POLICY AND PRACTICE RELATED CONSTRAINTS TO INCREASED FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own original work and has not been submitted previously for evaluation for any degree to any other university. Sources and references are acknowledged.

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PC MOOROSI

DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to my late father, Ntate Tumo. Ntate, you left me just when I was nearing the end of this road and was looking forward to celebrating it with you. But I know that you are celebrating it with me and the rest of the family from wherever you are.

May your soul rest in peace!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines South African policies addressing gender inequality in education management, and interrogates whether or not these policies made a difference to the career route of women principals of secondary schools. The under-representation of women in education management has been a long observed problem in many countries including South Africa. A number of initiatives have been put in place to address this issue but little improvement is seen in the South African situation in education management. The purpose was to understand why women are still under represented in school management and to learn from their experiences.

The study used data from three sources. Firstly, policy documents and practices were analysed in terms of their symbolic, regulative and procedural functions. Secondly, the personal accounts of 28 women principals in KwaZulu-Natal who had been appointed after 1994 were collected through the use of extended interviews, and thirdly, interviews were conducted with key officials and members of School Governing Bodies that had participated in the selection of principals. The data generated were analysed at two levels in order to understand the factors constraining the participation of women in education management.

At the micro level, I use the 'management route model' as an analytical framework that identifies the three phases women principals go through in their career route, namely anticipation, acquisition and performance (van Eck and Volman, 1996). The model reveals that factors influencing women's career paths into management are very complex and based firstly on the individual agency where women grapple with more internal issues such as professional qualifications and experience, aspirations, lack of ambition and family responsibilities. Secondly, these factors are at the organisational level where women suffer discrimination at the recruitment and selection processes, and lack of institutional support through mentoring and sponsorship. Thirdly, it is the social level, which involves the cultural discourses in which women operate. These discourses include

sex role stereotypes that inform the social expectations about the role of men and women in society.

On the macro level, I use feminist theory to interpret and understand the women's experiences and findings in general. The findings reveal that policy interventions put in place since 1994 to close the gender gap were mostly informed by liberal feminism that focused on affirming women in order to gain access into the school management without tackling the social practices that are defined by sex role socialisation and which therefore continue to work subtly and insidiously towards the discrimination of women.

I conclude that although the liberal feminist interventions that have been put in place have been useful to some extent, the problems impeding women's full participation in education management cannot only be tackled at a policy level because this attempt leaves the most problematic social practices intact. However, I argue for policy and legal intervention as a starting point to combat the gender crisis in a society that has inherited so much inequality. While I acknowledge that women of all races in South Africa have all been negatively impacted upon by the historical and traditional values and expectations on the role of women and men in society, I argue that the situation has been worse for women of the Black African race, who suffered dual oppression in terms of gender and race.

The study proposes the need to look beyond provision of legal and democratic reforms and more into social practices that prevent legal reforms from reaching the desired goals. Social structures and cultural practices that hamper the greater representation of women should be dealt with in order to allow women freedom to participate in discourses where their choice is not informed by gender subordination.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

B.ED	Bachelor of Education
BPAED	Bachelor of Pedagogy
CGE	Commission on Gender Equality
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
Ex- DET	Former Department of Education and Training
Ex-HOD	Former House of Delegates
GFP	Gender Focal Person
GETT	Gender Equity Task Team
GEU	Gender Equity Unit
HED	Higher Diploma in Education
HOD	Head of Department
FDE	Further Diploma in Education
FET	Further Education and Training
KZN	KwaZulu Natal
NDOE	National Department of Education
PTC	Primary Teachers Certificate
STC	Secondary Teachers Certificate
SASA	South African Schools Act
SEM	Superintendent of Education Management
SGB	School Governing Body
UED	University Education Diploma (current PGCE)

CHAPTER 1

CONCEPTUALISING THE PROBLEM

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Concerns around the issues of gender equity in general have been on the policy agenda for a long time internationally and there has been a lot of research and writing on the under-representation of women in education management in particular. South Africa has been faced with restructuring education in order to allow equal opportunities for boys and girls at school and men and women in employment positions for over a decade. Attempts in the form of policy interventions have thus been made locally to address the problem of lack of female participation in management positions, but the problem still persists in education management. Women are mostly concentrated in primary teaching, and are less well represented in secondary schools particularly in management positions. Men, on the other hand, continue to be at the centre of education management and this centrality is marked by both their numerical dominance and the masculine culture of leadership that is perpetuated in education management (Whitehead, 2001; Chisholm 2001; Blackmore, 1999).

The under-representation of women in education management in South African secondary schools today is a problem, given the dominance of women in the teaching profession. It shows that women in promotion positions have faced and continue to face more deterrents than men do, otherwise there would be a more equitable gender distribution of secondary school principals. This thesis proceeds from the position that there should be a more gender-equitable distribution of personnel at the management level in schools. Equal gender representation is not advocated merely for equity's sake, but firstly because women's qualities are regarded essential for effective delivery, since they emphasise collaborative team work and shared leadership (Hall, 1996 and Gupton and Slick, 1996). The debates in the recent literature in education leadership and management put more emphasis on distributive leadership, an attribute displayed mostly

by women owing to their ability to work collaboratively and in shared participation (Lumby, 2003; Leithwood et al, 1999).

Secondly, women's equal representation with men at the management level of the schools hinges on the role of the school in socialization, which means that women's position in education is part of the hidden curriculum, which teaches about the position and aspirations of women and men in the labour market (Van Eck and Volman, 1996). As Al-Khalifa (in De Lyon and Migniuolo, 1989) points out, school principalship is often linked to stereotypically defined masculine traits and behaviours, especially 'strength and detachment'. According to Al-Khalifa's (1989) own perception, the work of principals varies according to different individuals, the size and type of school, but mythology about the nature of leadership had a masculine bias which has a powerful hold in teacher culture. Al-Khalifa (1989) cites Hoyle (1981) who draws attention to the role and importance of symbols in the study of school management. Hoyle observed that schools are rich in symbolism, and the symbolic order of the school includes messages about the relationship of men and women. This, according to Al-Khalifa and Addison (also cited in Al-Khalifa, 1989) leads to the school's restatement and reworking of the social understandings of male dominance and female dependence and gender roles in everyday language and interaction. Hoyle sees patterns of association amongst staff and principal, spatial relationships between staff, the nature of meetings, roles and documentation as having symbolic interest in school management and leadership. These aspects can be easily translated into experiences familiar to most teachers, denoting the masculine character of school leadership. Hoyle concludes thus, "the association of masculinity, male authority and school leadership is pervasive in the life of the school" (Hoyle, 1981:85).

Previous research has located the problem of women's under-representation in education management within women themselves, in traditional and sociological perspectives but not much has been done on the role of policy and how it addresses this gender disparity. This study investigates the same concern that has been tackled by earlier research on why

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there are fewer women than men in school principalships. However, here the focus is on how education policy in South Africa has been experienced by women who are already in education management positions and whether or not these women, as a previously disadvantaged group, have in any way benefited from the policy initiatives put in place over the last decade. This area has received very little attention in education management research thus far.

I make an attempt here to define education management as a concept for purposes of this study. Hodgkinson (1991) asserts that it is a prerequisite of intelligent discourse to establish an understanding of the meaning of basic terms between parties as soon as possible, otherwise the discussion that follows is in vain. Some people usually use education management, administration and leadership quite casually and interchangeably, while others attempt to make a distinction between the concepts. In this study I acknowledge the differences between these concepts, but I concede a close connection and/or interrelationship amongst the three in a way that makes it difficult to draw a clear-cut distinction. Although the study is located within the gender and management paradigm, and cautiously uses 'management' instead of 'leadership' or 'administration', it draws on the relevant literature on the discourses of management, administration and leadership in education without necessarily distinguishing between the three. The focus is on principalship of secondary schools which it is acknowledged involves a lot of all three concepts.

1.2   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study investigates women's under representation in secondary school principalship in South Africa. This is regarded as a problem considering the huge number of women dominating that of men in the teaching profession. The under representation of women in education management positions while they form the majority of the teaching profession, has been a global problem for a long time. Hall (1999) suggests that reasons for this disparity vary over time. Studies done to establish reasons for this discrepancy found them to range from within the personal, historical, traditional, sociological and

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organizational constraints (Dale, 1973; Shakeshaft, 1989; Hall, 1993; Blum, Fields and Goodman, 1994). There have been policy interventions in South Africa to address this problem of gender inequality in general. However, not much has been done with regard to these policies to establish whether or not they have had an impact.

This study aims to address these issues in the South African context. The study investigates the problem of the continuing under-representation of women in secondary school principalship in the KwaZulu-Natal province. This is achieved through the examination of policy initiatives and experiences and perceptions of female principals of secondary schools as first hand recipients of policy. In order to understand women's status and their experiences of gender equity policies, the research asks the following key questions:

1. How does policy address gender inequality in education management?
2. What are the policy experiences and perceptions on the ground of women who attained management posts?
3. What are the lessons learnt in understanding women managers' career paths?

The assumption made is that in order to close gaps and disjunctions between policy and practice, strategies in policy formulation and implementation need to be developed to ensure that policy addresses the appropriate problems and that such policy is acceptable enough to all stakeholders to be effectively implemented and for practice to be institutionalized.

To develop the discussion throughout this study, I firstly explore the statistical picture in education management in South Africa as background to the study in question. Hall (1999) remarks that presenting the statistical picture is the usual starting point for discussing gender and education management, but this for some people is the background to a more important discussion of the extent to which management is masculine. Men's numerical domination appears to be an indisputable part of the management discourse,

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process and practice that has to be recognized in dealing with the phenomenon, and gender disaggregated statistics highlights the intensity of the problem.

