

The Role of Secondary Schools in Averting Xenophobia in South Africa

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Abstract

South Africa has been plagued by attacks on foreign nationals and their property since it gained independence from the apartheid regime in 1994. The attacks reached alarming levels in May 2008 when there was an outbreak of such attacks in the township of Alexandra in Johannesburg that later spread across the country and the attacks are referred to as xenophobic attacks. More incidents continue to take place after the 2008 mayhem and one thing that appears to be very conspicuous is the little or no attention that the attacks are given by authorities. Xenophobic acts just happen and very little has ever been reported in terms of bringing to book the perpetrators painting a picture that such attacks are now considered to be just a 'normal' daily occurrence. This study sought to determine the causes of xenophobia in South Africa with a view of establishing ways of averting xenophobia within the school context at secondary school level. The mixed method approach of combining quantitative and qualitative research approaches was used to collect data when the former method was utilised through the quantitative non-experimental survey method and the latter through interviews to collect data. The findings imply that xenophobia is a complex phenomenon that clearly has something to do with the resentment of people of foreign origins. The causes of such resentment are not explicit as a number of competing theories have emerged in terms of what really triggers xenophobia. Accusations that foreigners steal jobs from locals, foreign men 'steal' local women, take all the food and money to their home countries, suffocate locals' spaces, are responsible for the high rate of crime, bring diseases into South Africa, being corrupt and the jealousy of locals are some of the issues that surfaced as causes of xenophobia. Xenophobia is an endemic feature amid some South Africans and efforts to counter it are greatly required.

Keywords: Xenophobia, causes of xenophobia, effects of xenophobia, social justice, multicultural education, ethnicity, diversity and Peace building programmes.

1. Introduction

Since the dawn of independence in South Africa in 1994, there has been a pattern of xenophobic tendencies towards foreigners, which ultimately reached alarming levels in May 2008. Although there have always been xenophobic attacks in South Africa, the May 2008 xenophobic attacks lasted for almost a month from 11 up to 28 of May and left behind 62 people confirmed dead and many more unconfirmed ones and a trail of destruction of foreign owned properties and businesses. Around 100 000 foreigners were forced to retreat back to their native countries. Many more foreigners who had no means of going back to their native countries were left displaced, some injured or maimed and many with nothing left of their hard-earned possessions.

One incident that will forever be remembered about xenophobia in South Africa is that of a Mozambican immigrant, Ernesto Alfabeto Nhamuave. Nhamuave, was a 35-year-old father of three, and was set on fire in the middle of a street and burnt to death in Reiger Park in Johannesburg on 18 May 2008, in front of a large cheering crowd. The incident was beamed live on satellite around the whole world to the horror of many. The then President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, was quoted in the Mail and Guardian (23 May 2008) as having said, "Today we are faced with a disgrace, a humiliation as a nation in that we have allowed a handful of people to commit crimes against other Africans living in our country."

In contrast to the politicisation of ethnicity under Apartheid, where Europeans were favoured above Africans, this new xenophobic tendencies in contemporary South African society manifest as extreme hostility of some South Africans towards African immigrants from neighbouring countries. The Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners:

International Student Edition, (2002:1667) defines xenophobia as “A strong fear and dislike of people from other countries and cultures.” Manser and Turton (2000:482) explain that, the word xenophobia comes from two Greek words, that is, *xenos* meaning stranger and *phobia* meaning fear. The Daily Sun (2010:46) states that, “If a person has fear of something, it means they are very scared of that thing.” The paper goes on to explain that phobia is a fear so strong that it can stop a person from living their life normally. In contrast to the traditional and conventional meaning of xenophobia expounded here, the term seems to have a new meaning in South Africa as it is used to refer to brutal attacks of foreigners and their belongings or very indifferent treatment that shows extreme hatred. Mnyaka (2003) notes that, in light of the African principle of *ubuntu* (humane) and Christian moral values position, it can be demonstrated that xenophobia is morally indefensible since it is inhumane, selfish, racist/ethnocentric, discriminatory, and violent. The Teacher (2008:35) comments in relation to the 2008 xenophobic orgy that, “To any decent South African, this is a sort of a history we are reluctant to revisit because it includes embarrassing and morally reprehensible moments of madness.”

