



POVERTY



PACSA FACTSHEET

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POVERTY MAKES PEOPLE SUB-HUMAN – EXCESS WEALTH MAKES PEOPLE INHUMAN

DOM HELDER CAMARA.

More than 100 Biblical texts link oppression to poverty and it is recognised in the Bible as the basic cause of poverty.

The existence of widespread poverty and human wretchedness in many parts of South Africa is not a matter of chance but can be attributed to oppression in one form or another. One of the most serious consequences of poverty is the high infant mortality among the poor.

SOME CHILDREN NEVER GROW UP – THEY DIE OF HUNGER



MORE THAN 50% OF ALL DEATHS AMONG AFRICAN AND 'COLOURED' PEOPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA ARE CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF FIVE.

INFANT MORTALITY

According to the Pietermaritzburg Medical Officer's 1980 annual report the infant mortality rate for Blacks in the borough was 8 times that of the White population, at 24 per 1000. A survey carried out by a doctor in Vulindlela (formerly Zwartkop Reserve) showed a rate of 42 per 1000 or 14 times that of the Whites in Pietermaritzburg in 1980. In Nqutu (Northern Natal) in the mid-seventies a study revealed a figure of 88 per 1000. Another survey covering four other Zulu communities gave the following:

KWA-MASHU	54
INANDA (Ndwedwe)	134
HLABISA	80
MAWELA	111

INFANT MORTALITY RATES (Dept. of Health – 1975)	
ASIANS	35
BLACKS	100
'COLOURED'	104
WHITE	20

Infant mortality rates only reflect death up to the age of 1 year, and medical experience is that children are most vulnerable up to 5 years of age. Doctors admit too, that what is seen in hospitals, is only the tip of the iceberg.

