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE
-------	----------	----------

5.1 Resource materials for the implementation of RS must be more accessible and available in schools.

--	--	--

5.2 Resource materials for the teaching of RS must be well balanced, free of all bias and representative of all religious denominations of the community.

--	--	--

5.3 Educators must be well trained and unbiased when teaching RE as there is a strong possibility of them having a bias towards a particular faith.

--	--	--

6 CHALLENGES THAT SCHOOLS ARE PLACED WITH IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGION STUDIES IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

*Please place an "X" below in the appropriate block*

AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE
-------	----------	----------

6.1 **RS** should provide a basis for personal development, shared moral values and a spiritual foundation upon which a new nation can be built.

--	--	--

6.2 **RS** creates a challenge in building a new nation to activate the positive, constructive values of the great religious traditions.

--	--	--

6.3 **RS** lessons require some pedagogical standards of clarity of purpose, communication, interest and enthusiasm in the teaching of other areas of the school curriculum.

--	--	--

6.4 Cultural analysis for curriculum purposes is extremely difficult and fraught with the risk of accusations of value bias.

--	--	--

## 7. THE NATURE OF RELIGION EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN SCHOOLS

*Please place an "X" below in the appropriate block*

AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE
-------	----------	----------

7.1 **RS** must be consistent with human and civil rights to freedom of religion, conscience, thought and expression.

--	--	--

7.2 **RS** must ensure social benefits by facilitating mutual understanding, reducing prejudice and increasing civil toleration of human diversity.

--	--	--

7.3 **RS** must give Learners the opportunity to reflect critically and constructively on the function of religion in their personal and interpersonal lives.

--	--	--

7.4 **RS** is essential for the building of character and making of proper citizens.

--	--	--

7.5 **RS**, taking into account the demographics of the country, must ensure that all religions are included in the school curriculum.

--	--	--

7.6 **RS** must ensure that the indigenous religions or traditions of South Africa, like all other religions, be given their rightful place in the school curriculum.

--	--	--

## 8 THE OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF RELIGION STUDIES

*Please place an "X" below in the appropriate block*

AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE
-------	----------	----------

8.1 It is realistic to think that the teaching of **RS** can counter undesirable influences.

--	--	--

8.2 In view of the conflicts that are occurring between and within faith communities, a deinstitutionalised form of **RS** should be promoted which will focus on personal experiences of mystery and spirituality rather than on belief systems and institutionalised traditions.

--	--	--

8.3 **RS** helps to understand the world view and motivating power of the religious traditions most influential in the historical and cultural development of their country of residence.

--	--	--

8.4 **RS** helps to increase the understanding of the other religious and ideological traditions significantly represented in the general population.

--	--	--

8.5 **RS** helps to develop capacity to identify and evaluate religious truth claims and values, including those of the tradition they know best.

--	--	--

8.6 **RS** helps to enlarge the ability to empathise with the way people who hold different beliefs from themselves see the world and are motivated by their beliefs.

--	--	--

8.7 **RS** helps to foster the capacity to dialogue with people in a non-defensive and non-threatening way about ultimate beliefs and values.

--	--	--

8.8 The study of **RS** is important insofar as it provides support for the spiritual values that must be imparted to Learners to arrest the decline of discipline and character.

--	--	--

## 9. MODELS OF RELIGION STUDIES

*Please place an “X” below in the appropriate block*

AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE
-------	----------	----------

9.1 **RS** should follow a faith-based approach.

--	--	--

9.2 **RS** should follow a multi-faith based approach.

--	--	--

9.3 **RS** should follow a non-faith based approach.

--	--	--

9.4 There should be no particular dominant religious ethos in public schools.

--	--	--

9.5 **RS** should allow all religions and secular views to be taught.

--	--	--

9.6 A curriculum with “life experience” themes should be used as points of **RS** rather than religious stories.

--	--	--

10 MY VIEWS AND OPINION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGION STUDIES  
IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

10.1 What in your opinion are some of the prospects of RS in the school curriculum?

---

---

---

---

10. 2 What do you think would be some of the challenges and barriers in the implementation of RS in the school curriculum?

---

---

---

---

10.3 My views and opinion on RS.

---

---

---

---

## Appendix 2 -CONFIRMATION OF REGISTRATION



School of  
Religion and Theology



UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL

22 October 2008

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN (For att.: Phiwa)

I hereby confirm that Mr. N. Rajbansi (Stud. No.: 206511242) is a registered student for the MA (Religion Education) in the School of Religion and Theology, University of Kwazulu-Natal, for the year 2008.

Kind regards

Prof JA Smit

Academic Coordinator Religion

Private Bag X10, Dalbridge, DURBAN, 4041, South Africa.  
Telephone: +27 31 260 7303; Facsimile: +27 31 260 7286  
[masiza@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:masiza@ukzn.ac.za) ; [www.sorat.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.sorat.ukzn.ac.za)

### **Appendix 3: PERMISSION TO ADMINISTER QUESTIONNAIRES**

Tel. : 032 5331987 (H) 46 Dianthus Road  
Telefax: 031 5079021 (W) Brindhaven  
Cell : 082 782 3689 Verulam  
Email : naran.rajbansi@gmail.com 4340  
25 April 2008

Dr G.N. Msimango  
Dept. of Education  
Province of Kwa Zulu-Natal  
Private Bag X9137  
Pietermaritzburg, 3200

#### **PERMISSION TO ADMINISTER QUESTIONNAIRES**

I am an Educator at Northlen Primary School in Phoenix. Presently I am engaged in studies at the University of Kwa Zulu-Natal, Howard College Campus and I am studying towards my Master of Arts Degree in Religion Studies which is a new Subject and in keeping with the new Policy Document in Religion Studies.

