



MAURITIUS RESEARCH COUNCIL
INNOVATION FOR TECHNOLOGY

**A STUDY OF CPE LOW
ACHIEVERS IN THE BLACK RIVER
DISTRICT**

Final Report

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Black River District

by

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	1
Chapter 1 Black River District	2
Chapter 2 Objectives of the Research	3
Chapter 3 The Mauritian Education System	4 to 5
Chapter 4 C.P.E Low Achievers – A Concern to all Stakeholders	6 to 7
Chapter 5 Methodology	8
Chapter 6 Literature Review	9 to 10
Chapter 7 Sociological Profile of Population Under Study	11 to14
Chapter 8 Characteristics of Population	15.to 26
Chapter 9 Case Study	27
Chapter 10 Summary of Main Findings and Conclusion	28 to 30
Questionnaire	
References	

INTRODUCTION

Every child has a dream. To be a doctor, lawyer, manager, teacher.....businessman or even self-employed!! Each of them should be given the opportunity to have access to education to attain his goal. Each of them should be properly guided. Education is a right that should never be usurped.

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INTRODUCTION

The idea of conducting a study on low achievers of the Certificate of Primary Education (C.P.E) examination germinated while working with low achieving students at the Women's Center of Bambous. The researcher was working as part-time "animateur" at the Center under the responsibility of the Ministry of Women and Child's Development. Majority of the children who were admitted to the Center obtained four "F" at the C.P.E examination and even more dramatic was that they were not able to read, write (French & English) and do simple mathematical calculations. However, it was surprising to note that after some time at the center and under the guidance of experienced teachers, they were able to read, write and do simple mathematical calculations. Some questions need to be asked. How is it after spending six or seven years in the primary school a child could not read or write! Is the Mauritian education system to be blamed? What impact the family, income of parents and their professional activity, nutrition, school environment (teacher, infrastructure, headmaster etc.), intelligence etc. have on the child who fails? Is he the only one responsible for his faith? Of course not!

THE C.P.E EXAMINATION

In 1980 the Primary School Leaving Certificate and the Junior Scholarship Examination were abolished giving way to the Certificate of Primary Education Examination. It is taken by children of 11 or 12 years old at the end of the primary schooling after spending 6 or 7 years in primary schools. The main feature of the examination is ranking. It has the dual role of selection and certification. More than 30 000 sit for the examination every year and try to get admitted to the few "star schools" available. The highest ranked students will get access to the best secondary schools of their choice. This is so because of the disparity in the quality of secondary schools.

About 35%¹ of students fail the C.P.E examination every year. More than 6000 will drop school after the C.P.E examination after spending 6 or 7 years in primary school despite the fact that school is compulsory up to the age of 16. This study focuses on these C.P.E. low achievers. However, the research neither emphasises on the feasibility of the examination nor on the causes of their failure but focuses mainly on the following areas: family and school environment, social life, life style, future aspirations, attitude towards school and examination, economic and social status of parents, nutrition etc.

¹ Calculated from MES statistics

CHAPTER 1

BLACK RIVER DISTRICT

Black River district is situated on the west coast of Mauritius. It has a population of approximately 40 000 persons. The following areas of the district have been chosen for the study: Riviere Noire, Bambous, Tamarin, Cascavelle, Flic en Flac, Case Noyale, Le Morne and Petite Riviere.

It should be pointed out that this study has been carried out on a purely local context and the conclusions may be applied to certain areas of Mauritius with similar profile.

The table below shows the success rate of some of the schools in Black River District at the CPE exams 1999 and 2000

S.Nb.	SCHOOL	YEAR	
		1999 (%)	2000 (%)
1.	Bambous GS	37.68	39.23
2.	Black River GS	38.60	47.50
3.	Cascavelle GS	20.00	31.03
4.	Case Noyale RCA	40.00	65.38
5.	Flic en Flac GS	40.00	21.43
6.	La Gaulette GS	58.06	62.50
7.	Le Morne GS	40.91	33.33
8.	Petite Riviere GS	37.38	41.86
9.	Richelieu GS	32.14	37.50
10.	St Benoit RCA	40.43	40.00
11.	St Jacques RCA	63.16	45.45
12.	NewBambous RCA	51.09	55.26

2 Data available from MES

CHAPTER 2

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

C.P.E. low achievers have received scant attention from our major educational institutions. Much attention has been paid to those students who succeeded in the examination. Having passed the C.P.E. examination, those able students joined a secondary school after which some of them joined the tertiary education. As mentioned in the introduction, more than 6 000 students leave school after their failure to succeed. They have to struggle very hard to earn their living. Some join the labour market while others start indulging in criminal activities and even become drug addicts.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

- To identify some of the problems facing the C.P.E. low achievers in one of our poorest district

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

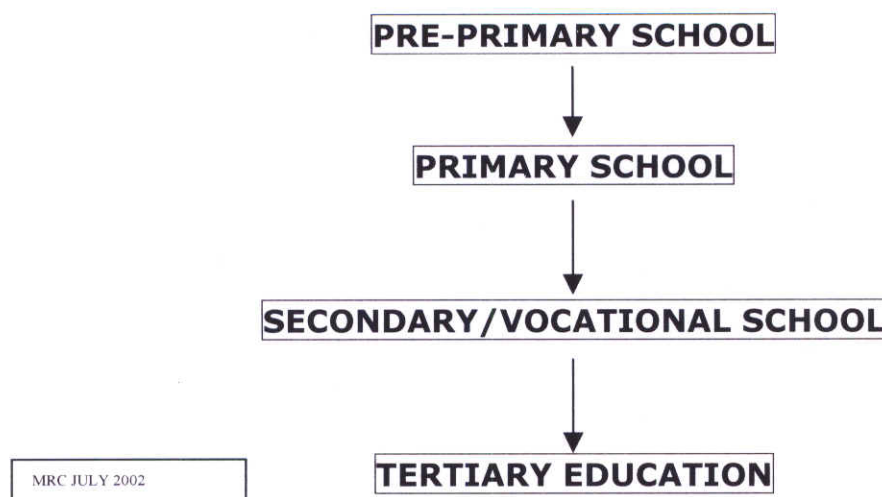
- To find out why some students perform poorly in the C.P.E. examination.
- To scrutinize their family background.
- To propose measures to reintegrate these students in the educational system and society in general.