Secondly, I review the literature to look at previous research on the subject in order to acknowledge the work done by my predecessors on the subject and to locate the issues arising from this current study in the research debates and context. Thirdly, I examine the policy initiatives put in place to bridge the gap between men and women in education management. It is evident that the situation of women in education is still unsatisfactory despite the policy efforts put in place. The purpose of examining the policy content is to look at how policy proposes closing the gender gap, to highlight the existing gaps within policy itself in order to understand the policy related constraints to the increased female participation in education management. Lastly, I examine the experiences and perspectives of women principals who got the principalship posts after 1994. This is to establish the impact policy has or has not had and to illuminate some of the areas needing attention in the endeavour to deal with the problem effectively. A more explicit structure of how the chapters unfold is provided at the end of this chapter.

1.3 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

A number of studies have tried to find reasons for the problem under investigation. The most significant work in South Africa for purposes of this study is that by Mahlase (1997) which looked into the position and experiences of black women teachers and managers in the former Lebowa (current Limpopo) Province. It is almost nine years since Mahlase's work was published, and eleven years since the non-racist government, which emphasized redress and equity, came into place. Not many South African gender studies in education have been done since then, particularly with regard to black female education managers. Although the current study is based in KwaZulu-Natal, it is a follow up to Mahlase's investigation through the interrogation of policies put in place to address gender issues, in order to establish reasons for the continued under representation of women in education management. The interrogation of policy is a gap identified in the

already existing works on why women are under-represented in education management. After exploring the impact of apartheid and traditional patriarchal relations on black women teachers and managers, Mahlase recommended that more research needed to be done in order to adequately describe the female teaching profession. Thus, the study is a post apartheid response to the problem and attempts to bring new insights into how the issue can be tackled at least at the level of policy and its implementation.

Education in South Africa has generally been influenced and shaped by the historic legacy of apartheid. However, while the gendered dimensions of education are not purely a result of apartheid, apartheid clouded and exacerbated gender relations and all other forms of discrimination through its policies on racial segregation. Gender concerns form a very important dimension of teacher education and teacher promotion in South Africa currently, but the structural positions that women find themselves in and the overall gender bias in the teaching profession have not received much attention. Gender issues and gender disaggregated data in the management of the South African education system have not been sufficiently explored and recorded in history and so very little national statistical information was available when this study was conducted. The following section briefly provides a historical overview of South African women teachers in order to put the study in context.

1.3.1   A brief historical overview of South African women teachers

This section gives a brief historical background to black South African education. Education matters in the apartheid era are well documented in the South African literature by authors such as Peter Kallaway, Pam Christie, Frank Molteno, Ken Hartshorne and many other South African writers. There is therefore no need to reproduce what has been so vastly covered. The purpose of this section is to briefly put the situation of women in context so that it can be understood where the women educators in general and women principals in particular come from. The section will highlight some of the major areas that informed the present education status as it affects

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women principals. Drawing mainly from Christie (1988), the section is a rather descriptive outline of the historical processes that led to the current status of education in general in South Africa. Other sources will be acknowledged throughout the section.

Women's position in education management cannot be treated in isolation from the general status of women in formal education and in society in general. Formal education is the foundation from which education managers come, which is why girls' formal education is fundamental to this study. There are many factors influencing the position women attain in education management in general, and in particular, factors that have influenced the position women have attained in education in South Africa. Amongst these factors, there is, firstly whether the pool of women who are formally qualified exists; secondly, the socio-cultural and psychological barriers preventing women's access into such positions and thirdly, the attitudes within the education system towards women's access to and subsequent performance in such positions.

Until 1994 when South Africa became a democracy, education had been fragmented along racial lines. The apartheid regime used education policy as an instrument of control to protect their power and segregate according to a hierarchy of resources and quality from white people down to black people, which consequently put black people at a disadvantage (Hartshorne 1999). Through its policies and practices, the regime reserved the most lucrative jobs for the white population leaving the black indigenous people suffering even at the level of employment. Teaching became one of the few professions available for the black race in general and in particular for women who were relegated into more nurturing and low paid jobs by the then policies. Black men were forced out of the low level teaching posts into higher paying positions that had better chances of promotion[1]. Women remained dominant in the teaching profession, but lowly represented in higher positions of power and authority.

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[1] This was as per HF Vervoed (the former minister of Native Affairs) quote "As a woman is by nature so much better fitted for handling young children, and as the great majority of Bantu children are to be found in lower classes of primary school, it follows that there should be far more female teachers than male teachers...The department will therefore ... declare the assistant posts in ... primary schools to be female

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According to Hartshorne (1992), formal institutional training for black teachers (although not exclusive to blacks) in South Africa began in 1841 at one missionary institution called Lovedale. Teachers (who were mostly men) during this time, were expected to take active part in church to work as pastors and preachers, so school teaching became directly related to church preaching. Missionaries initially provided teacher training in South Africa during colonialism and although they were the only group that provided education for all blacks, the higher levels of education including teacher training did not cater for women. Missionaries brought with them the Western ideas about the place of women in society. They believed that women should be trained for domestic roles both in their own homes and as servants in other people's homes, as they could not be directly involved in economic production or in politics. One of the missionaries was quoted saying, "give them (African girls) as little education as possible. The system of cramming is too much for the intellect of Kaffir girls" (Christie, 1988: 76).

As a result of this perception, women who attended school did not easily proceed to higher levels and it was mainly males who went on to secondary schools and higher education. This obviously affected the status women could achieve and domestic service became the main employment for women. The few women who made it to higher education were mostly restricted to nursing and primary school teaching. Thus, mission education obviously did not treat women as men's equals, but prepared them for restricted and generally subordinate roles in society.

The 1953 policies on Bantu Education actively discouraged men from primary school teaching, and those who insisted had to accept a lower rate of payment. However, the replacement of male with cheaper female teachers in the primary schools had already started in the 1930s and escalated in 1940 when a policy that restricted black women access into training as senior primary teachers was introduced. This resulted in women not having formal qualifications for teaching and providing poor service in cases where

teachers' posts…. Quota will be laid down at training colleges as regards numbers of male and female candidates respectively which may be allowed to enter for the courses… (Truscott, 1994: 22).

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they did get the teaching posts since admission for junior teacher training only required a junior secondary certificate. Women were also not able to gain access to higher education since they did not matriculate. Men on the other hand received better positions in the primary and secondary schools with better payment, and were entitled to training for teaching at higher levels. They also had better access to higher education institutions because the system did not prevent them from matriculating. They therefore had access into universities and other institutions of higher learning where they could study other prestigious courses in sciences and management. That is partially why women were and are still in the majority in lower levels of teaching in the schools.

The change in the economic and political conditions in the country increased the education opportunities for women in general, but not so much for black women in particular. Most women still remained with limited or no education while a few went as far as tertiary education. Compulsory education was introduced for the Indian and Coloured populations in the late 1970s but not for Africans. White teachers, including women received proper training from teacher training colleges and even universities. Black women teachers began to be trained in large numbers in the 1970s and it was only after this period that teacher training began to be controlled by the fifteen different departments, which offered unequal training for people of different races. Black teacher education was offered by colleges of education that were regulated by the DET syllabus in almost all the homelands. These different departments[2] of education legislated different Acts at different times, for example White women got to retain their permanent posts in 1970, fourteen years before their black sisters (Kotecha, 1994).

Working conditions of women of all races in the teaching profession have been different from those of men, and have led to the status of women being below that of men. However, the situation was worse for black women since they were already compromised by their skin colour. There was formal legislation to discriminate women from their male

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[2] ex- Homelands Department for rural African schools in the former homelands, ex-House of Assembly for the Whites, ex- House of Delegates for the Indians, ex-House of Representatives the Coloureds and the Ex-Department of Education and Training for the so-called urban African schools, (Kotecha, 1994).

counterparts on many conditions including payment for similar jobs, housing, leave and other fringe benefits that men enjoyed.

Women lost their permanent posts in teaching as soon as they got married and were not considered for permanent positions in the management of schools, as principals or deputy principals. The reason behind this was the fact that women were not considered to be breadwinners. Married women who were allowed to compete for these posts were those whose husbands were unable to support them. Women were also not granted paid maternity leave until 1991, and even that was only granted to married women. Women were required to work for eight uninterrupted years before they could get study leave. This had a direct bearing on women's productive function since it was highly unlikely that women would work for eight years as most of them would join the teaching profession at the time when they were about to start families. This meant that women could not qualify for study leave to further their education in order to prepare themselves for management posts in education. The situation for women remained like this until the early 1990s when negotiations for democracy and general equality were made.