The Sowetan (2009) states that, “... most South Africans would rather wish away the blight caused by the embarrassing episode.” There is evidence of xenophobic attacks on people of foreign origins in South Africa specifically those from other African countries from the onset of democracy in 1994, which makes it a matter of concern that needs solutions before it escalates to levels that are even more deadly than the scenes of 2008. What is more worrying is the fact that from recent researches after the 2008 xenophobic attacks, xenophobic attitudes appear to be deep rooted among some South Africans. Bega (2010:9) notes that, according to the results of a research conducted by the Gauteng City Region Observatory together with Witwatersrand University, a disturbingly high percentage of respondents, that is, 70% agreed that foreigners are receiving benefits meant for South Africans. Such a high percentage is worrying as the issue does not have proven statistical backing yet it is one of the most litigious issues that incite xenophobia as foreigners are believed to be the major causes of all the ills within South Africa which include erroneously benefitting from government handouts which they are said not to deserve.

Matsinhe (2009:13) says, “South African xenophobia has attracted a number of scholars, activists and journalists alike, all of whom have offered their piece of mind about its occurrence.” Most academics, scribes, analysts, politicians, researchers and many people who have taken their time to comment on xenophobia view it as a phenomenon that is deeply entrenched in the general populace of South Africa. Xenophobia in South Africa seems to have no boundaries, as it is unleashed against other Africans other than South Africans.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Xenophobia in South Africa

Marais (2009) states that, xenophobia directed against migrants and refugees from elsewhere in Africa has been reported since the mid 1990s in surveys, focus group studies and other researches. A research project called ‘Building on a World Values Survey on International Migration’ conducted by Southern Africa Migration Project (SAMP), revealed that, South Africa held the harshest views on foreigners among the 29 nations surveyed worldwide (Philip 2008:4). The results of the research to determine whether countries should prohibit foreigners from visiting their territory tabled below clearly show the sentiments of South Africans about immigrants entering South Africa and compares such sentiments with those measured in other countries in response to the same question.

Table 2.1 International hostility to immigration

Hostility to immigrants: Prohibit people from coming at all										
Country	SA	Russia	G. Britain	Argentina	China	Botswana	USA	Mozambique	Japan	Australia
Percent	22%	18%	13%	13%	11%	10%	4%	4%	3%	3%

Source: Sunday Times 25 May 2008

According to Hassim, Kupe and Worby (2008:6), the perpetrators of the May 2008 violence explicitly targeted *amakwerekwere* (a term used to refer to people regarded as foreigners in the derogatory sense of being intruders in South Africa.) Hassim *et al* (2008:79) explain that, darker skin is believed to betray foreign African origins and invite persecution by some local black South Africans who perceive being light skinned as a mark of authentic South African citizenship. They (Hassim *et al* 2008:7) explain that, the poor locals made scapegoats of foreign blacks as a way of venting their anger about failing to meaningfully enjoy the fruits of the freedom that South Africa secured in 1994. Hassim

et al (2008:7) also point out that, the post-apartheid state (government) has been unable to provide even basic entitlement of safety, health and the right to secure the means of life for many South Africans. People feel abandoned by the state and thrown back onto their own resources for survival, whereby they are forced to dwell in a shack, without any prospect of regular employment.