CHAPTER 3

THE MAURITIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Before moving any further, it is important to get a general idea of the Mauritian educational system as it is now. Over the years, educationists have become conscious that the major dysfunction of our education system is the C.P.E. examination and the unfair competition that prevails prior to it. The Ministry of Education and Scientific Research through a document (May 2001) titled "ENDING THE RAT RACE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION AND BREAKING THE ADMISSION BOTTLENECK AT SECONDARY LEVEL" made the following observation □ *"It has long been observed that such competition results in a rat race beginning right from lower primary years, exerting immense psychological pressure on both students and their parents and perverting the very function of the school within the society."* To remove the burden of the C.P.E. examination on the shoulders of the children and their parents the said Ministry is coming with several measures e.g. introduction of a grading system instead of the ranking one, construction of additional secondary schools, conversion of high demand state secondary schools into Form VI colleges and finally the regionalisation of admission to Form I.

STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM



Education is the avenue for social, cultural and economic equality. Since 1976 education at the primary and secondary levels has become free and in 1988 university level followed the same trail. These decisions were major steps towards giving access to education to all social classes of the society. In the early years, some parents found it difficult to send their children to schools due to financial constraints. The education sector has evolved rapidly in the 60s with the setting up of the University of Mauritius, Mauritius Institute of Education and Mauritius College of the Air and the University of Technology.

Looking at the structure of the Mauritian education system we note that a child spends 3 years in pre-primary school, 6 or 7 years in primary school, 7 or 8 years in secondary school and finally 2 - 6 years at the tertiary level depending on the course (Diploma/degree/doctorate) and channel (science/art/technical etc.) he chooses to undertake.

The C.P.E. is a national examination under the responsibility of the Mauritius Examination Syndicate (established in 1984). The passing percentage increased from 47% to around 60 % in 2000. However, the 30 - 40% of the children who fail every year is considered high. What do they do after their failure? What do they become? Much attention is given to the successful students. They join a secondary school and afterwards complete their higher education. They get a good job and are able to live a descent life. The C.P.E. failures need much attention of the authorities. They need help and support.

CHAPTER 4

C.P.E LOW ACHIEVERS - A CONCERN TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS

The CPE examination has been in the limelight in the last few years. It has been exposed to various criticisms due to the hard competition that prevails prior to the examination. The Ministry of Education and Scientific Research is coming up with educational reforms in that perspective to eliminate the burden on the primary school students. What happen to the students who fail the CPE exams? Not so much care has been given to these students. What role has the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, the Mauritius Institute of Education, the University of Mauritius, Head-teachers, teachers, parents, religious bodies, non-governmental organisations and finally the students themselves to try to solve this major problem? Special programmes, technical schools, vocational schools have been created to cater for these students. Is it enough? Can all of these students be taken up in these special schools and programmes? Can we talk of educational equity?

Education is a right to every individual and this should never be usurped. Low achievers have traditionally received scant attention from either the school systems or the communities. Many schools boards and superintendents know little about the development and learning needs of young adolescents, and communities worry more about students' behaviour than about what they can learn. So many times have we heard people saying "so la tête faible missié, li pas capave apprane." The future of this country rests on the shoulders of our young citizens. The richness of a nation relies not only on the amount of money that its people have but more substantially on the quantity and quality of education that it can give to its citizens.

Improving the quality of institution, getting businesses involved with schools (and vice versa), creating a more coherent path from school to work, increasing parent and community involvement, encouraging cooperation between schools and social service agencies, reducing crime and violence, urging equity for all students, or some combination of these shall be the goals of the major stakeholders in our education system.

We should bear in mind those students between the ages 10 and 12 demands something different - something that recognizes and builds on their distinctive strengths. The CPE examination falls during that period. Everyone agrees that early adolescence can be a difficult time.

Educators and parents point to young people's rapid changes and volatile personalities, their "raging hormones" and mood swings. These are normal symptoms of development at this age, part and parcel of making the transition from childhood to adulthood. Most of us remember well how hard these years can be, and we sympathize.

Unfortunately, sympathy for low achievers can be too much of a good thing. Concern for low achievers' emotional and psychological needs overshadows expectations for high achievement. Developmental concerns are important - indeed essential - to effective education, but they must never be allowed to justify a retreat from intellectual rigour, a rich and demanding CPE curriculum, or a belief in students' competence as learners. At this age the students have a large capacity to learn new and different things. Unfortunately, a lot of educators and parents seem to have a different idea of what kids are capable at this age.

As children have fewer and fewer caring adults in their lives it is high time to provide them guidance, tangible help and tools to achieve academically and thus avoiding the risk of dropping out of the educational system. The society saves by "avoiding future costs of unemployment, health and welfare support and the costs of the criminal justice system."

All stakeholders should try to improve the quality of education for children at risk so that they can succeed in society. The problem of low CPE low achievers is a societal one.

