

CHAPTER TWO

2. Situational Analysis

Covering 17 101 km², Gauteng is the smallest of South Africa's nine provinces. Conversely, more people live in Gauteng than in the other provinces. Currently, the Gauteng population is estimated at eight million people. This makes Gauteng the most densely populated province in the country. Most of the country's economic activity takes place in Gauteng, earning the province the title, 'the economic hub of South Africa'. It is also the most urbanised province in South Africa, reported to be 90% urban. The province has a literacy rate of 75.6%. Eighty percent of Gauteng children are reported to be in school with 60.5% entering school at primary school age.

Given the extent of economic activity in Gauteng, the province was most hit by migration during apartheid years. This phenomenon gave rise to informal settlements that have developed at a rapid pace in the province. The southern part of the province is reported to have 42 informal settlements harbouring more than 1/6th, of the province's population.⁸ A substantial number of members of the population including children, are reported to live in streets, walkways, buses, shelters and parks.⁹

Respondents to the Ciet Africa study identified safety as a major concern in the province.¹⁰ Crime generally, and violent crime specifically, is a major developmental challenge facing the province.

2.1 The Prevalence of Sexual Violence Against Children in Gauteng

'No one knows quite how common sexual violence is. Typical claims prior to the present initiative were that one woman in three in Johannesburg has been raped. Increased policing, health and social services have been unable to offer a solution, or even quantify the incidence of sexual violence.'¹¹

It is impossible to know exactly how prevalent sexual violence is in Gauteng. In 1995, the Human Rights Watch reported on sexual and domestic violence as follows:

'Although lack of police statistics on the issue makes it impossible to estimate the prevalence of gender violence in South Africa... what is clear is that South African women, living in one of the most violent countries in the world, are disproportionately likely to be victims of that violence.'¹²

In 2001, the Human Rights Watch, reporting on sexual violence in South African schools, reported that 'on a daily basis in schools across the nation, South African girls of every race and economic class encounter sexual violence and harassment at school that impedes the realisation of the right to education.'¹³

When asked about the prevalence of sexual violence in the south of Gauteng in the Ciet Africa study, 77% of the submitters reported that sexual violence is common or

very common. The proportion of youth who reported suffering sexual violence increased with age. By 18 years of age, 20% females and 13% males reported having suffered some form of sexual violence. In a survey conducted in 1998 as part of the study, 76% of the submitters reported being raped in the previous year.¹⁴ Of these submitters, others reported having been raped several times.¹⁵ The victim in 60% of the cases knew the perpetrator, while family members perpetrated no less than 54% of the incidents.¹⁶ Strangers accounted for 44% of the single rapes and 19% of the repeated rapes.¹⁷

Lack of a central official database on sexual violence generally and against children specifically, makes it impossible to know exactly how prevalent sexual violence is. Until a moratorium was declared on police statistics in 1999, the police Crime Information Management Centre provided data on reported sexual violence cases. Although the data was not absolutely reliable (it was not children specific, the data capturing system was weak and all people who have suffered sexual violence do not report the incident to the police),¹⁸ it provided a sense of the prevalence of the problem. The moratorium has since been lifted in 2002.

2.2 Availability of support services

People who have suffered sexual violence are reported to resort to some form of help.¹⁹ Victims of sexual violence normally resort to the police, clinics and hospitals, family and friends, schools, civic organizations, street committees, social welfare organisations, help lines and private doctors. Information on the availability of support services for children who have been sexually abused in Gauteng and the location of such services could not be found during the literature review in this report.