Name

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Course

Date

Kaffir Boy

Kaffir Boy is a book about a young black boy named Johannes who grew up in South Africa during the apartheid regime. The concept of apartheid refers to government policy or a bunch of systems of segregation and discrimination on the premise of people’s race (3). The policy sought to separate racial groups from one another by creating artificial and physical boundaries between them. The pass laws were a series of rules and regulations, basically anchored in the Pass Laws Act of 1952, requiring every black South African aged 16 and above to carry a passbook everywhere and at all times for identification (36). The passbook included information on an individual's employment, education, and tax compliance status. It also contained information on permissions to be in a particular area, among other data. Pass laws determined where one should reside, work, and basically where to be legally accepted. The pass law impacted Johannes' family in various negative ways, which explains the challenges he faced as a young man. First, the family suffered constant fear of deportation because the father and mother did have passbooks with anomalies (19-20). Anytime the police carried out an operation in the area where the family stayed, fear gripped the family. The father and mother would go into hiding, leaving Johannes and his siblings left alone shaken (9). Essentially, fear of deportation was a constant problem in the family that had its roots in pass laws. Secondly, Johannes and the family suffered humiliation because of pass law. In one of the raids, the police found the father hiding under the bed, half-naked. It was embarrassing for the police to harass him before the children. They abused and ordered him around (20-23).

The pass laws affected Johannes and his family led to the father's arrest, leaving the family without a breadwinner. The father was the only sole breadwinner for the low-income family, which implies that his arrest left it without a source of income. Most of the time family went without food because the mother could not provide enough in the absence of a working father (37). Without his arrest, the chance of the family's financial status meeting the basic needs was high than when he is not around. Additionally, without the father and difficult financial problems, the family resorted to begging to make ends meet. In one of the begging incidents, the mother had to run around the town soliciting funds to buy food and pay rent (41). Johannes and the family suffered the humiliation of begging and going on an empty stomach because there were no funds to support them. Quintessentially, the effects of pass laws had plunged the entire family into extreme poverty and degrading life. The arrest of the father and eventually eliminating the family income earner led to difficulties in paying rent. The landlord often threatens the family with throwing it out of the house over accrued arrears (37). At the same time, family items such as furniture were seized by the people the father owed money (38). Life became difficult for the family because the breadwinner had been taken away over the pass law violation. Children could not receive proper medication when sick because the mother could not afford as little as one hundred cents needed to pay for the services (38).