METHODOLOGY

A *sample* of 174 children was chosen *randomly* selected from primary schools and the work market in the district of Black River for the purpose of the study. The areas chosen were: Petite Riviere, Riviere Noire, Bambous, Case Noyale, Le Morne and Tamarin. Most subjects chosen were C.P.E. failures and aged between 11 to 18 years old. Phase 1 of the study consisted of administering a *questionnaire* to all children. It was noted during the initial stage that the children would not be able to complete the questionnaire on their own. It was found necessary to move to a kind of *structured interview* with the researcher completing the questionnaire by asking the children questions already prepared. This helped a lot as it provided additional information to the researcher. Questions related to their age, educational background (school attended, results at the C.P.E. Examination etc.), religious belonging, family background (job of parents, academic achievement & salary) etc. As the researcher was a teacher at the Women's Center at Bambous, students there were given special attention, as it was suitable to *observe* their personality characteristics. As many areas in the Black River District are considered as a "zone defavorisé" it was not difficult to find the so-called low achievers. Interviews were made in schools with the help of teachers, on the streets and at the homes of students. During the phase 1 additional questions were asked to the children. After phase 1 was completed the researcher proceeded with a case study of 5 children chosen randomly at the Bambous Center. The results are described hereby.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vinayagum Chinapah through a study in 1983 - *Participation and Performance in Primary Schooling* - concluded that socio-economic background was one of the major factors leading to differences in student achievement. In addition, he found that schools in Mauritius have apparently no influence in reducing these disparities in student achievement but may well be reinforcing them. The level of academic achievement of pupils participating in the national examination at the end of primary schooling has fallen over the years. Many reasons have been advanced as to why the majority of pupils fail and only a few excel. The ones most frequently given are :

- (1) an unsuitable curriculum and undefined primary school objectives;
- (2) insufficient attention to poor achievers - due to the existing system of automatic promotion;
- (3) no systematic diagnosis and continuous assessment of pupil's abilities and difficulties;
- (4) no good consideration of environmental condition of environmental conditions in which children are brought up - a disadvantage for children coming from uneducated families with speech and language difficulties, especially in English and French; and
- (5) lack of importance paid to schoolwork during the entire primary education cycle. The advent of the CPE in 1990 with an aim at reducing inequalities in scholastic performance at the end of primary schooling is viewed with great doubts by the Richard Commission of 1979.

In every society education is given priority as it is an important vehicle for development and progress. A broad search on the subject chosen for study and education in particular has given the researcher tools to understand the impact of education on a country's development (social, economic, cultural, political etc.). Free universal schooling should be extended through primary grades everywhere in the world, as a human right and that access to secondary and tertiary education should be based on merit rather than wealth or station (December 10, 1948, the General assembly of the United Nations - article 26).

Dr. T. R. Morrisson in his study entitled "*Adolescence and the experience of development in Mauritius*" made the following comments on our education system : Competition lies at the heart of educational system in Mauritius and

affects the attitudes of students, teachers and parents alike. There is nothing inherently wrong with competition if it is structured to match equals. Indeed, this form of competition can engender motivations to excel. In Mauritius the structure of competition does not match equals, in the sense that there is the same opportunity to acquire the tools and skills and success. Rather, the structure and rules of competition are linked to social capital in such a way that there is a differential capacity to compete built into the system itself. The image that comes to mind is of a 200-metre race around a circular track in which there is no provision for a staggered starting point. In this type of race some runners have a lead before they start the race!

Dr. T. R. Morrisson puts much emphasis on co-operation and collaboration and believed that these two measures could be the key to a modern educational system in Mauritius. He added that "The paradox of modern world is that co-operation is the key to competitive advantage". The degree to which the educational system of the society can contribute to the competitive advantage of a nation depends, also paradoxically, on the degree to which it is based upon and engenders the values, skills and learning styles that flow from co-operative relations. In this regard, in Mauritius, there is a serious misalignment of educational system with the competitive challenges of the world today, yet alone the world of the next millennium. To a certain extent, the educational system in Mauritius is still functioning upon "colonial principles" in which elites were the central and driving forces of the economy and society. Refocusing the educational system on co-operative rather than competitive principles, from this perspective, can also be seen as a final step in the decolonisation of Mauritius itself.

Sheila Bunwaree in her thesis "*Mauritian education in a global economy*" states that all students regard schooling as a means to obtain a certificate, for varying reasons according to socio-economics status, ranging from getting a certificate enabling them to work in a factory rather in the sugarcane field to seeing education as "background material for their university degrees"

In April 1991, through the financial help of the UNICEF the Mauritius Examination Syndicate conducted a research study entitled "*Determinants of performances in primary schools with special references to failures at C.P.E level*" concluded that performance at C.P.E level is determined mainly by general intelligence possessed by the pupils, extra educational facilities made available to them and their socio-economic status.

The "Movement Pour le Progres de Roches Bois" carried out a study in Roches Bois. It showed that the group of low achievers at the CPE exams is constituted as from the fourth standard and increased in the fifth and sixth standards. In the group of "4F" at the CPE almost 35% obtained the same results in the fourth and fifth standards, 18% in the fifth and sixth standards, the rest saw their performance deteriorated since the fourth standard. The school plays an important role on the results of the students. Those in Roches Bois produces almost 50% of "4F".

CHAPTER 7

SOCIOLOGICAL PROFILE OF POPULATION UNDER STUDY

The random population chosen for study in the Black River district is mainly those low-income families and those who are at the bottom of our social class system. Certain jobs are over represented and reflect the difficulty of mobility in the class system. Thus fisherman represents 15.5% of jobs of fathers, mason 13.7%, labourers 10.3%, maintenance and cleaning 5.8%. The jobs mentioned represent 45.3% of professional activities of the fathers of the population under study.

JOB CHARACTERISTIC OF FATHER

JOB CATEGORY	NUMBER	%
Mason	24	13.8
Helper	6	3.5
Fisherman	27	15.5
Watchman	6	3.4
Messenger	4	2.3
Caretaker	2	1.1
Gardener	3	1.7
Supervisor	2	1.1
Maintenance & cleaning	10	5.8
Handicapped	6	3.5
Hawker	9	5.2
Waiter	3	1.7
Salt factory	3	1.7
Paper factory	3	1.7
Juice seller	4	2.3
Cleaner	5	2.9
Labourer	18	10.3
Contractor	3	1.7
Securicor	6	3.5
Own business	3	1.7
Government Servant	3	1.7
Thief	3	1.7
Unemployed/retired	7	4.1
Not specified	14	8.1
TOTAL	174	100

Table 1

Table1 above gives an indication of the type of professional activities of fathers of population under study.