Gelb in (Hassim *et al* 2008) notes that, the residents in the areas where xenophobia mainly occurred in May 2008, pointed out issues including crime, lack of work, housing and basic services in South Africa as some of the reasons that triggered the violence. Mbikwana (2008:22) concurs with Gelb when he comments that, "SA 'men' are attacking other Africans who found a place they could call home. These perpetrators are accusing foreigners of sabotaging their 'beloved country' by stealing the fruits of democracy: jobs, Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses and women." Zondi (2008:27) suggests that three perspectives dominated the public debate that followed the xenophobic attacks. According to Zondi (2008:27), the first perspective solely puts the blame on criminal elements in the community for hijacking people's vulnerabilities to commit crimes against foreign nationals. Zondi (2008:27) suggests that the second perspective surmises that, these attacks were not spontaneous, but were orchestrated by *agent provocateurs* with clear political motives, principally to discredit the African National Congress (ANC) and its government. The third perspective according to Zondi (2008:27) which is believed to be the most popular view is that, xenophobia has been developing in South Africa over a period of years, and that it is intensified by poorly managed immigration policy. For the three perspectives Zondi (2008:28) however notes that, each of them contains an element of truth but is inadequate on their own to explain this complex issue satisfactorily and a more comprehensive perspective needs to be built.

Eiseev (in Hassim *et al* 2008:31) comments that, during the 2008 attacks, the attackers were a fearless, faceless mob accusing their victims of 'stealing' their jobs and went from door to door sniffing out the foreigners. This is a direct contrast to the straight meaning of xenophobia, that is, fear and hatred of foreigners as xenophobia in South Africa is totally opposite of that and consists of fearless invasions of foreigners' spaces and wanton destruction of anything in the way of the perpetrators. The perception that foreigners take/'steal' jobs away from the locals seems to be the most repeated sentiment in many discussions on xenophobia and was repeated in almost every news broadcasted in connection to the May 2008 attacks. The only lacking link to this idea is that there are no elaborations as to how foreigners 'steal' jobs from the locals as the country's current labour laws seem to insulate the locals from foreigners trying to 'steal' what rightfully belongs to them. The foreigners are employed by locals who consider either their qualifications or readiness to take up any form of employment without being selective as many locals and in some cases, foreigners set up very thriving businesses that become the envy of the poor local populace.

2.2 *The role of Apartheid in planting xenophobic attitudes in people's minds*

There seems to be a strong link between the characteristics of the apartheid era in South Africa and issues that lead people to be xenophobic. McMahon and Schulman (1999:2) note that white people wanted separation as a means of protecting white identity hence in 1948 the National Party began to implement policies to divide the South African population racially thus raising a newly prominent ethnicity among different ethnic groupings that had not been witnessed earlier on. The Population Registration Act of 1950 formalised racial classification which, was further emphasised by the Group Areas Act of the same year that was aimed at providing separate living areas for each racial group as each individual was codified by the earlier legislation. McMahon and Schulman (1999:4) note that the Acts were rigorously enforced. The segregationist legislations were reinforced by the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 that was enacted to promote the development of self-governing ethnic homelands for black populations whose self-governments were to work in consultation with the white government. In 1953, the Bantu Education Act and The Separate Amenities Act followed in order to create further statutory distance between whites and blacks. Again, these statutes were rigorously enforced with the result that ethnic identities were emphasised as intended. The above-mentioned apartheid laws are just but a few of the many laws that really raised the consciousness of ethnic affiliation. The apartheid conditions built anger in the indigenous African populace that led people to violently oppose the apartheid government until it was eventually replaced by the democratic government in 1994.

Steinberg (2011) states that the perpetrators of the 2008 xenophobic attacks were asserting command over the city by sifting through its population and classifying it just like what happened during the apartheid era. Those whose skin colour was too dark, had a vaccination mark on their arm, or spoke isiZulu with an unfamiliar accent failed to pass the test that resulted in their homes being set on fire or looted. In relation to the various apartheid government statutes mentioned above and the way the perpetrators classified the population, Steinberg (2011) asks the following question, "Who else once sifted through the populations of South African cities, classifying its black residents into those who belonged and those who did not? It was, infamously, what apartheid state did. Indeed, for generations of people, the ordeal of being

sifted and categorised and thrown out was the signature experience of being black." Steinberg (2011) points out that, it is no coincidence that, in 2008, years after Apartheid ended, the people in the mobs were re-enacting apartheid's aggression and identifying with the most infamous bully tactics, the city had ever known. It therefore means the apartheid tactics are now being disguised as xenophobia and unfortunately perpetrated by indigenous Africans versus fellow indigenous Africans who they consider as outsiders in the South Africa that was demarcated by colonial settlers.