1.3.2   The status quo

In South Africa, women across population groups are educated in almost equal numbers as men, with the former comprising more than half of the student population in most South African universities, according to the research figures available from the 2001 census. These statistics show that women students are in the majority at universities (albeit in the minority in technikons), making fifty-three percent (53%) of the student body (Statistics South Africa, 2001). There are generally more females than males in the world, with an estimated ratio of 54:46 in favour of females. South Africa is not much of an exception. The estimation is about the same as that of the world population. Fifty-two percent (52%) of the population is female according to both the 1996 and 2001 population census (Statistics South Africa, 2001) with a vast majority of Africans. The following chart depicts the racial breakdown of the South African population:

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Fig. 1: The racial breakdown of SA population
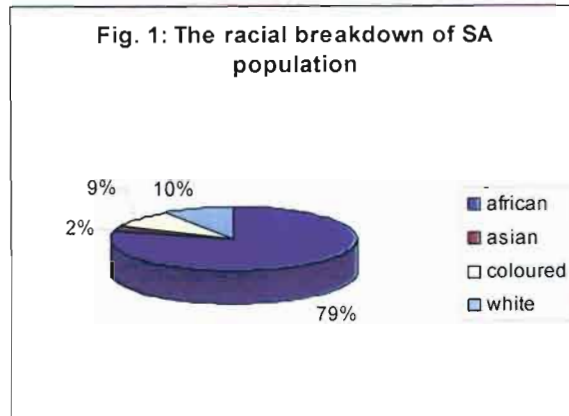
Source: *Statistics South Africa (2001)*

The difference between the national and provincial (KwaZulu-Natal where the study is focused) demographics is that in the province there are fewer Coloureds and Whites and more Indians. The table below illustrates the KwaZulu Natal (KZN) provincial population demographics from the 2001 census:

Table 1.1: Total population of KZN province by gender and race in percentage

	Black African	**Indian**	**White**	**Coloured**	**Total**
Males	39.4%	4.1%	2.5%	0.7%	**46.8%**
Females	45.5%	4.4%	2.6%	0.8%	**53.2%**
Total	**84.8%**	**8.5%**	**5.1%**	**1.5%**	**100%**

Source: *Statistics South Africa (2001)*

There are still more females than males even in the province as the above table shows. With regard to enrolment in the institutions of higher learning, the statistics show that numbers of female students who enrol for education in South African Universities keep increasing as illustrated in the table below:

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Table 1.2: Student enrolment in Education in South African Universities from 1990-1998

Year	Females	Males	Total	Females %
1990	33 879	20 353	54 232	62.%
1991	36 218	20 406	56 624	64%
1992	35 914	19 384	55 298	65%
1993	37 262	20 202	57 464	65%
1994	40 605	21 416	62 021	65%
1995	43 829	23 778	67 607	65%
1996	40 793	19 847	60 640	67%
1997	38 218	17 038	55 147	69%
1998	35 218	15 078	50 296	70%

Source: Edusource (2001)

There was a gap between 1998 and 2001. The latest information available reflected that the total percentage of female students in the higher learning system was 54% in 2002 (NDOE, 2004). This latest figure comprised all female students in South African institutions of higher learning from all fields of study and not just education. It is evident from the table above that education as a field of study, attracts a majority of students and particularly female students. If girls have as much access to education as boys, and if women enter institutions of higher learning in higher numbers than men, it follows that the pool from which women education managers are derived should be bigger than it currently is. However, it becomes quite interesting to realize how the number of women keeps dwindling as they go higher in the field of education management.

According to Napo (1998) of the thirty-two (32) directors in education nationally only nine (9) of them were women. The same situation is reflected in the schools where junior management positions are mostly occupied by women (see figure 2 below). Chisholm and Napo (1999) also show that in 1997, eighty seven percent (87%) of teachers were women, who comprised only nine percent (9%) of heads of departments, two percent

(2%) of deputy principals and two percent (2%) of principals. This reflects the fact that "women dominate the education profession but not its leadership" (Napo, 1998). The situation has significantly improved since 1997, but there is still a long way to go to reach parity between men and women in the education sector (as the tables below show). Women continue to be slightly visible in lower management level but invisible in the senior management positions.

The latest national statistics provided by NDOE (2004) continue to reflect an overwhelming majority of women in the teaching profession nationally, yet they are still under-represented in the senior management levels. The following diagrams reflect the uneven distribution of women across ranks:

Fig. 2: Educators in Post Level 1[3]

AFRICAN		ASIAN		COLOURED		WHITE	
MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
71 284	158 106	2 116	5 766	7 161	15 589	5 554	23 613
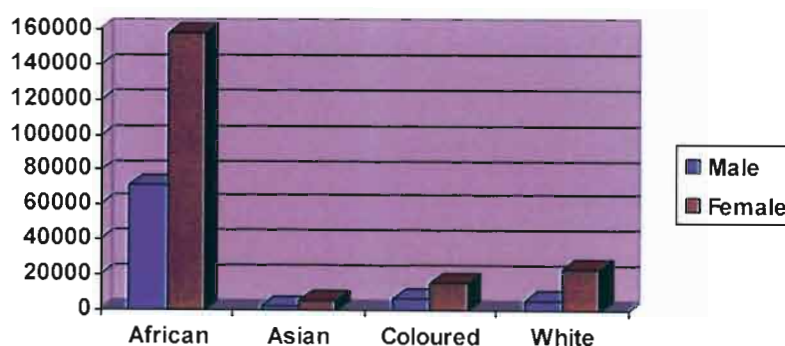
This diagram reflects the dominance of women across all racial groups in the post level one. In this post level, women comprise an overwhelming majority of seventy percent (70%) and men are in the minority across all racial groups. This includes both educators from primary and secondary schools.

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[3] Post level 1 is the entry level educator. Post level 2 is for Head of Department, 3 for deputy principal and 4 for principal. However, there are variances where a principal can be at post level 3 if the school enrolment is below 800 (Interview with EMIS official, 2003)

Fig. 3: Educators in Post Level 2

AFRICAN		ASIAN		COLOURED		WHITE	
MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
12 817	21 981	880	844	2 153	2 017	2 297	3 679
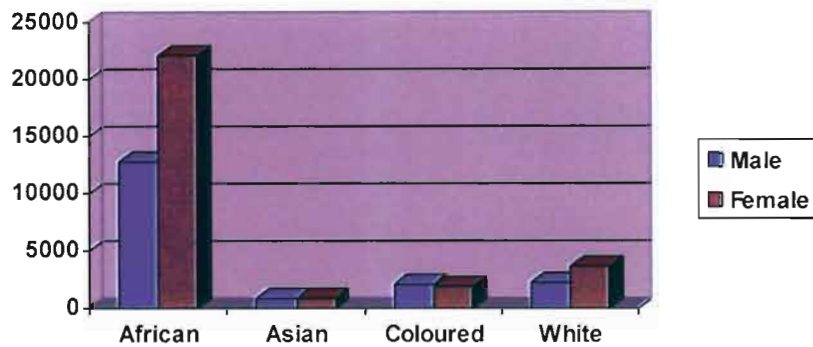
This post level reflects differences between racial groups. Post level 2 is the first level of management in South African schools which is otherwise known as Head of Department (HOD). As the diagram shows, there are more female educators within the African and White racial groups, whereas the Coloured and Asian groups reflect equality on the numbers of educators at this level. Overall, women are still dominating in this post level by a majority of sixty-one percent (61%).

Fig. 4: Educators in Post Level 3

AFRICAN		ASIAN		COLOURED		WHITE	
MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
12 412	8 379	594	256	1 488	481	2 142	1 227

Source: NDOE (2004)

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This is the deputy principal level, and clearly, as the diagram depicts without ambiguity, the post level is dominated by males across all racial groups. Men dominate by a majority of sixty-two (62%) percent while women only make thirty-eight (38%).

Fig. 5: Educators in Post Level 4

AFRICAN		ASIAN		COLOURED		WHITE	
MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
4 242	1 824	332	76	798	132	1 046	251
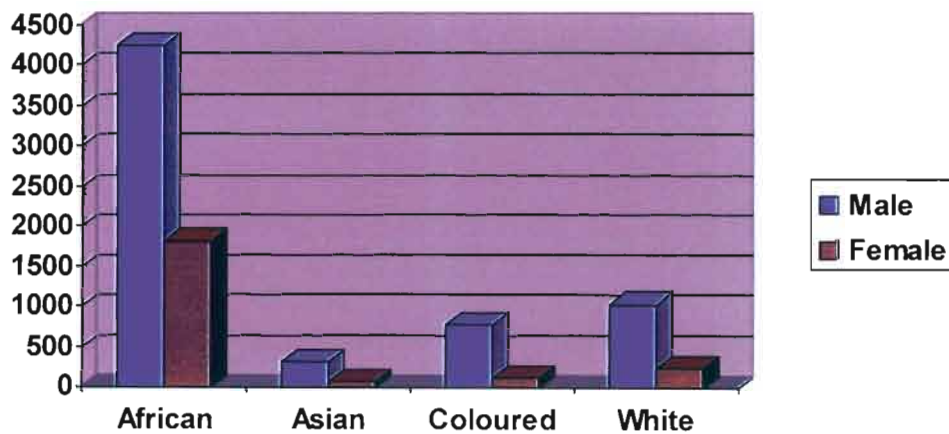
Source: NDOE (2004)

This is the principalship post that is clearly dominated by males across all racial groups. In this post level men have an alarming majority of seventy-four percent (74%) and women only occupy the remaining twenty-six percent (26%).