Table 2 below gives an indication of the job characteristics of the mother. Here again we note again that they fall in the low - income category workforce. 26.5% of mothers are housewives, 21.8% are maidservant, 10.3 % as cleaners and 10.3% are in the textile industry.

JOB CHARACTERISTIC OF MOTHER

JOB CATEGORY	NUMBER	%
Textile industry	18	10.3
Cook	7	4.1
Maidservant	38	21.8
Cleaner	18	10.3
Salt Factory	11	6.3
Own business	5	2.9
Housewife	46	26.5
Labourer	9	5.2
Not specified	22	12.6
TOTAL	174	100

Table 2

REVENUE OF PARENTS (Father & Mother combined) – Monthly basis

CATEGORY (Rs.)	NUMBER	%
Not specified	20	11.5
1501 - 2000	12	6.9
2001 - 2500	14	8.1
2501 - 3000	29	16.7
3001 - 3500	12	6.9
3501 - 4000	33	18.9
4001 - 4500	21	12.1
4501 - 5000	7	4.1
5501 - 6000	6	3.4
6001 - 6500	3	1.7
8501 - 9000	5	2.9
9001 - 9500	6	3.4
9501 - 10000	3	1.7
10501 - 11000	2	1.1
13001 - 20000	1	0.6
TOTAL	174	100

Table 3

Nearly 50% of households have a monthly revenue of less than Rs. 3 500. It should be noted that Rs. 5 000 is considered to be the minimum revenue by the Commission for Peace and Justice for a family to live a decent life. Moreover, some of the families receive pensions (handicapped, widow etc) that are included in the total revenue.

FAMILY STATUS OF HEADS

FAMILY STATUS	NUMBER	%
Married	114	65.5
Divorced	45	25.9
Widowed	8	4.6
Free union	7	4.0
TOTAL	174	100

Table 4

With regard to the family status of the head of families, 65.5% are married, 25.9% are divorced, 4.6% are widowed and 4% live with a concubine.

RELIGIOUS BELONGINGS OF PARENTS

ETHNICITY	NUMBER	%
Hindu	78	44.8
Creole	93	53.5
Muslim	3	1.7
TOTAL	174	100

Table 5

In the sample chosen for study 44.8% are from the Hindu faith, 53.5% are from the Catholic faith and 1.7% from the Muslim faith.

SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD

Nb. OF PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD	%
2	6.8
3	20.9
4	18.2
5	13.0
6	16.7
7	8.6
8	4.7
10	7.1
13	4
TOTAL	100

Table 6

Households 4 to 6 persons constitute more than half of the sample. At the same time we also note that households with at least 7 members compose 25% of the sample.

HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT ACHIEVED BY ONE OF THE PARENTS

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	%	% Cumulative
NO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE	13.9	13.9
Std I - Std III	10.3	24.2
Std IV - Std V	8.6	32.8
Standard sixth/CPE	20.7	53.5
Form I - IV	18.9	72.4
Form V	12.1	84.5
HSC	1.7	86.2
University	0	86.2
No Precision	13.8	100
TOTAL	100	

Table 7

Table 7 shows that nearly 55% of parents have not been to any secondary school. Only 12.1 % have done the School Certificate. Educational level of the parents would seem to influence the educational performance of the child.

CHAPTER 8

CHARACTERISTICS OF POPULATION

AGE COMPOSITION

AGE	NUMBER	%
12	73	41.9
13	47	27
14	25	14.3
15	23	13.2
16	3	1.8
17	2	1.2
18	1	0.6
TOTAL	174	100

Table 8

Table 8 shows the age composition of the sample chosen. 73 subjects have been chosen from the 12 years category. The majority of subjects in this category are repeating C.P.E. As this study is based on C.P.E. low achievers other age categories were also chosen to get more information on this section of our population. While conducting the interviews we came across one 18 years old C.P.E. failure. He was included in the sample as he provided valuable information on the problems faced by the low achievers after being rejected from our educational system. Table 9 illustrates the gender characteristics of the population. 58.6% of sample is composed of boys and 41.4% girls.

SEX

SEX	NUMBER	%
Male	102	58.6
Female	72	41.4
TOTAL	174	100

Table 9

ACTIVITY OF SAMPLE

INTITUTION/ACTIVITY	NUMBER	%
Repeating C.P.E	67	38.5
Vocational/Technical School	56	32.2
Professional Activity	14	8.1
No activity	37	21.2
TOTAL	174	100

Table 10

As shown in the table 10, 21.2% of the sample falls in the category of "no activity". This is alarming as these children are not active at all. Moreover, as indicated in the table 11 we can note that 47.8% of children falling in the 15 years old category are inactive. However, as indicated with Table 12 91.8% of children in the 12 years old category are repeating C.P.E. It is worth to note that as age increases the percentage of children falling in the category "no activity" increases, e.g. 12 years - 8.2%, 13 years - 19.1%, 14 years - 32%, 15 years - 47.8% etc. This can be noted by analyzing Table 13.