In addition to the various laws enacted by the apartheid government, it also came up with several humiliating ways of classifying coloured people as whites or blacks. According to Ndlovu (2008), the apartheid era officials used a pencil test in which they ran a pencil through one's hair and if it slid out that would make you white and if it got stuck, then it made you officially black. In a similar fashion, today some South African mobs are using the same tactics of coming up with the so-called 'tests' to establish nationality. Ndlovu (2008) mentions that, as attacks on foreigners intensified and spread across Johannesburg, the mobs began pulling people out of queues and forcing them to take language 'tests' to establish their nationality. The 'tests' prove how the apartheid era planted certain philosophies in the general masses of South Africa.

The Teacher (June 2008) blames deficient literacy and poor skills levels in South Africa as a direct result of apartheid's under-education for leaving too many South Africans trapped in abject poverty. The article further opines that, "Not knowing how to escape this plight (of abject poverty), the blame game will always seek out easy targets, that is, African foreigners in South Africa." Akikopari (2001:12) notes that the cruel and generally inhuman treatment usually meted out to suspected illegal African immigrants is in sharp contrast to the tender treatment given to say Europeans and Americans. Akikopari (2001:12) adds that, it seems certain that this is yet another manifestation of the seemingly indelible legacy of the apartheid system under which the white skin colour was revered and of the persistence of the idea of white supremacy as an ingrained reality in peoples' minds.

The imprints of the unjust apartheid era will take a long time to erase from the minds of those who were oppressed for so long as their humanity was stretched to the limits and people were now prepared to face even a blazing gun. The violence that was generated in people by the apartheid system has indeed been replayed in situations like the xenophobic attacks, which indeed appear to be a defense mechanism by those who feel threatened by outsiders who supposedly want to snatch away the hard-earned freedom from the legitimate beneficiaries. The apartheid system helped South Africans to recognise each other differently in terms of ethnic grouping. The Apartheid Museum (2006:11) concedes that, the apartheid government found it necessary to separate people in an unnatural and deliberate way. Solomon (2003:22) also mentions that, "Apartheid South Africa accorded privileged status to white immigrants and attempted to increase white immigration at the expense of prospective non-white immigrants." Livesey (2006:57) states that, apartheid was based on ideologies of difference and exclusion and issues such as race and ethnicity dominated policy decisions and actions. She believes that, it seems that the hind sets of exclusion that were created during apartheid are still strongly contributing to xenophobic attitudes and actions. Livesey (2006:57) also believes that the culture of violence is a legacy of apartheid as the 1980s decade was one of the most violent periods in the South African history and served as a foundation for the intense violence that has been targeting Africans from elsewhere in the continent. Bordeau (2008:43) shares the same sentiments and states that, "Apartheid was responsible for a great deal of violence, turmoil and political unrest in South Africa for many years."

2.3 *Theoretical framework of the study*

Social justice was chosen as the theoretical framework of the study as there are visible common issues between the tenets of social justice and the issues that seem to result in xenophobic tendencies. Cramme and Diamond (2009:3) state that, "Social justice is a term which refers to the relative distribution of rights, opportunities and resources within a given society and whether it deserves to be regarded as fair and just." Fraser in Vincent (2003:18) outlines social justice based on the absence of:

- Exploitation: having the fruits of one's labour appropriated for the benefit of the other.
- Economic marginalisation: being confined to undesirable poorly paid work or having no access at all to work.
- Deprivation: being denied an adequate material standard of living.