The following table summarises all the information in the above charts and highlights the female situation in percentages:

Table 1.3: South African educators by rank and gender

	Male	Female	Total	Percentage female
Post Level 1	86115	203074	**289 189**	**70%**
Post Level 2	18147	28521	**46668**	**61%**
Post Level 3	16636	10343	**26979**	**38%**
Post Level 4	6418	2283	**8701**	**26%**
Total	**127316**	**241938**	**371537**	**65%**

Fig 6: Gender breakdown of SA principals

Fig 7: Gender breakdown SA teachers
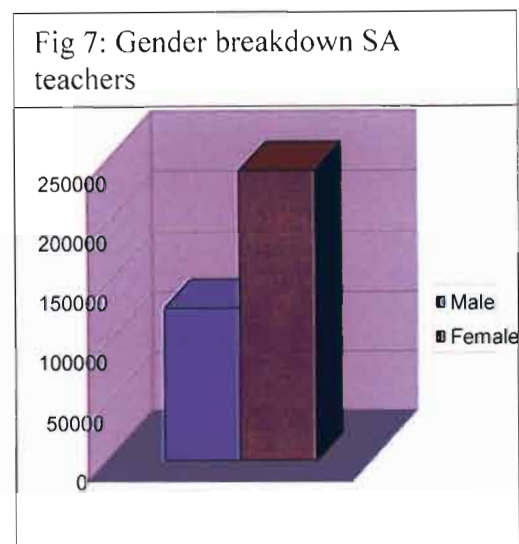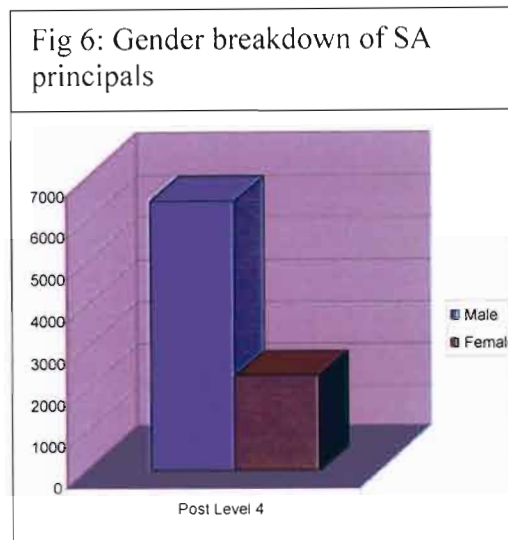
Figure 6 and 7 are juxtaposed to highlight the differences in ranks at the national level. Women generally dominate men in numbers by sixty-five percent (65%) in the teaching profession. But in principalships the situation is reversed. Men dominate principalships by seventy-four percent (74%). This is the crux of the problem I am investigating in this study – what prevents women from occupying managerial positions in as large numbers as they occupy in teaching.

In KwaZulu Natal, the situation is not different from the national one. According to the statistics available from the Provincial Employment Equity Statistics (2001), there were a

total of 56245 educators in KZN public schools, and 41221 of them were women while only 15024 were men. There were more female HODs (5065) as compared to male HODs (3112), but there were still more male principals (2922) than females (2067). There were forty-nine (49) districts in the province in 2002 and forty-three (43) of them were managed by men while only six (6) were managed by women. At the time this was seen as some improvement because before 1999 all the district managers were men. The following table illustrates the current educator status in the KwaZulu Natal province:

Table 1.4: Profile of KZN educators by rank and gender in 2005

Post level	Male	Female	Total	% Female
01	14860	42191	57051	74%
02	4062	7881	11943	66%
03	1897	1310	3207	41%
04	3050	2153	5203	41%
Total	**23869**	**53535**	**77404**	69%
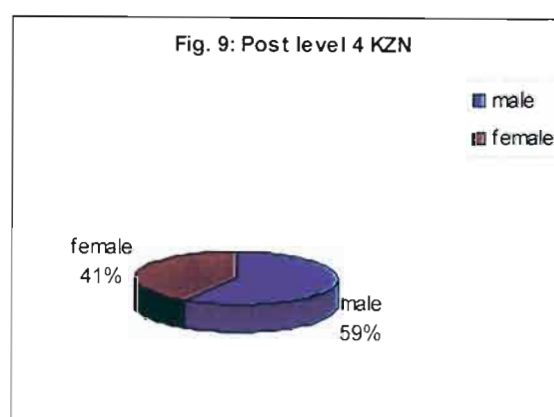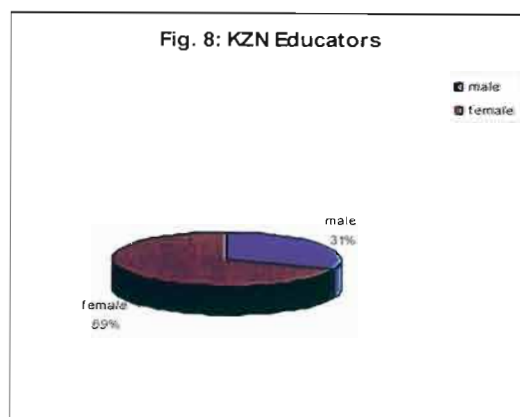
Source: Provincial DOE (2005)

These twin diagrams further highlight the gender disparity in ranks in the province. Principalship is still dominated by men by fifty-nine percent (59%) yet men only comprise thirty-one percent (31%) of the provincial teaching population.

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The above diagrams (Table 1.4 and Figures 8 and 9) show that although there are currently more women (69%) educators than men in the province, the bulk of women educators are still in the lower levels of teaching (post level 1). It further shows that women are more visible at lower management posts, as sixty-six (66%) of HODs (post level 2) are women. But in deputy principalship and principalship (post level 3 and 4 respectively) women are in the minority comprising only forty-one percent (41%) for both post levels.

It should be noted that the majority of educators in the country are in the primary schools and that is where the bulk of women educators are. Seventy three percent (73%) of all women educators in the country are in the primary schools. Secondary school educators make only thirty percent (30%) of all educators at national and thirty-seven percent (37%) in KZN according to the information available from NDOE (2004). Of the thirty percent at national level women principals make up approximately twenty-nine percent (29%)[4].

Thus, the above presentation of statistics in the education sector highlights without doubt the disparity of gender distribution of educators in the management positions of the South African schools. Women dominate the teaching profession but are not evenly distributed across post levels and continue to be under-represented in management positions.

1.3.3 The transformation era: a response to inequality

The beginning of the transformation era was marked by the removal of all forms of discrimination through the South African Constitution that became the cornerstone of democracy and other legislation. It was after the attempt to address racial equality, that gender inequality was also addressed at least at the legal and policy level as an attempt to promote equality in a number of ways for all citizens. Researching policy that addresses these matters in order to inform other policy intended for change and development is one

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[4] Statistics were not available from three provinces and the overall percentage of women principals at secondary schools at national level could only be estimated on the bases of the available statistics.

way in which these inequalities can be combated. Gender discrimination is still very much embedded in the society, and policy is believed to have the potential to go a long way towards removing these barriers to equality. This study investigates policy put in place about a decade ago to address gender equity in education management as one of the occupations that have been, and continue to be characterized by gender imbalances.

1.3.3.1 The international commitment to gender inequality eradication

An international commitment to removing gender barriers to women's development was made long before South Africa became a democracy. This section briefly looks at some of these agreements and commitments towards achieving gender equity in which the South African government became party in order to join the global fight against discrimination against women. South Africa also made agreements and commitments to taking action to transform relations between men and women towards gender equity. International conventions do not necessarily form part of the national law, but ratification is an important step because it signifies the commitment of government towards specified principles. The following are some of the international calls made against gender discrimination in which South Africa participated:

- A call for governments to create gender-sensitive education systems in order to ensure equal educational and training opportunities and full and equal participation of women in educational administration, policy-making and decision-making, was made in Beijing, at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

- A call for governments to remove gender-biased educational processes, including curricula, educational materials and practices, teachers' attitudes and classroom interaction which reinforce existing gender inequalities, in order to give the 'girl-child' full potential development, was also made in the Beijing Declaration.

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- As a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), South Africa also agreed to the SADC declaration on Gender and Development as well as the addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children in 1997.

It is acknowledged that South Africa participated in some of these conventions long before it became a democracy, but as indicated earlier, policies of apartheid clouded any attempt to bring about gender equality in the country. Other initiatives to which South Africa participated to improve the status of women and girls included:

- In 1965 the United Nations embarked upon a long-term programme to improve the status of women in all fields.
- A decade later, 1975 was designated as the International Women's Year and UNESCO declared its belief that "in the long run, education will prove to be the most effective channel for achieving equality between men and women and ensuring the full participation of women in development" (Byrne, 1978:11).
- The years 1976 to 1985 were declared the Decade for the Advancement of Women, by development professionals (Pearson, 1992).
- In 1979 the United Nations convention on the Elimination of discrimination against Women set out in legally binding form internationally accepted principles and measures to achieve equal rights for women everywhere.
- In 1995 the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender Development which provided a framework for Commonwealth governments and identified for planners and implementers fifteen areas considered desirable components of gender equity.

Although these commitments per se are not the focus of the study, they are of particular relevance to the study since they signify the commitment to the eradication of gender inequality. In the governments' attempt to address the gender imbalance, intervention in

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the form of policies was made and structures dealing with these problems were established. The impact of these policies needs to be determined, hence this study.

1.3.3.2 The national commitment

According to the National Department of Education (NDOE) (2001), issues relating to gender and development processes have been examined over the years but ways of addressing these issues have changed as the understanding of women's role in society and development changed. Mention is made in this NDOE document that as compared to what used to happen in the 1950s to 1970s, the late 1980s and 90s began to see the shift of focus in addressing women's issues. The latter years of development put more emphasis on women as consultants, agents and beneficiaries of development rather than objects for whom recommendations were made. These later attempts to address women issues led to the focus on "gender mainstreaming"[5], the concept that informs gender equity initiatives in South Africa at the moment.

At the national level, the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) gives everybody equal rights to education (Section 29 of the Bill of Rights), and the right not to be discriminated against (Section 9 of the Bill of Rights, Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the RSA, Act 108 of 1996). In addition to the Constitution, some of the legally binding provisions intended to address inequality in general including gender although not exclusive to education were the following:

- Labour Relations Act (1994)
- The White paper on Education and Training (1995)
- The National Education Policy Act (1996)
- The White Paper on Programme for Transformation of Higher Education (1997)

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[5] Gender mainstreaming refers to the establishment of systematic processes for taking gender issues into consideration at all stages of development and planning and resource allocation, which was adopted as a specific principle at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 (NDOE, 2001).

- The White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (1997)
- The White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery (1997)
- The Employment Equity Act (1998);
- Employment of Educators Act (1998)
- The White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service (1998)

These policy documents have clauses prohibiting discrimination and addressing equal attention and equal opportunities for both males and females. A detailed analysis of some of these policies is presented in Chapter 5 in order to understand how they propose closing the gender gap and why they may have or have not had a positive impact.