SAMPLE COMPOSITION

ACCORDING TO AGE & ACTIVITY

AGE	Repeating C.P.E		Vocational/ Technical School		Professional Activity		No Activity		Grand Total	
	nb	%	nb	%	nb	%	nb	%	nb	%
12	67	91.8	0	0	0	0	6	8.2	73	100
13	0	0	31	65	7	14.9	9	19.1	47	100
14	0	0	17	68	0	0	8	32	25	100
15	0	0	6	26.1	6	21.6	11	47.8	23	100
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	100	3	100
17	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0	2	100
18	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	1	100
TOTAL	67	38.5	56	32.2	14	8.1	37	21.2	174	100

Table 11

ACCORDING TO AGE, ACTIVITY & SEX

AGE	Repeating C.P.E		Vocational/ Technical School		Professional Activity		No Activity		Grand Total	
	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS
12	92.7%	66.7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7.3%	33.3%	100%	100%
13	0%	0%	48%	86.4%	28%	0%	24%	13.6%	100%	100%
14	0%	0%	40%	80%	0%	0%	60%	20%	100%	100%
15	0%	0%	26.7%	25%	26.7%	25%	46.7%	50%	100%	100%
16	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
17	0%	0%	%	100%	%	%	%	%	0%	100%
18	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
TOTAL	53.9%	16.7%	19.6	50%	59%	8.3%	26.5%	41.7%	100%	100%

Table 12

Table 13 shows the type of jobs that 45 respondents have taken either before the C.P.E. exams or after. Note that some of them are still carrying out these jobs. It is observed that 35.5 % of the sample has been employed as helper/maid-servant/cleaner. These jobs performed are categorized in the low-income group. Moreover, 66.7 % of the girls fall in the category: helper/maid-servant/cleaner.

INDICATION ON THE TYPE OF JOBS PERFORMED/ING BY SAMPLE

JOB	NUMBER	%
Helper/ Maid-Servant/Cleaner	16	35.5
Carpenter/ Artisan	8	17.8
Labourer/Gardener	3	6.7
Mason/Tiles layer	3	6.7
Mechanic/ Electrician/ Welder	10	22.2
Fruit seller/Vegetables delivery	2	4.4
Hair-dresser	3	6.7
TOTAL	45	100

Table 13

ACCORDING TO SEX

JOB	%	
	BOYS	GIRLS
Helper/ Maid-servant/Cleaner	20	66.7
Carpenter/ Artisan	20	13.3
Labourer/Gardener	10	0
Mason/Tiles layer	10	0
Mechanic/ Electrician/ Welder	33.3	0
Fruit seller/Vegetables delivery	6.7	0
Hair-dresser	0	20
TOTAL	100	100

Table 14

ACCORDING TO AGE & SEX

AGE	Helper/ Maid-servant/Cleaner		Carpenter/ Artisan		Labourer/ Gardener		Mason/Tiles layer		Mechanic/ Electrician/ Welder		Hair-dresser		Fruit seller/Vegetables delivery	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	33.3%	0	50%	0	0	0	0	0	30%	0	0	0	50%	0
14	0	40%	50%	0	100%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50%	0
15	66.7%	60%	0	0	0	0	0	0	30%	0	0	100%	0	0
16	0	0	0	100%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	0	0	0	0	0	0	100%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40%	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%

Table 15

REVENUE OF SAMPLE

Table 16 shows the monthly revenue that the children were getting from their employer. It clearly shows that the employers took advantage of children as they could not fight for any right. The children are taken up on a temporary basis and are sacked as per the wish of the employer. This can be seen as a sort of exploitation infringing the child's rights.

MRC JULY 2002

CATEGORY (Rs.)	NUMBER	%
0 - 400	7	15.6
401 - 800	8	17.8
801 - 1200	6	13.3
1201 - 1600	0	0.0
1601 - 2000	2	4.4
2001 - 2400	4	8.9
2401 - 2800	8	17.8
2801 - 3200	10	22.2
TOTAL	45	100

Table 16

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Table 17 shows the schools that the C.P.E. repeaters are attending. 67 out of the 174 being studied are still at school. The schools attended by the children show a high rate of failure. For example, in 1999 Bambous Government School showed a failure percentage of 62.32%, Black River Government School - 61.4%, New Bambous Government School - 48.91% and Richelieu Government School - 67.86% at the C.P.E. In year 2000 only Black River Government

School showed a notable improvement with only 52.5% failures. As indicated in Table 18 fifty-six children are following a course in a vocational school.

PRIMARY SCHOOL (THOSE STILL AT SCHOOL)

SCHOOL	NUMBER	%
Bambous A Govt. Sch.	17	25.4
Black River Govt. Sch.	22	32.8
La Montagne Govt. Sch.	4	5.9
New Bambous Govt. Sch.	18	26.9
Richelieu Govt. Sch.	6	9
TOTAL	67	100

Table 17

VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL SCHOOL

SCHOOL	NUMBER	%
Mont Roches Voc. Sch.	12	21.5
B.P.S. Tamarin	13	23.2
Bambous Voc. Sch.	14	25.0
Women's Center, Bambous	13	23.2
St. Marys Voc. Sch.	4	7.1
TOTAL	56	100

Table 18**PRIMARY SCHOOL (THOSE WHO LEFT)**

SCHOOL	NUMBER	%
Baie du Cap Govt. Sch.	9	17.5
Black River Govt. Sch.	7	13.6
Candos Govt. Sch.	1	1.8
Cascavelle Govt. Sch.	7	13.6
Case Noyale Govt. Sch.	1	1.8
Chamarel Govt. Sch.	1	1.8
Chemin Grenier Govt. Sch.	4	7.8
Dupermer Govt. Sch.	2	3.9
Flic en Flac Govt. Sch.	2	3.9
Henry Buswell Govt. Sch.	1	1.8
Le Morne Govt. Sch.	6	11.8
New Bambous Govt. Sch.	7	17.5
Tamarin Govt. Sch.	3	5.8
TOTAL	51	100

Table 19

56.9% of the sample obtained "4F" in their first attempt and 49.3% got "4F" in their second attempt. Out of the 75 children who have attempted a second time not even one have succeeded. When analysing the results of the second attempt carefully we can note that around 15% of these could have succeeded easily. They failed in only one subject.