Power and Gewirk (in Vincent 2003:19) introduce associational justice as another form of social justice when they state that, "Associational justice can be defined by the absence of patterns of association amongst groups (nonexistence of selective association) which prevent some people from participating fully in decisions which affect conditions within which they live and act in." In other words, this is when everyone is treated equally irrespective of ethnicity instead of a situation where those in authority only associate and further the interests of those they share the same race, colour, ethnicity or origins with. Associational justice points to social identities whereby the dynamic processes involved point to

who individuals identify with, who they want to be and whom they want to be with (Epstein in Vincent 2003:19). Xenophobia therefore denies individuals of enjoying their democratic rights of freedom of association as they are identified as not belonging and then isolated and denied access to privileges that are generally provided to those who share the same race as those in power. Many locals also fear any association with foreigners as they will be labelled as traitors who associate with undesirable elements of society.

Table 2.2 below summarises terms that can be used under socially justified circumstances and those that are considered socially unjust.

Table 2.2: Socially just terminology and socially unjust terminology

Socially just terminology	Socially unjust terminology
Equality	Inequality
Rights	Oppressive
Rationale	Marginalisation
Interests	Deprivation
Freedom	Exclusion
Equitable	Injustices
Fair	Unfair
Respectful	Domineering
Privilege	Inequitable
Entitlement	Segregation

The socially unjust terms outlined in the table above seem to be the full package of the trademarks of those who perpetrate xenophobic acts.

2.4 The United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

A major landmark of the growing prominence of the issue of social justice was the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The declaration encompasses all the aspects listed in the first column of the table above as socially just. According to Barnard, Frank and Kneen (2006:27), human rights are rights to which all people are entitled to, regardless of their race, colour, gender, age, sexual orientation, language or religion and in that regard, the UN drew up the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to make the whole world aware of human rights.

The UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights makes the following important declarations:

- All human beings, regardless of race, colour, sex, or religion, are born free and have the same rights.
- All people have the right to life and liberty.
- No one shall suffer torture or inhuman punishment. No one shall be put into prison without a trial.
- All people are equal before the law and have the right to a fair trial.
- All people have the right to travel freely in their own country. They also have the right to leave their own country and return to it.
- Adult men and women have a right to marry. Men and women are entitled to equal rights in marriage.
- All people have the right to freedom of thought and religion, and to worship in freedom.
- All people have a right to own property.
- All people have the right to work and to equal pay for equal work.
- Everyone has the right to education.

The UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights outlines and covers issues meant to address issues of social justice and eliminate the unfair treatment of individuals without taking one's race, colour, sex, origins or religion into consideration. Despite these rights outlined in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, foreigners in South Africa seem not to enjoy any of the stated rights as in many cases they endure exactly the opposite of what is outlined by the declaration. Notwithstanding the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, research by the Human Rights Watch titled "*No Healing Here*" released on the 7th of December 2009, noted the following alleged abuses against foreigners in South Africa:

- Restrictive immigration provisions leave many labor migrants, long an important part of South Africa's economy, undocumented and unprotected from deportation, discrimination and ill treatment.
- Human Rights Watch found that South Africa's failure to protect asylum seekers and refugees from

deportation and violence leads both to increased disease and injury, and increased barriers to treatment for those conditions.