Other high profile structures were also established to deal with gender in the apparatus of the state and bureaucracy, and their focus was to increase access of women into public life and institutions to eliminate discrimination against women. Some of these structures and frameworks were:

- In 1995 South Africa ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW's requirement amongst others is that men and women have equal access to technical and vocational training and that education institutions should enable the active participation of women in society.
- In May 1996, Cabinet approved the establishment of gender focal points in all government departments whose tasks include policy review, strategy development and coordination of gender training, monitoring and evaluation and establishment of mechanisms for liaison with civil society (Chisholm & Napo, 1999).
- A Gender Management System established in 1997 which is formed by government and independent bodies and the most notable being the Office of the Status of Women, the Commission on Gender Equality and the Women's Budget Initiative (Chisholm and Napo, 1999).

Although the Constitution does not offer a hierarchy of the order in which inequalities should be addressed, it has been the aim of the democratic government to remove all barriers in order to allow women to develop to their full potential. Gender equity has evidently become one of the main emerging policy problems that had to be addressed by the South African democratic government since it came into power in 1994. At the opening of the first democratically elected South African government, the former president Nelson Mandela said:

> It is vitally important that all structures of government, including the president should understand fully that freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression, ... the objectives of the RDP will not have been realized unless we see in visible and practical terms that the condition of women of our country has radically changed for the better, and that they have been empowered to intervene in all aspects of life as equals with any other member of society (State of the Nation Address, 24th May, 1994).

This statement underlines the practical implications of a commitment to gender equality and empowerment of women in the new South Africa, something that has since been endorsed and elaborated in many different ways (Budlender, 1998). Furthermore, the former minister of finance, Chris Liebenberg, in his budget speech of 1996, also promised that the government would disaggregate data by gender (which increases women's visibility), introduce targets and indicators of gender equality, and develop a performance review mechanism in respect of gender (Statistics South Africa, 1998). What is of paramount importance to this study is the degree to which commitments like these, especially through policy interventions that followed, have or have not had an impact on the lives of women in education in the new South Africa.

Furthermore, the Department of Education itself recognized in the early 1990s that if women are to benefit from public policies that aim to empower them, they have to participate at all stages of the public policy processes including the needs assessment, adoption and implementation stage (NDOE, 2001). The dominant discourse in

empowering women has therefore been on challenging the perceptions about the role of women in society in order to allow them full participation in shaping the transformation. The Department of Education therefore committed itself to amongst others:

- Review rules and regulations which directly or indirectly perpetuate gender discrimination and subordinate roles of girls and women in learning and working environments;
- Review the establishments and practices within national and provincial departments of education and in schools, to identify and eliminate policies and practices that directly and indirectly undermine equal access in terms of gender to recruitment, treatment, retention, advancement and promotion;
- Foster a gender-responsive culture; facilitate the transformation of perceptions and attitudes towards women and men at work and in schools and institutions by initiating and supporting genuine gender equity dialogue, sensitization and training of employees, learners and educators (NDOE, 2001).

Given this scenario, the assumption is that women have equal access to all areas of study and employment including those that would enable them to enter into decision-making positions. Why then, does the problem of under representation of women in education management persist? It is obvious that mobility into higher ranks of education management is more difficult for females than males; despite the fact that they all enter education in more or less equal numbers and that, women themselves enter the teaching profession in even larger numbers.

This study examined women principals' experiences and perceptions regarding;

(i)   factors pertaining to the nature and consistency of government policies addressing gender issues,

(ii)   the articulation of such policies between training and the education job market and

(iii)   the sustainability of such policies in terms of implementation and institutionalization of practice.

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1.4 A PREVIEW OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research is informed mainly by theories of feminism, and liberal feminism in particular, with its emphasis on women's individual rights and equal opportunities provided by laws and clearly articulated policies (Acker, 1994; Arnot and Weiler, 1993). A detailed discussion of the theoretical perspective will be given in Chapter 3 of the thesis, but here, a brief overview is provided. Weiner (1994) states that different feminist perspectives have generated different research questions for education. Liberal feminist research studies tend to focus on women's failure or underachievement in the schooling system and in education in general as an attempt to campaign for change. Thus, liberal feminists have explored the apparent failure of women to achieve at school, in higher education and in the workplace in relation to their male counterparts. As Weiner goes on, the aim behind this has been directed towards working within the system to achieve change quickly and with minimal disruption. Terms such as underachievement and under-representation produce a discourse in which most acceptable answers are those that are unlikely to make too many overtly threatening demands on a largely sceptical (and male) educational status quo. Liberal feminists argue for the removal of barriers to women's full potential, which they presume will result in equal distribution of genders across various divisions of labour in existing social hierarchies (Acker, 1994).

However, the removal of barriers is not enough to secure an equitable distribution of genders across various divisions of labour as liberal feminism argues. Moreover, liberal feminist attempts to close the gender gap have not been very successful because they leave the status quo intact since they do not challenge the patriarchal social practices (Weiner, 1994; Blackmore, 1999). The study argues that equitable distribution of men and women goes beyond the numbers game, and cannot be guaranteed by gender policies and laws prohibiting unfair discrimination alone. The study therefore drew on several other views of feminism such as post-structural feminism, black feminist approach, African feminism and used different feminist concepts to interpret and make sense of the findings while at the same time reflecting on liberal feminism's limitation in accounting

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for women principals' experiences. A detailed review of the feminist theories as applied in this study is provided in the chapter three.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study was prompted by the continuing gender inequality in education management. As already discussed, women are numerically dominant in the teaching profession, but they are not equally represented in the management positions. Enough research has been done on factors contributing to the lack of female participation in education management. As has been seen, these factors range from forces from within the organizations, forces from within the women themselves relating to the dualism of women's responsibility (professional and traditional) and forces relating to the traditional socialization of women. Policies have been made to address these issues of inequality in general but what is still not clear to date is the relationship between policy directed at addressing these issues, the implementation of such policy and how it is sustained. The study therefore contributes to the response to the post-apartheid South African policy research terrain in terms of contributing and possibly positively influencing the development of a gender sensitive education management system.

The outcomes of the study could be useful to policy-makers and implementers to provide a basis for policy guidelines for reform. Gupton and Slick (1996) show that reasons for female under representation in education management differ over the years, and this study hopes to show whether, how and why this disparity persists as a result of the disparity between policy and practice, thereby contributing to a huge amount of literature that already exists on the subject.

Policy research operates on a continuum between academic and applied policy analysis (Cibulka cited in Taylor et al, 1997). Academic policy analysis should therefore not be considered as just a critical academic exercise with no political value because the process is value laden and has a way of making judgments of whether and in what ways policies help to make things better. Taylor et al (1997) state that academic policy analysis can for

different reasons be utilized by teachers, teacher unionists, politicians and workers. That is why this particular study is both a study of policy and for policy even though it is not directly intended to inform immediate policy initiatives. Teachers and unions can benefit by realizing policy discrepancies from which they could therefore use their influence on those who have power to make a difference in making appropriate policy.

Howell and Brown (1983) argue that writers on educational policy making always have to cater for two types of audiences - students and practitioners. In this case there is always a danger of wanting to satisfy both but ending up satisfying neither of them. This can be minimized by the integration of theoretical and empirical elements of a study, and treating each element in sufficient depth to produce an analysis that throws light on general theoretical issues, whilst at the same time presenting a narrative that is intelligible to those interested in purely empirical aspects for academic purposes. As an academic study, the research may be biased towards the theoretical elements, but enough empirical data has been collected and analysed in order to enhance accessibility to all types of audiences. Thus, the study is hoped to be useful to both practitioners and scholars by making a contribution to both academia and political worlds.

In conclusion, this chapter has conceptualized the research problem and provided a theoretical and historical background for the study. A need for research on and for gender and education policy has also been established. Gender and education management is sufficiently dealt with at the theoretical level, but not at the level of policy in South Africa. The study will therefore be of great value to the literature on this subject. What follows is the outline of chapters making this thesis.

1.6 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Chapter one has introduced the problem and put in context the focus of this study. It outlined the background to the study through an overview of the historical context of

women in South African education, with the purpose of putting the current status of women in education management in context.

Chapter two summarizes a review of the literature on the existing works on education management and principalship in general, and gender in education management in particular. It further looks at the literature on gender and organizations and reviews attempts that have been made to close the gender gap in organizations. This chapter is a build-up towards the feminist framework completed in the next chapter.

Chapter three presents the theories of feminism as a theoretical framework that inform the study and examines the broad literature on education feminisms. The chapter also presents other analytical frameworks used in the study.

Chapter four covers the methodology, and looks specifically into issues around qualitative and feminist research design, and methods and processes for data collection. The issues of sampling and data collection procedures followed in this research are explored here.

Chapter five focuses on the analysis of policy documents that address gender issues in South African education in the post-apartheid era. The purpose is to highlight the policy attempts and to answer the first broad question on what policy says about gender issues in education management.

Chapters six, seven and eight explore the findings on the preparation, acquisition and performance phases respectively in terms of the studied women principals' experiences. These three chapters answer the second broad question on the experiences and perceptions of women who got into management. In these three chapters data are displayed with the use of direct quotations from the transcripts.

Interpretation of the findings is given in Chapter nine. This chapter also serves as a broad conclusion outlining the interaction and relationship between these three phases with regard to women's experiences in and into principalship in secondary schools. The complexity of the obstacles women experience in their management route is highlighted through the interaction of the three phases affecting them at the personal, organisational and social levels. This picture is necessary to understand the complexity of issues affecting women in their attempt to access management posts in education. The last chapter (chapter ten) draws conclusions on the study, summarises the lessons learnt and attempts to make recommendations for policy, practice and further research.