C.P.E RESULTS OF WHOLE SAMPLE (1st ATTEMPT)

RESULTS	NUMBER	%
4F	99	56.9
3F & 1E	22	12.7
2F & 2E	20	11.5
2F, 1E & 1D	8	4.5
1F, 1E, 1C & 1D	5	2.9
1F, 1D & 2C	5	2.9
1F, 2E & 1D	2	5.1
1F & 3D	4	1.2
Absent	9	2.3
TOTAL	174	100

Table 20

C.P.E RESULTS OF WHOLE SAMPLE (2ND ATTEMPT)

RESULTS	NUMBER	%
4F	37	49.3
3F & 1E	11	14.7
2F & 2E	10	13.4
2F, 1E & 1D	5	6.7
1F, 1E, 1C & 1D	4	5.3
1F, 1D & 2C	6	8
Absent	2	2.6
TOTAL	75	100

Table 21

Table 22 shows the relationship between results obtained by the students at their 1st attempt and their religious group. 71% of the students from the Catholic faith obtained 4 "F" compared to only 42% from the Hindu faith. The regions being studied were mainly composed of Hindus and Catholics. Muslims constitute only a small minority.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESULTS (1st attempt) AND RELIGIOUS GROUP

RESULTS	HINDU		CATHOLIC		MUSLIM		TOTAL	
	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%
4F	33	42.3	66	71.0	0	0.0	99	56.9
3F & 1E	19	24.4	3	3.2	0	0.0	22	12.6
2F & 2E	11	14.1	9	9.7	0	0.0	20	11.5
2F, 1E & 1D	8	10.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	4.6
1F, 1E, 1C & 1D	5	6.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	2.9
1F, 1D & 2C	0	0.0	5	5.4	0	0.0	5	2.9
1F, 2E & 1D	0	0.0	2	2.2	0	0.0	2	1.1
1F & 3D	0	0.0	4	4.7	0	0.0	4	2.3
Absent	2	2.5	4	4.7	3	100	9	5.2
TOTAL	78	100.0	93	100.9	3	100.0	174	100.0

Table 22

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESULTS (1st attempt) AND JOB CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTS

JCP 1: Government servant, contractor, own/small business, supervisor etc

JCP 2: Watchman, securicor, waiter, caretaker etc

JCP3: Fisherman, maidservant, labourer, cleaner, mason etc

RESULTS	JCP 1		JCP 2		JCP 3		No Precision	
	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%
4F	11	33.3	7	43.8	69	62.2	12	85.7
3F & 1E	6	18.1	7	43.8	9	8.1	0	0.0
2F & 2E	3	9.1	0	0.0	17	15.3	0	0.0
2F, 1E & 1D	5	15.2	2	12.4	1	0.9	0	0.0
1F, 1E, 1C & 1D	0	0	0	0.0	5	4.5	0	0.0
1F, 1D & 2C	2	6.1	0	0.0	3	2.7	0	0.0
1F, 2E & 1D	1	3.0	0	0.0	1	0.9	0	0.0
1F & 3D	2	6.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	14.3
Absent	3	9.1	0	0.0	6	5.4	0	0.0
TOTAL	33	18.9	16	9.2	63.8	100	8.1	100

Table 23

The above table shows the relationship between results obtained at the CPE exams and the type of jobs of the parents. 63.8% of parents fall under the JCP 3 category that is considered the low-income one and in the same it is noted that the % of 4F is higher.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESULTS (1ST ATTEMPT) AND REVENUE OF PARENTS

RESULTS	No Precision		Less than Rs. 3000		Rs 3001 to Rs. 6000		Rs. 6001 to Rs. 9000		More than Rs. 9000	
	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	%	Nb	Nb	%
4F	10	50	32	58.2	54	68.4	0	0	3	25
3F & 1E	2	10	12	21.8	8	10.1	0	0	0	0
2F & 2E	3	15	6	10.9	5	6.3	3	37.5	3	25
2F, 1E & 1D	1	5	1	1.8	5	6.3	1	12.5	0	0
1F, 1E, 1C & 1D	0	0	0	0	2	2.5	2	25	1	8.3
1F, 1D & 2C	1	5	0	0	3	3.9	1	12.5	0	0
1F & 3D	1	5	1	1.8	0	0	0	0	0	0
1F, 2E & 1D	0	0	3	5.5	0	0	0	0	1	8.3
Absent	2	10	0	0	2	2.5	1	12.5	4	33.3
TOTAL	20	100	55	100	79	100	8	100	12	100

Table24

Table 24 shows the relationship between results of sample at the CPE exams and the revenue of parents. Revenue of parents has definitely an influence on the performance of their children. More than 50% of those parents who fall in the category Rs3001 to Rs6000 obtained 4F at the CPE exams. As income increases performance of the siblings also ameliorates.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESULTS AND ACADEMIC LEVEL OF PARENTS

RESULTS → ▼	Parent	C.P.E or under	Higher than C.P.E	NP	Total
	Children				
4F		60.1	66.7	47.3	100
3F & 1E		13.9	0	15.7	100
2F & 2E		3.2	20.8	21.1	100
2F, 1E & 1D		3.2	12.5	3.5	100
1F, 1E, 1C & 1D		2.2	0	5.3	100
1F, 1D & 2C		2.2	0	5.3	100
1F & 3D		2.2	0	0	100
1F, 2E & 1D		4.3	0	0	100
Absent		8.6	0	1.8	100
TOTAL		100	100	100	100

Table 25

Academic level of parents also plays an important role in deciding the performance of children. As it can be noted in Table 25 children tend to follow the bad academic results of their parents. More than 60% of children who obtained 4F have parents who have a low academic standard.