- Human Rights Watch's researchers found asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented migrants living in harrowing and life-threatening conditions, constantly under threat of assault, rape, disease, and discrimination.
- Migrants are particular targets for violence.
- Non-citizens are also targets for opportunistic crimes like robbery; a migrant advocate told Human Rights Watch that foreigners are sometimes called "ATMs" (automated teller machines) because "it is so easy to get cash out of them."
- South Africa suffers very high levels of rape and other sexual violence, and migrant women are at intense risk throughout their journey and their residence there, especially those living in unsafe, informal group shelters.
- Non-citizens are excluded from government-subsidized housing, and no formal shelters for asylum seekers or other migrants exist.
- Left completely without shelter and at risk of deportation, recently arrived asylum seekers in Musina on the Zimbabwe-South Africa border were in 2008 forced to stay in a fenced open ground, called "the show grounds," rented by the DHA to register asylum seekers.
- Wherever they take shelter, migrants in South Africa frequently live in hazardous conditions, vulnerable to illness, violence, arrest, eviction, food insecurity, and lack of basic services.
- The health rights afforded to migrants on paper are belied by the harassment and denial they face in hospitals and clinics, while their ability to survive and remain in good health is undermined by violence, displacement, and threat of deportation.
- Reception staff at clinics and hospitals regularly charges asylum seekers, refugees and migrants excessive fees in contravention of established DOH policy, frequently resulting in a failure to access essential treatment.

2.5 *Links between causes of xenophobia and issues of social justice*

The causes of xenophobia and issues around social justice seem to all deal with bread and butter issues. When individuals within a given society have their needs met, that society would be considered a just society. Individuals who are deprived of certain needs, can be considered to be living in conditions that are socially unjust. Individuals living under ostensibly unjust conditions may find themselves confronted with very harsh life situations that may trigger them to react in ways that can be viewed as being xenophobic. According to Davies in Apple (2010:9), one third of the global urban population now live in slums. Even more staggering is the fact that over 78% of urbanites in the least developed countries lives in slums. Davies in Apple (2010:9) continues to explicate that, "The economic crisis in these slums is experienced by the people living there in ways that are extra-ordinarily powerful. Rather than thinking about jobs in the usual sense of that term, it is better to think of informal survivalism as the major mode of existence." The disgruntled section of the South African population normally identifies those they feel as outsiders and met out instant justice on them. The elaborate identification process leads to 'boundary maintenance' that borders on categorising of groups within a population drawn upon a combination of social markers that include (but not limited to) physical appearances, accent, hairstyles, and cultural practices. Connolly in Vincent (2003:169) states that, "The consequences of evoking and employing racial markers of difference because of their emphasises on biologically rooted and fixed differences in innate ability and temperament tend to result in particular forms of inter-group relations based upon inequality, dominance and exploitation." The major aim of identifying and categorising people is to exclude some from certain life fundamentals, which can be in the form of government aid.

3. **Motivation for the Study**

A disquieting fact of the xenophobic violence in South Africa is that, most of the perpetrators are young people especially those of school going age. This prompted the need to investigate the causes of xenophobia with a view of finding ways in which secondary schools can play a role to counter and avert xenophobia as it still persists in the country. The then Deputy Minister of Police, Fikile Mbalula pointed out that, "We are fully aware that in most cases these acts of criminality are led by criminals aided by and abetted by locals, particularly the young people who enjoy the looting and pillaging of foreigners' businesses." The study under review attest the authors' concerns in this regard and a desire to bring about constructive change so as to redirect young people's mindsets into constructive pathways by showing them how evil such attacks are and try to show them that they will definitely not enjoy it if they were to encounter such violence in their lives.

The South African Human Rights Commission workshop on Racism and Xenophobia (1998) concluded that,

"Fighting xenophobia is not an easy task. It is a huge complex problem with manifold dimensions but it is not an intractable problem. Indeed, it can be rolled back and vanquished from the society. However, it is going to be a protracted struggle, which requires energy and drive, and above all, the sustained efforts of all democratic South Africans. It will require a concerted and co-ordinated effort linking all actors, ranging from governmental and non-governmental organizations, labour, the business community, the media as well as affected communities, and the refugees themselves."