CHAPTER 2

GENDER AND EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The literature provides a variety of theoretical frameworks that have been used internationally over a long period of time in the analysis of women's under-representation in education management. As a result of these different analyses, various intervention strategies have been developed in the attempt to close the gap, but they have not reached the desired effects. This study explores women's under representation in education management from women's perspectives (hence a feminist methodology as will be seen in chapter 4) and therefore required a theoretical framework that takes into consideration the complexity of women's experiences as a disadvantaged group whose attempts to get into management and perform in management positions are faced by the negotiation of a series of deterrents.

This chapter builds towards the theoretical framework to explain the study (fully developed in the next chapter) by firstly providing a brief summary of the already existing research on the topic in question and highlighting some of the theories used. By so doing, the chapter locates the study in the research context by drawing briefly on some theoretical underpinnings to the barriers to women's progress and reviews some organizational strategies advanced in an attempt to close the gender gap in the management of organisations. Coleman (1996) acknowledges that there are barriers to upward mobility experienced by women in the schooling system and these may be overt or covert. These barriers may be based on socialization, cultural constraints; work-related constraints or related to responsibilities in the home. But whatever the source of these barriers, their implications for managers concern the ethos of the school and the structures put in place.

Secondly, because the study also draws heavily from the theoretical approaches of gender in organizations to understand the reasons for the existing inequities between men and women in the management of schools, it discusses these approaches as presented by Ely and Meyerson (2000). These approaches are informed by some underpinnings of some perspectives of feminist theory and constructs are identified and developed to explain the inequities. In this chapter, the study picks some aspects of the approaches that helped in explaining the findings in order to identify strategies that could be useful in combating the gender problem. The aim is for the study to make a link between some constructs within feminism and the gender approaches to organisational analysis as addressed by Ely and Meyerson, and to draw a conceptual framework that explains the complexity of women's experiences in and into management.

This chapter is an attempt to acknowledge the existing works on gender and education management, but because the subject is so well documented, no attempt is made in this study to repeat what has been done. The existing evidence in the literature to the effect that women are under-represented in senior management positions in all sectors, and in education management in particular is regarded as background to this study[6]. Instead of regurgitating what is already covered by previous research, this chapter provides a brief summary of relevant studies in order to put the study in the research context. The literature is reviewed throughout the thesis.

2.2   WOMEN IN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

It is evident from previous research (refer to footnote below) that very few women do make it to the management of the upper echelons of the educational institutions, despite efforts that have been made at the policy and legal level to secure equal access to all occupations in South Africa. There are also few women at the level of principalship in the secondary schools, yet there are more women principals in the primary schools. The

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[6] See works of Coleman (1996); Bush (1995); Riches, (1990); Law & Glover, (2000); Blackmore, (1993; 1999); etc.

irony of this situation is the fact that women dominate the teaching profession at all levels. Women continue to dominate teaching at secondary level, but numbers keep declining higher up the management ladder. There is almost equitable distribution of genders in the middle management of secondary schools, but principalship remains largely the province of men. Some writers argue that this is due to gender differences in career conception where administration is deemed more important than teaching; and that in education, the further away educators are from teaching and direct dealing with children, the more they are seen to be professional (Shakeshaft, 1989; Leithwood et al, 1996; Smith et al, 1997). This is in line with the argument that women have been socialised into nurturing the young that make it more men's responsibility to manage the school leaving women to the actual dealing with children.

Studies such as Bush et al (1999), Blackmore (1993) and Blum et al (1994) cover the gender and education management subject broadly and show how and why women have always been under-represented in education management. The reasons they posit for this discrepancy can be summarized as the pre-socialisation of women, organizational barriers and lack of clearly articulated policies. Some older studies done on the subject such as Edson (1981), Biklen (1980) and Wheatley (1980) focused on the discrimination and stereotypes that limit women's entry into educational management and also touched on the socialisation that prevents them from developing expected credentials required for these administrative posts. What is common in these studies is the focus on the socialisation and sex role stereotypes theories that are used to explain the under-representation of women in positions of power.

Hall (1996) and Gupton and Slick (1996) studied successful women managers in the United Kingdom and United States respectively. On the one hand, Gupton and Slick's concerns were why women were still under-represented in education administration twenty-five years after the implementation of affirmative action policies, and what the experiences of those who got in were, in terms of how and why they got there, how they survived and why and how they continued to be successful. Hall (1996) on the other

hand, was looking at the different styles of management women have and the impact gender has on leadership behaviour resulting in these differences. Although the studied women did not have identical experiences, there were some commonalities in terms of what contributed to their success. Some of these similarities included participatory and collaborative leadership, networking and educational qualifications. The authors also found that although the women had "broken through the glass ceiling," they still experienced some more subtle and covert barriers to their advancement and success in education administration, such as traditional and organizational constraints. These barriers were also experienced by the successful Caribbean women managers studied by Morris (1998) and the Indonesian women studied by Hasibuan-Sedyono (1998). An overview of the barriers to women's progression in educational management will be provided later in the discussion.

Other studies examine the different management styles between women and men, and tend to focus more on why women perform differently from men (Schmuck, 1981). Most of the older studies in the early 1980s[7] based their explanation of findings on why women perform differently from men on the trait theories of leadership that view women as deficient. But since the late 1980s there has been a shift from this view of women since it fails to differentiate between effective and ineffective male leaders (Blackmore, 1989).

The later mid-1990s studies (Gold, 1996; Hall, 1996; Gupton and Slick 1996) tend to celebrate women's differences in management styles and their useful qualities that improve effectiveness in management. The most recent works (Gardiner et al, 2002; Cubillo and Brown, 2003; Fitzgerald, 2003; Bloom and Erlandson 2003) explore a whole range of factors constituting barriers to women's advancement as well as factors contributing to women's success in education management. Blackmore and Kenway (1993), Coleman (1996), Drake and Owen (1998), Law and Glover (2000) and Loughlin (1999) also make a substantial contribution to the debates around issues of the promotion of women at the international level. What still needs to be explored further is the fact that

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[7] (See works of Schumck et al, 1981; Marshall 1985;)

even though women in education appear to be making progress, they still have to negotiate a lot of hindrances on their route to top management, which not all of them are able to negotiate successfully.

Drake and Owen (1998) and Davies (1998) argue that so much has been written on women in management to the extent that 'women in management' has become synonymous with gender and management. This has been done over and over again until it is beginning to seem impossible to get more women in education management. Davies (1998) argues that this is owing to the fact that the literature concerning the arguments around the subject on women in management is mostly read and done by other women, leaving men out. Consequently, men carry on excluding themselves from issues of gender since they regard gender issues as women's issues. They have no idea how women feel about their status and as far as they are concerned these issues do not concern them, thereby perpetuating the notion that gender equals women.

Whitehead (2001) argues that for sexual and gender equality and equity to materialize in work organizations men and women must recognize the significance of their own gender as a facilitator or barrier to equal opportunities for women. He calls this 'self-reflexivity' that is central to any subsequent gendered shift that might occur in the wider public domain. Whitehead studied men and women managers of further education colleges in England and Wales and compared and contrasted their gendered subjectivities in education management. From his study, men appeared to have less gendered subjectivities as compared to women. Men did not see their own gender as a factor contributing to inequality of opportunities. He therefore concluded that:

> So long as men managers remain the invisible gendered subject, equal opportunities will remain largely rhetoric, confined to the margins in practice and gathering dust as policy documents. For most men managers' inability to see their own gender as a factor in equality enables them to continue to regard equal opportunities as language from the 'other'; a gender-visible state which, paradoxically, possibly permits them to 'believe' in their personal commitment to equal opportunities, whilst at the same time regarding it as 'women's problem' (Whitehead, 2001:80).

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Concurring with this sentiment, in her study of six successful British women principals, Hall (1996) attempts to further discredit the notion of gender equals women by outlining three reasons why her study should stand alongside other studies of education management and not viewed exclusively as a "women's" or "feminist" study. Summed up, these reasons are: her study is a portrayal of women studied on their own terms; it emphasizes gender relations rather than gender differences; it documents and interprets the behaviour of women in leadership and takes into account their contribution to educational leadership in general. The question remains however (although this is not the focus of the study), whether having more men reading more women's or feminist work, or including them in women's research, is a guarantee that their thinking and attitude towards women will change. As Brock-Utne (1989) says "you can lead the horse to water, you may even make him thirsty, but you can't make him drink". But from a feminist point of argument, the view I share with these writers is that in order for gender equity to materialise men and women should have insight into their own gender as a barrier or facilitator to equal opportunities for women, hence I agree with Whitehead (2001) that a commitment to equal opportunities requires a personal and cultural shift beyond policy documents and advertising jargon.

Hall (1999) supports the above point by arguing that the debates around gender and educational management continue to be carried out mainly by women about women. Fitzgerald (2003) shares the same view. These two authors both suggest that the best way of serving gender interests is not to have more women at the top, but to have structures in place which promote equity and to have people (both men and women) who believe in and abide by those structures. That means, as Fitzgerald put it, to locate gender at the centre of the debates on leadership and not at its periphery where it is largely ignored. Kaabwe (2000) enhances this by suggesting that in order to maximize men's commitment to gender-based interventions, managers need to make gender issues men's or traditional decision makers' problems which they should solve. Mathipa and Tsoka (2001) identify culture and tradition as barriers to women's advancement to leadership positions in the

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education profession. They cite Horton and Hunt (1976) who state that tradition is one of the most reassuring sources of truth and that traditional authorities have tremendous power on what goes on in the local schools. Kaabwe (2000) therefore argues for the involvement of men and traditional leaders in gender-based interventions as this may not have an effect of upsetting traditional power relations but could, instead, benefit women.