TUITION

Results	Private Tuition	No Private Tuition	Total
4F	29	70	99
3F & 1E	8	14	22
2F & 2E	15	5	20
2F, 1E & 1D	3	5	8
1F, 1E, 1C & 1D	2	3	5
1F, 1D & 2C	1	4	5
1F & 3D	1	1	2
1F, 2E & 1D	1	3	4
Absent	5	4	9
TOTAL	65	109	174

Table 26

Only 65 children out of the 174 chosen have taken tuition. Tuition is not a contributing factor towards success for CPE failure. More than 40% of those who took tuition got 4F. While interviewing those children who had tuition and obtained 4F, it was surprising to note that they were not able to read, write or even count.

PREFERENCES AT SCHOOL

Reason to go to school	As 1 st Choice	As 2 nd Choice	As 3 rd Choice
Play with friends/fun	85	11	0
Learn/educated/knowledge	16	0	4
Succeed in the C.P.E exam	15	13	17
Monthly exam	0	4	0
Get certificate/To get a good job in the future	23	25	0
Teacher	7	4	0
Nothing	22	0	0
Environment	5	3	0
TOTAL	174	62	21

Table 27

When asked about their preferences at going to school, nearly 50% said that they like playing with friends and having fun as their first choice answer. Only 8.6% on their first choice wanted to succeed in the CPE exams. However, 13.2% would like to get a certificate and have a good job in the future. It is worthy to note that 12.6% of the sample did not have any preference at school.

DISLIKES AT SCHOOL

Dislikes	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
Sitting in class	7	0	0
Teacher	44	14	2
Naughty friends/repeaters	12	0	0
C.P.E. exams	29	0	6
Injuries	7	31	0
Fighting	33	0	0
Punishment	5	32	0
Environment/toilet	4	0	0
Study	14	7	0
Nothing	19	0	0
TOTAL	174	86	8

Table 28

Table 30 gives an indication on the dislikes of the sample concerning school. 23.3% said they did not like the teacher. The environment of the school was also raised while going through the interview. 32 out of 86 who gave a second answer said that they were sometimes punished and they did not like it at all. 29 of them did not like the CPE exams.

FAVORITE SUBJECT

SUBJECT	%
English	13.2
French	24.1
Mathematics	45.4
Environmental studies	9.2
Nil	8.1
TOTAL	100

TABLE 29

SUBJECTS NOT PREFERRED

<i>SUBJECT</i>	<i>%</i>
English	46.6
French	14.9
Mathematics	17.8
Environmental studies	16.1
Nil	4.6
TOTAL	100

Table 30

Mathematics was the most preferred subject among the sample while English was the most disliked one.

HOW THEY SPEND THEIR LEISURE TIME?

LEISURE	Nb
Fishing	35
Playing football	31
Watching TV	19
Listening to Music	5
Reading books & newspaper	3
Playing with friends	70
Others	11
TOTAL	174

Table 31

When asked about their main activity for leisure, most of them replied "playing". Play forms part of their daily activity, as they do not have much choices for any other leisure activities.

CHAPTER 9

CASE STUDY (CS)

A case study of 5 children at the Bambous Women's Center was made to note their different characteristics.

CS1

Reshma Koobarawa is aged 16 years and lives in Bambous. She obtained 4F at her two attempts at the CPE exams. Her father is a watchman and mother carries out the household duties. When she joined the Center, she was not able to express herself in English and French. Her reading capacity was awful. She even did not know how to handle money. She has done little progress since joining the Center. Her conduct is good. She is attentive and obedient to what the teacher says. Now she is able to read few lines of a book and understand them. She has done well in needlework, hand embroidery, home economics and design. She gives the impression to be interested in what she is learning. She has participated in extra-curricular activities like sketch and has even learnt to play table tennis. At the end of the session Reshma was coping with numbers and thus could do shopping without being cheated. She took the CPE exam paper 2000 (paper corrected by the teachers of the Center) and got a B in English, C in French, C in Mathematics and a C in EVS.

CS2

Veronique Marie Russie is aged 16 years and lives in Cité La Ferme. She obtained 4F at the CPE exams and did not go for a second attempt. Her father is a drunkard and the mother works as maidservant. Her Family could not afford to send her at school. She joined the Bambous Center in 1999. She could be considered as illiterate as she could not read, write or even count when joining the center. She learned alphabetization very slowly. She has shown interest in learning but could not grasp what she was taught. By June 2001 she was able to make a little progress but not up to expectation as she spent more than two years in the Center.

CS3

Salonee Curroah is aged 15 years old and lives in Bambous. She obtained 4F in two attempts at the CPE exams. Her father works as gardener and the mother works as maidservant. She could write and read but could not understand the meaning of the words and sentences. She is regular at the courses and has made little progress. Due to the poor conditions of her family she has to work as cleaner in the morning before attending classes and in the afternoon she goes for gardening. She has interest in learning but the condition in which she is living does not permit her progress.

CS4

Christian Duval is aged 14 years and lives in Bambous. He obtained 4F in two attempts at the CPE exams. His father works as carpenter and mother as housewife. He joined the Center in January 2001. He spends almost all of his time playing football with his friends. He has made progress while joining the Center but lack interest. He is very interested in becoming a football star. Play forms part of his life. He is more interested in playing than studying. He is obedient. His parents do not seem to show interest in his studies. He may take over his father's business in future.

CS5

Sunil Jankee is aged 14 years and lives in Bambous. He obtained 4F in two attempts at the CPE exams. His father works as gardener and mother carries the household tasks. The father has made much sacrifice to give his son a good education. However, Sunil does not seem to be interested in learning. His elder brother has just completed the SC exams successfully. Sunil is the "enfant gâté" of the house. He has not been regular at the courses and as such did not make any progress. He has still difficulties in reading, writing and counting. His father always came at the Center for advice from the teachers.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

This study has as prime objective to identify the main problems facing the CPE Low Achievers in one of the poorest district of the island. The main findings of the study are summarised in this section.

1.0. FAMILY BACKGROUND

1.1. JOB OF PARENTS & SALARY

It is noted that certain jobs are over-represented and all of them fall in the low-income category. More than 60% of the parents fall in the JCP3 category. Nearly 50% of the households receive a salary of less than Rs3500. As income increases the performance of the subjects under study seems to show an improvement although most of them did not succeed. The revenue of parents would seem to have an influence on the educational attainment of children.