Osman (2009)'s study revealed that immigrant learners do experience xenophobia in various forms by South African learners and, in some cases, educators as well and they (the immigrant learners) were predominantly exposed to prejudice and xenophobic comments. As educational practitioners, the researchers naturally consider educational intervention as an essential way of dealing with xenophobia as there are no solid programmes in place in schools to assist learners in the area of multicultural education which deals with issues of tolerance of differences. On the same note, the comment of the Herald (15 November 2006) also states that, "In the shorter term, perhaps the only solution to xenophobia lies with education and inculcating in learners at school the principles of a culture of human rights. This will allow them to see refugees not as enemies but as fellow Africans who they must join hands to build a brighter and more prosperous future for all people of this continent."

4. Aim of the Research

In light of the May 2008 xenophobic attacks with the youth in mind, the aim of the research is to investigate *what the role of secondary schools should be in averting xenophobia in South Africa*. In view of this aim the following was investigated: the causes and effects of xenophobia in South Africa. Ultimately guidelines are put forward on what can be done in secondary schools to instil a culture of tolerance and avert xenophobic attacks in South Africa.

5. Research Design and Methodology

5.1 Research design

The mixed method approach of combining quantitative and qualitative research paradigms was used to collect data when the former method was utilised through the quantitative non-experimental survey method of using questionnaires and the latter through interviews to collect data. In order to triangulate data, an extensive review of literature was carried out first and then the question items for the questionnaire and the interview schedule were designed along themes that emerged from the data gathered through the literature review. A pilot study was also carried out to check the feasibility of the research instruments in an effort to identify and eliminate any unforeseen vagueness and to inform the researchers of any important matters that may have been left out.

5.2 Participants

As per prior arrangements, 250 South African learners were supposed to take part in the quantitative non-experimental questionnaire survey but eventually 241 (96.4%) did participate. All the 15 foreign learners that were identified and negotiated with, participated in one-on-one interviews at different arranged times. Of the 241 South African learners, 143 were boys and 98 were girls whilst for the foreign learners eight were boys and seven were girls. The age of both groups of participants ranged between 14 and 19 years with the average age being 16.1 years. Since the 2008 xenophobic attacks started in and around the townships of Alexandra, Tembisa and Diepsloot all in the city of Johannesburg before spreading to other parts of the country, participants for the study were selected from eight schools located apart in the three mentioned townships. Five schools were each to supply 50 South African learner participants whilst the 15 foreign learners were selected from the other three schools.

6. Findings

6.1 Findings from the literature study

The literature study revealed that since 2001 when South Africa hosted a World Conference through the aegis of the UN on the matter of curbing intolerant behaviour from nation to nation, this matter has received scant attention here in South Africa. There are allegations of reluctance of police and other local leaders to intervene vigorously in defence of

xenophobia, as they fear losing legitimacy and political positions if they were seen as defending unpopular groups. This aspect is worrying as a strong stance on the issue of xenophobia from high-ranking political leaders and security clusters can indeed go a long way in recasting the populace's view of foreigners. The literature study identified the following issues as causes of xenophobia:-

Foreigners allegedly:

- access government handouts meant for *bona fide* citizens.
- 'stealing' jobs and women from locals
- accept below minimum set wages
- are responsible for the high rate of crime in South Africa
- bring diseases into South Africa
- cause friction between themselves and local entrepreneurs as the foreigners are accused of using unorthodox ways to attract customers e.g. The use of *muthi* (traditional medicine) (Hassim *et al* 2008, Mbikwana 2008:22, Eiseev in Hassim *et al* 2008:31)

In addition to the above general issues around xenophobia, the literature under review also showed evidence of the existence of xenophobic tendencies within the school context (Osman 2009). Many of the incidents go unreported or receive very little or no attention at all, as many foreign learners are afraid to report xenophobic incidences, as they feel shortchanged by the system or fear the aftermath after reporting such as persecution and exclusion.

The literature study recognised violence, death, injuries, loss of property, displacement of victims, loss of jobs, rape and political instability as some of the serious effects and results of xenophobic attacks perpetrated on foreign nationals by some indigenous South Africans.