Studies on gender in education management from the United States of America by writers such as Shakeshaft (1989), Chase (1995), Grogan (1996), and from the United Kingdom (Ozga, 1993; Coleman, 2001) and Australia (Blackmore and Kenway, 1993; Blackmore, 1999) tackled issues that generally put gender at the centre of the discussions and not at the periphery with other issues of diversity such as social class, ethnicity and race. Most of the latest works in the education management field further address as core to management, issues of social class, ethnicity and race in addition to gender (Bloom and Erlandson, 2003; Fitzgerald, 2003). The dominant discourse in these studies is the treatment of women as a homogeneous group disregarding their different experiences based on their diversity. Some of these works consequently use theories of post-structural feminism (Gardiner et al, 2002; Aveling, 2002) and black feminist thought (Bloom and Erlandson, 2003) to illuminate the issues of diversity and how they impact on women principals and those aspiring for leadership and management. This study continues the 'non-homogeneity' discourse and explores the complexity and multiplicity of women's situation. The study continues the discourse by using (as indicated earlier) the relevant constructs contributing to the theoretical framework without attempting to claim precedence of one theory over others, or as constituting the one truth or explanation about women's experiences in management.

There is evidently a wide variety of literature on the subject of women's under-representation in education management internationally, but the issue is explored in a limited number of studies in South Africa (Truscott, 1994; Wolpe, Quinlan and Martinez, 1997; De la Rey, 1988; Van Deventer and Westhuizen 2000; Hanekom, 2001). Although very little has been done locally, it is not very different to the international debates,

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except for the fact that South African discussions centre around the impact of apartheid on gender and education in general. For example Truscott (1994) showed that one reason why black women occupied teaching at low levels in large numbers and have not been able to occupy more management posts was because they had been 'engineered' by the Bantu education policy of 1954. Wolpe et al (1997) in the Gender Equity Task Team Report showed how different policy provisions were to address the issue of gender in education management in order to achieve gender equity. They also indicated that women principals, who have made it, generally recognize resistance as organizational issues and not as personal challenges. Chisholm (2001) also addressed the women in leadership issue by probing the quick entry and departure of women from the leadership positions at the Gauteng Department of Education between 1994 and 1999. Chisholm's study focused more on organisational constraints as barriers to women's progress. Van Deventer and van der Westhuizen (2000) and Hanekom (2001) also highlight the barriers at the level of the organisation that women in management still have to negotiate.

Mahlase (1997) investigated the position and experiences of black women teachers and managers in the former Lebowa area in 1990, and showed how women teachers were recruited in the apartheid regime. From the findings of her study, Mahlase concluded that black women teachers were deeply affected by State controls and the patriarchal relations built into Bantu education. Lack of uniform policy and cultural stereotypes also appeared to be working against appointment and promotion of black women teachers. This work acknowledged the treatment of race, culture and ethnicity as issues affecting and having defined experiences of women in education in general and education management in particular, thereby highlighting black African women's experiences in the field of education management.

All these studies showed that a number of issues regarding women's participation in education management have to be probed and for this study a more useful way to do that is to use different theoretical standpoints. It is also evident from this brief analysis that black African rural women managers have not been explored, yet forces of traditional

leadership have more impact on women in the rural areas since this is where traditional leaders are more powerful.

2.3 BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT

The earlier discussion confirmed the existence of barriers inhibiting women's advancement in education management. Coleman (1997) acknowledges that these barriers to women's progress may be overt or covert, personal or external. These barriers may also be based on a number of factors such as socialization, cultural constraints, work-related or home-related responsibilities. But whatever the source of these barriers, their implications for managers concern the ethos of the school and the structures put in place. The following section looks specifically into barriers to women's progress as a framework to understanding their lack of participation in education management. For purposes of this study, these are classified into two main categories: internal and external barriers.

2.3.1 Internal barriers

Internal barriers to the progress of women in education management are barriers from within women themselves which occur at the very level of anticipation of promotion where women tend to be less persistent than men in aspiring for promotions. According to Cubillo and Brown (2003) these barriers often result from either gender role socialisation that makes women feel unsuitable for certain positions, or the historical dominance of men over women. These internal barriers are therefore not easily overcome because they have been so deeply entrenched. They range from women's personal lack of confidence, lack of competitiveness, fear of challenging the cultural expectations of their role and fear of failure (Cubillo and Brown, 2003). Van Deventer and van der Westhuizen (2000) regard internal barriers as inherent deficiencies associated with personal beliefs and attitudes of the individual that have serious implications for women teachers' promotion into higher positions. Coleman (1994) also asserts that women tend

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to be self-critical in weighing up their chances of successfully obtaining promotion, while men continue to hold more positions of responsibility and tend to set the standards of what is expected from a manager.

2.3.1.1 Gender role stereotyping and gender role socialisation

Gender role stereotyping and gender role socialisation have an influence on the way women perceive themselves and their capabilities in the work place. With the legal interventions guaranteeing equal access to all occupations in many countries, Ely and Myerson (1999) agree with Coleman (1997) and others that instances of overt discrimination are rare, but there still exists more insidious pressures and stereotypes that produce constraints to the progress of women, and some of these pressures and stereotypes are the result of women's view of themselves. Coleman states that the identification of women with supportive roles and of men with leadership roles is a stereotype that may be linked with processes of socialization, which lead women into believing that the public domain is not suitable for them because they have been socialised into the private domain. The stereotyping of roles as male and female therefore narrows the career choices available to teachers and managers in education and particularly women. Women teachers and middle managers have tended to be identified with the pastoral role, which is less likely to provide an automatic route to headship.

Theories of socialization and sex role stereotypes have been predominantly used to explain why women are relatively rare in positions of power (Blackmore, 1989). This is the view that women are less likely to be promoted because of the way they have been socialized. Advocates of socialization theories argue that the differentiation between men and women is constructed by the internalization of certain gender roles imparted through school, family and work. This is where boys learn and are encouraged to be aggressive and dominant in social situations, while girls learn to be more subjective, dependent and passive. This then prepares boys and girls for the different public (male domain) and private (female domain) spheres of life which they respectively assume as they grow. The

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implication in these theories therefore is that the male image of leadership (the public sphere) is the norm, and that women are the deficit model because they have not been socialized into the public sphere (Gray in Riches and Morgan, 1989; Blackmore, 1989). The remedy here is that women have to be re-socialised so that they can fit into the world of men. According to Ely and Meyerson (2000), socialisation informed strategies have thus far not been completely successful in "chiselling down the glass ceiling," because training provided with this purpose is conducted under the guise of providing equal opportunities for the "disadvantaged and deficient women" (Cubillo and Brown 2003:), and that although socialisation strategies have been successful in increasing the potential pool of applicants, it leaves structures and cultures in tact and these continue to sabotage women.

According to Edson (1981) and other earlier research, even women who are qualified to get into administration just do not attempt it because of the inner belief that they are not cut out to be managers. Thus, the old school of thought regarded women as very inactive about the attainment of management posts, mostly because they believe being in management is too troublesome, while others believe there are too many obstacles in the process. Coleman (1997) shows that self-confidence is a necessary prerequisite for successful job application. Consequently, women who lack self-confidence do not aspire to achieve administrative positions and even for those who do aspire, they do not have sufficient extrinsic motivation from mentoring, counselling and encouragement (Schmuck, 1981). Some literature however, such as the work of Warren and O'Connor (1999), suggests that this is a non-feminist approach to the subject that views women as the problem. Acker (1983) also identified this as a "blame the victim approach" which asserts that typically women lack confidence, ambition and commitment.

The current study does not concur with this kind of approach, not only because initiatives under this approach have not reached desirable outcomes as Ely and Meyerson (2000) observed, but also because women are not as deficient as the socialization theories suggest. The study argues that women have historically and traditionally been denied the opportunity to participate in the positions of power thereby making rules of the game

only suitable for and obtainable by men. Women are not regarded as the only problem here, but the problem is with the male biased discourses, structures and cultures that need to be dismantled to accommodate both men and women into these positions.

In their study of South African women teachers, van Deventer and van der Westhuizen (2000) found that women teachers regarded gender-role stereotyping as an internal barrier that exerts a lot of influence on the women teachers' thinking, leading to a diminished interest in a career in education management. Van Deventer and van der Westhuizen (2000) view sex-role socialization as having manifested itself within the framework of gender inclusive, but more practically gender exclusive perceptions of role models, symbols, prescribed roles and expectations which allow it to acquire a legitimate institutionalized social character. This is the same view identified by many feminist writers such as Blackmore (1989; 1993; 1999), Acker, (1990), Ely and Meyerson (2000) and many others, that there exist so many social practices in educational organizations that appear gender neutral yet they happen to be the most insidious and subtle forms of gender discrimination. Because it is so institutionalised, gender role socialization is not regarded as a barrier to promotion into management by many women (van Deventer and van der Westhuizen, 2000 and Hanekom, 2001). Women end up allowing themselves to be oppressed because they believe what they do is their duty, thereby perpetuating the stereotypes about gender roles in society (Moorosi, 2000).

Internal barriers are therefore viewed as a result of gender role stereotyping that leaves women with certain perceptions about themselves and their capability to perform in management of organizations. Contradictions in the way internal barriers are perceived continue to surface in some of the recent local studies. While van Deventer and van der Westhuizen (2000) observed a shift in the way women themselves perceived internal barriers as contributing to their lack of representation in education management, Hanekom (2001) established a difference between perception and reality where women participants appeared to deny that these are barriers. Thus, internal barriers resulting from sex role stereotyping are not just a perception but a reality evidently affecting men as

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well, but it is a reality which, if it is not acknowledged as a limitation, makes internal barriers difficult to eradicate.