1.2. RELIGIOUS GROUP

The Black River District is mainly composed of the so-called "creoles" and "hindus". More 4Fs come from the "creoles" category and confirm that this category of the population is more vulnerable.

1.3. ACADEMIC STATUS OF PARENTS

Academic achievement of parents played an important part in performance of the subjects at the CPE exams. Most of the parents have not received a secondary education. There was no proper follow-up of the education of the children. As most of them were from a poor background the main concern of the head of the family is survival and education is not a priority. This can be confirmed by analyzing Table 14 where 45 subjects have worked/still working. Educating parents should be a major step in improving education of their offspring.

2.0. PRIMARY SCHOOL BACKGROUND

The subjects under study come from schools that show a high rate of failure at the CPE exams. Few schools have shown marked improvement in their performance during the CPE 2001 exams.

3.0. STATUS OF SUBJECTS

Out of 174 respondents under study, 37 fall in the "no activity" status (21%). These children are not engaged in any gainful activity. In an interview carried out with Mrs. Fifine Sanstoupet of the "L'Association Feminine de Cascavelle" describes the situation as follows: *"missië sa bannes zenfants la passent tout zotte létemps zouer boule, Quand zotte fatiguer zotte zouer cannette apres zotte alle marcher lors bassin. Nou fine cause are bannes parents la mais zotte pas prend compte. Sa bannes zenfants pena aucene l'avenir et capave pose ene probleme pou lezotte dimounes"*. It is to be noted that 47.8% of those 15 years old children fall in this category.

4.0. JOBS PERFORMED BY SAMPLE

45 of the 174 subjects have worked or are still working. The type of jobs varies and they fall in the low-revenue category. Moreover, few have or are receiving reasonable revenue. It is clear that they have been exploited by the "patrons".

5.0. TUITION

One of the major findings of the research was that tuition did not help much these children who needed more individual attention. About 45% of those who took tuition still got 4F. This is so because the children are placed in the same condition likewise the school. No individual attention is given to them. While going through the notebook of one particular student it was noted that the same was rarely corrected by the tuition teacher. A situation that compels the researcher to deduce that the teacher was never concern with the progression of his student.

6.0. PREFERENCES AT SCHOOL

Approximately 50% of the subjects go to school to play and have fun with friends compared to 31% who care to learn and succeed in the exams. Mathematics is the most preferred subjects among the subjects.

7.0. DISLIKES AT SCHOOL

Approximately 25% of the subjects do not like school because of the teacher, 16.7% do not like the CPE exams and 18.9% do not like fighting. Violence in schools exists and it is reported by the respondents. In schools sometimes they do not say anything because of fear of more persecution by other children. English is the most disliked subject among the subject

MAURITIUS RESEARCH COUNCIL
A STUDY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL/C.P.E. LOW ACHIEVERS
BLACK RIVER DISTRICT

The information provided will be treated in strict confidentiality. Thank You.

A. PROFILE

1. Surname: _____ 2. Name: _____

3. Date of birth: _____ 4. Address: _____

5. Phone number: _____

6. Weight: _____ 7. Height: _____ 7.1. Sex _____

8. Are your parents still alive? Mother yes/no Father yes/no

8.1. Are your parents divorced? yes/no

8.2. If yes, since when? _____

8.3. Ethnic group _____

9. Do you have brothers and sisters? yes/no
Brothers: _____ Sisters: _____

10. What is your rank at birth? _____

11. Primary School attended: _____
From: 19..... To: 19...

12. Secondary/Vocational School attended: _____
From: 19..... To: 19...

13. Do you like to go to school? yes/no

If yes, why?

If no, why?

14. What do you like most at school and why?

15. What do you like least at school and why?

16. Do you like taking part in examinations? yes/no

If yes, why?

If no, why?

17. What do you think about the CPE Examination?

18. Which subject did you like the most and why?

19. Which subject did you like the least and why?

20. How do you spend your leisure time?

Playing Football ☐

Playing with friends ☐

Fishing ☐

Reading newspapers, books & magazines ☐

Watching TV ☐

Type of TV programs and literature _____

21. What did you have for breakfast, lunch and breakfast?

Breakfast: _____

Lunch: _____

Dinner: _____

22. What would like to be when you become older?

23. What type of work do you perform at home?

24. Have you worked for a salary before? What type and your salary?

25. Did or do you like the job?

26. What type of job do you like to perform?

27. Are you well treated by your parents? yes/no

25. Have you ever tasted cigarette or alcoholic drinks?

26. Did you like and why?

27. CPE Results

SUBJECTS	1ST ATTEMPT YEAR: 19....	2ND ATTEMPT YEAR: 19....	3RD ATTEMPT YEAR: 19....
ENGLISH			
FRENCH			
MATHEMATICS			
ENVIRONNEMENTAL STUDIES			
ORIENTAL LANGUAGE			

28. Did you take private tuition? Yes/No

29. Present status of child – CPE repeater/working as...../Vocational
School/doing nothing-staying at home

B. FAMILY BACKGROUND

1. FATHER

- 1.1. Surname:
- 1.2. Name:
- 1.3. Age:
- 1.4. Address:
- 1.5. Job:
- 1.6. Place of Work:
- 1.7. Salary per week:.....
- 1.8. Primary School attended:.....
- 1.9. Secondary School attended:.....
- 1.10. Studied up to:

2. MOTHER

2.1.Surname:

2.2.Name:

2.3.Age:

2.4.Address:

2.5.Job:

2.6. Place of Work:

2.7.Salary per week:

2.8.Primary School attended:.....

2.9.Secondary School attended:.....

2.10. Studied up to:

C. OBSERVATION

[illegible]

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