6.2 Findings from the questionnaire

Some of the responses to the questionnaires are worrying as they clearly reveal some xenophobic tendencies among the South African learners. The following are some of the conclusions that came out of the responses to the questionnaire items:

- Over 140 respondents believe there are over 3 million foreigners in South Africa, which is worrying as there are no official statistics to that effect.
- A respondent said foreigners should not be given the same rights as citizens as they might get carried away and forget about going back to their countries whilst another respondent said they should never get the same rights as citizens as they may end up domineering over the citizens.
- 179 out of 241 respondents felt that foreigners committed more crimes than locals, though the official records show that only less than 3% of the South African prisoners are foreigners.

6.3 Findings from the interviews

Some responses by interviewees recount some disturbing experiences that the foreign participants encountered. Some of the responses include the following:

- *Daisy said, "They looted and burnt our tuck-shop, everything went down."
- Another girl said, "I can't go there (she was pointing at a certain place with park benches) at break, because they say it's our territory."
- *Mellissa said, "My father is gone, where? I don't know. They accused him of stealing from our neighbour and they came at night and he escaped through the window when he heard noises at the gate. Its two years now and I miss him. We struggle daily with mom."

* Not their real names.

6.4 Conclusions from the findings

The information obtained through three different data gathering methods highlight the existence of xenophobia within the South African society and that it flourishes with very little or no effort at all to counter it both in the whole society at large and within the country's education system. The gravity of the effects of xenophobia indeed requires some form of mechanisms to be established in order to avert it. It can be argued that a change of the mindset is effective at an early phase of the cognitive development stages so that it can be carried over throughout the entire life. Learners' secondary

school level was chosen as an ideal stage to implement awareness campaigns and programs aimed at reducing the xenophobic tendencies, which can greatly assist in averting xenophobia. In view of the fact that the South African school system lacks programs and awareness campaigns that are aimed at averting xenophobia, the following recommendations can be implemented within the school system to counter xenophobic tendencies.

6.5 Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- within the school system, ways of reporting and dealing with xenophobic incidents need to be put in place especially within the school policy, which will let everyone within the school system know that any xenophobic tendency will be dealt with in a bid to suppress such actions.
- South African schools arrange a number of exchange programmes with schools from neighbouring countries that will enlighten both parties about the other country's way of life and also to demystify some of the myths that run deep in South Africans' minds about other African countries. This is because one of the things that came up during the study was the fact that, one of the major issues around xenophobia is the differences in cultures, languages and way of life between South Africans and foreigners who come to live amongst them.
- South African schools organise regional sporting tournaments with schools from neighbouring countries, which can bring their citizenry together to compete in different sporting events in an effort to improve tolerance amongst different nationalities.
- In light of the extent of the effects of xenophobia in South Africa, education for tolerance should become an integral part of the Life Orientation subject in the curriculum in schools in an effort to enlighten learners about the need for tolerance of other nationalities.
- Both learners at school level and student teachers be taught more programmes based on multiculturalism in order to prepare them for the world that is rapidly becoming more globalised.
- The curriculum needs of foreign learners need to be considered by including some of the region's languages into the national curriculum to cater for the large numbers of foreign learners within the borders of South Africa.
- Motivational speakers from different African countries be invited to share with local learners their successes in an effort to highlight to learners that there are a lot of success stories from fellow Africans and also to demystify the notion that other African states make up the 'dark continent' as some people would want to believe.
- Mathematics Olympiads with other regional countries need to be encouraged so as to build strong relationships amongst learners within the region and in a way reduce prejudices.

7. Conclusion

The study established that, xenophobia is a reality within the South African society and its effects are worrying. It is hoped that the findings and recommendations of this research endeavour will be useful to policy makers in terms of highlighting the various concerns noted and also for them to implement some of the recommendations in an effort to avert xenophobic acts in future. The researchers hope that, the implementation of the suggested recommendations can indeed reduce the occurrence of xenophobia in South Africa, as the aim is to educate the young generation about tolerance.

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