I hereby request your permission to conduct my research at the following Secondary Schools which is a prerequisite towards my Master of Arts Degree.

Mountview Secondary School; Verulam Secondary School;  
Sipishile Secondary School; Greenbury Secondary School; and  
Northwood Boys High School.

The study focuses on “**The Prospects and Challenges in the Implementation of Religion Studies in the School Curriculum: A Case Study of North Durban Region in Kwa Zulu-Natal**”. The data or findings of the study could be used by the Department of Education and all stakeholders to determine the Prospects and Challenges that schools are faced with in the implementation of Religion Studies and how these barriers could be overcome in our multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-linguistic schools.

I have pleasure in assuring you that all the participants will not be disturbed in their normal school activities. I will ensure that questionnaires administered do not disturb the school programme. All information obtained will be strictly confidential and will be utilized for research purposes only. Lastly, the findings will be made available to the department should it wish to be informed on the research.

Yours in the interest of Education

---

MR N. RAJBANSI DATE



## Appendix 4 - GRANTING OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT QUESTIONNAIRE



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL  
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATALI

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
UMNYANGO WEMFUNDO

Tel: 033 341 8610

Fax: 033 341 8612

Private Bag X9157

Pietermaritzburg

3200

228 Pietermaritz Street  
PIETERMARITZBURG

INHLOKHOVISI	PIETERMARITZBURG	HEAD OFFICE
Imibuzo: Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar	Reference: Inkomba: 0050/2008	Date: Usuku: 24 October 2008

Mr N. Rajbansi  
46 Dianthus Road  
Brindhaven  
Verulam  
4340

### PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS

The above matter refers.

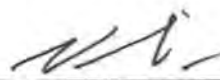
Permission is hereby granted to interview Departmental Officials, learners and educators in selected schools of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal subject to the following conditions:

1. You make all the arrangements concerning your interviews.
2. Educators' and work programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, educators and schools and other Departmental Officials are not identifiable in any way from the results of the interviews.
5. Your interviews are limited only to targeted schools.
6. A brief summary of the interview content, findings and recommendations is provided to my office.
7. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers and principals of schools or heads of section where the intended interviews are to be conducted.

The KZN Department of education fully supports your commitment to research: The prospects and the challenges in the implementation of religion studies in the school curriculum.

It is hoped that you will find the above in order.

Best Wishes

  
R Cassius Lubisi, (PhD)  
Superintendent-General

DIRECTORATE: RESEARCH UNIT  
ritz Street, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3201

RESOURCES PLANNING  
Office No. G25, 188 Pieterma

## Appendix 5 - LIST OF SCHOOLS



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL  
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATALI

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
UMNYANGO WEMFUNDO

Tel: 033 341 8610  
Fax: 033 341 8612  
Private Bag X9137  
Pietermaritzburg  
3200

228 Pietermaritz Street  
PIETERMARITZBURG

**INHLOKHOVISI**

**PIETERMARITZBURG**

**HEAD OFFICE**

Imibuzo:

Reference:

Date:

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Inkomba: 0053/2008

Usuku: 24 October 2008

Mr N. Rajbansi  
46 Dianthus Road  
Brindhaven  
Verulam  
4340

### LIST OF SCHOOLS

1. Mountview Secondary School
2. Verulam Secondary School
3. Sipishile Secondary School
4. Greenbury Seecondary School
5. University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus)

Kind regards

R Cassius Lubisi, (PhD)  
Superintendent-General

TORATE: RESEARCH UNIT  
101, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3201

RESOURCES PLANNING DIREC  
Office No. G25, 188 Pietermaritz Stra

## Appendix 6 - APPROVAL OF APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL  
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATALI  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
UMNYANGO WEMFUNDO

Tel: 033 341 8610  
Fax: 033 341 8612  
Private Bag X9137  
Pietermaritzburg  
3200  
228 Pietermaritz Street  
PIETERMARITZBURG

INHLOKOHOVISI	PIETERMARITZBURG	HEAD OFFICE
Imibuzo: Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar	Reference: Inkomba: 0050/2008	Date: Usuku: 24 October 2008

Mr N. Rajbansi  
46 Dianthus Road  
Brindhaven  
Verulam  
4340

### RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGION STUDIES IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM.

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the attached list has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educator programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The investigation is to be conducted from 03 November 2008 to 03 November 2009.
6. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s) please contact Mr Sibusiso Alwar at the contact numbers above.
7. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal of the school where the intended research is to be conducted.
8. Your research will be limited to the schools submitted.
9. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Resource Planning.


RESOURCES PLANNING DIRECTORATE: RESEARCH UNIT  
Office No. G25, 188 Pietermaritz Street, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3201

10. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to

The Director: Resource Planning  
Private Bag X9137  
Pietermaritzburg  
3200

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards



---

R. Cassius Lubisi (PhD)  
Superintendent-General

## Appendix 7 - LETTER OF APPRECIATION

*46 Dianthus Road  
Brindhaven  
Verulam  
4340*

*15 November 2008*

*The Principal  
Greenbury Secondary School  
Phoenix  
4068*

### *LETTER OF APPRECIATION*

*I would like to place on record my sincere thanks and gratitude to you and your staff for the kind response in completing the questionnaires given to your school.*

*The response and comments that emanated from the questionnaires had indeed been of great help in the researching of "Religion Studies" and its implementation in our schools in the very near future.*

*May you, your Staff and Learners of Crystal Point Secondary School have an enjoyable festive season and a prosperous New Year – 2009.*

*Yours in the interest of Education*

---

*Mr N. Rajbansi Date*