2.3.2   External barriers

External barriers are other factors existing outside the women themselves but also preventing or impeding women's progress in education management. These are factors outside women's control and are in most cases within the organisations in which women are working, or in which they aspire for promotion posts. Not all barriers, external or internal, are applicable to all women and women do experience different types of external barriers in their attempt to get promotion. Although studies conducted on external barriers show that women mostly experience obstacles during recruitment and selection processes (Schein, 1994 and Hanekom, 2001), other studies show that women still experience obstacles within the positions after their appointment (Van Eck and Volman, 1996). This section focuses on extrinsic barriers experienced by women in their attempt to get and function in management positions.

2.3.2.1 Structural / organizational barriers

Although organizations may appear to be changing, there is always a subtle underlying pressure that continues to hamper the career progress of women in education organisations. Organisational constraints as a theory explaining inequalities, implies that it is the culture of the organization that should change to accommodate women and not the other way round (Schmuck, 1986). Coleman (in Bush and West-Burnham, 1994) indicates that at every level of education there appear to be barriers to the advancement of women, which operate not only against women but also in favour of men thereby opening the gender gap. Some of these barriers are direct discrimination, which can be eliminated by policies and legal frameworks, but the more subtle ones still remain.

The literature suggests that structural barriers to women's advancement in organizations have their roots in the fact that most organizations have been created by and for men and

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are based on male experiences of management. Women have had access to the entire workforce for a long time, but their participation in the management and leadership of these organizations is still a matter of concern. Grogan (1996) argues that the absence of women in power positions suggests that women are being seen through traditional theoretical lenses and are being measured against ideals that have historically served men best. Meyerson and Fletcher (1999) affirm that organizations still define their competence and leadership on the traits that were stereotypically associated with men, such as assertiveness, decisiveness and aggressiveness. Most organizations act as if the historical division of labour still holds, even when women are as active as men in the working industry. These are the realities of gender inequity that drive the organizational life for which neither men nor women can be blamed (Meyerson and Fletcher, 1999).

Access into educational institutions is rated as a key issue influencing the position of women in educational management. Women who aspire for school administration face barriers of administration in hiring and promotion that often limit their movement. The dominance of men in powerful positions within the structure of school management such as school governing bodies and district officials is usually regarded as detrimental to women's access into these positions. This male dominance of key leadership positions is linked to the traditional perspective of the position of women in society which had men controlling the highest administrative jobs within school districts. This continuously leads to these male administrators giving positions to those who resemble them in attitude, actions and appearance (Grogan, 1996).

Barriers from the home, ways women are perceived naturally and historically, are also regarded as traditional barriers. For many organisations, work and home life should be kept separate and this view consequently constitutes a barrier for women teachers whose personal life is inextricably linked to their work life (Van der Westhuizen, 1991 cited by Hanekom 2001). Women administrators have additional difficulty learning their administrative role because of the conflicting attitudes about the stereotypes of what it means to be female and what it means to be an administrator. Women who are

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administrators and have children therefore straddle the dual worlds of parenting and working.

> While the world of teaching more easily accommodates the dual world of many women, the demands of administration still often presume one has a 'wife' at home (Dunlap and Schmuck, 1995:44).

Women's personal priorities and responsibilities outside work roles can be seen to vie with professional commitments. The balancing of different roles and responsibilities can be a source of pressure. For some women therefore moving into management brings an additional stress. Thus, in their attempt to balance their personal and professional lives, women hesitate to seek promotion into management posts because they anticipate a difficulty in maintaining the balance between the two. Women associate management work with inflexibility and restrictiveness as compared to what teaching in the classroom offers them in terms of meeting the demands of their time.

Because of women's biological nature (that there is limited time for child-bearing) and their dual responsibilities of traditional and professional providers, career breaks affect their upward mobility. This is because time taken away from work diminishes time to gain experience, which is a requirement for promotion. According to Hanekom (2001), traditional beliefs about the nature of work persist and include, amongst others, values of commitment to work which means uninterrupted presence at work. Career breaks are therefore regarded as one factor affecting women's promotion on the education ladder and are considered detrimental to women's career development, not only in education but also in the world of work in general (Coleman, 1994). Successful women in educational management may have minimized or avoided career breaks. Women who are in their productive age and take accouchement leave to bear and rear families suffer a negative impact on their career progression.

2.3.2.2 Mentoring

Within organisational barriers, mentoring and/or sponsoring is cited as one of the most important factors that have a positive impact on women aspiring for leadership positions and those beginning their leadership career. A mentor is usually defined as a designated, more experienced person who influences the career development and socialization of a less experienced individual in an organization in a formal or informal manner (Edson, 1995). Malone (2001) states that mentoring has existed for thousands of years but mentor-protégé relationships only received academic and professional attention in the past few decades. Mentors are often acknowledged as essential to those aspiring in educational administration (Edson, 1995), and critical components of the early stages of a successful career (Adam, 2004). Mentoring relationships thus, either formal or informal, provide the opportunity to discuss and reflect on situations and solutions. Coleman (1997) adds that research findings indicate the importance of mentoring and therefore a culture that fosters informal mentoring and support structures, which ensure that women get encouraged in seeking promotion. "Although stereotypes are hard to shake off, role models, mentoring and support through networking may help younger women aspire and achieve" (Coleman, 1997:134), while their absence may pose problems for aspiring women managers as a group that has not been exposed to management historically.

Gardiner et al (2000) identify several definitions of mentoring and different mentoring models. For these authors, mentoring is not only about a superior and subordinate relationship, but mentoring can also be between and amongst peers. In their study, Capasso and Daresh (2001) observed that in most cases men would not be willing to mentor women because they would not think that they are interested in leadership, while in others women in high positions also failed to mentor other women. Women who view themselves as tokens in positions of authority deliberately avoid mentoring others because they are too threatened to foster leadership in others. Coleman (in Bush and Middleton 1997) indicates that female managers in education value the support of other women and the lack of interest in mentoring other junior women works negatively for

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women who are aspiring for leadership positions. She posits further that the general level of support, both informal and formal, is a key factor in encouraging career progress, but mentoring young educators in senior and middle management is generally less well established.

Networking is usually used to refer to the "old boys' network" whereby older professionals groom younger ones for leadership positions. According to Gardiner et al (2000) women have been marginalised from these networks because the processes of belonging are highly exclusive and male dominated. This kind of networking is regarded as a useful form of support for both practicing and aspiring managers and women do suffer a great deal by not being part of these networks.

2.3.2.3 Role modelling

Another factor affecting women's progress in education management is lack of role models. Carlson and Schmuck (in Schmuck et al, 1981) argue that an occupation must be available and visible before a person can enter it. For men, a decision to enter school administration is credible because there is evidence of other men pursuing this as a career, while for women it is not. The imbalance of male and female role models is a disadvantage for women in meeting the contingencies related to positions of policy-making and management in education.

> The scarcity of women role models affects the contingencies of counsel, encouragement and socialization, at least to the extent that women choose women as sources for these things. The scarcity of role models also makes it difficult for women teachers to be assigned to school tasks that are administrative in nature because such tasks are almost invariably assigned to teachers by male vice principals and principals (administrators). To the extent that men predominate in those positions, and to the extent that they give men rather than women the opportunities to try their hand at administrative tasks, women are again handicapped in getting past the occupational contingencies (Carlson and Schmuck in Schmuck et al, 1981:121).

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In summary of this section, it is clear that stereotyping and socialisation of women, personal barriers as well as organisational barriers make appointment for principalship difficult for women. Socialisation and stereotyping obviously result in women viewing themselves in certain ways that inhibit their advancement, thereby leading to individual/personal blockages. There clearly is a very close yet intricate link between these barriers. At the organisational level, the cultures have been shaped by and for men and women have to keep fighting all the surrounding barriers in order to fit in. The system is not just difficult up the ladder, but sideways as well through attitudes held by colleagues and the society at large towards the so-called men and women's social roles and expected behaviour. Thus, the concern should not just be about cracking and shattering the glass ceiling, but it is about shattering all the glass barriers around women.

2.4   GENDER EQUITY IN POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Constraints (as barriers) to women accessing and staying in education management positions have been identified and as has been seen, these range from personal, sociological, institutional and traditional (Coleman, 1997; Bush, 1995). Because of these findings and other research that shows the relevance of female participation in education to economic benefits, many policies have been made world wide to address gender inequality in education participation. While these efforts have made significant differences in levels of access to educational organizations, promotion to upper levels of management still poses problems. This section therefore reviews literature on gender and policy with particular focus on the efforts made nationally and internationally to assist women in accessing and keeping their positions in spheres that were originally occupied by men.

Marshall (1999) argues that gender is not an afterthought in the formation of state policy itself, yet policy analysis continues to ignore and marginalize the feminist critique. Shaw (2004) reiterates that even though policy analysis is not value-neutral, it is often silent on the issues of gender and thus results in partial and perverse understandings of the ways in which women's lives are affected by policy. Policy is regarded as an important vehicle

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for gender transformation. Some policy analysts further regard policy as an official discourse for reforming school practice by legitimating devices for system actors in providing a mandate for school based change (Johnson, 2002). Gender inclusive policies are particularly regarded very influential in transforming the practices in education since they reflect the social and political debates of the day.

Political action with regard to policy and issues of gender or reliance on public laws and policies to address gender inequity is initiated through a liberal feminist movement. The literature shows that gender policies initiated through liberal feminism have been successful in ensuring women's access into educational institutions (Blackmore, 1990; Smyth, 1989), but the counter argument is that the policy culture informed by liberal feminism does not countenance interventions to alter patterns that reproduce inequitable gender relations since they ignore gender and power relations in the work place and personal relationships, as the deeper assumptions under-girding gender issues (Marshall, 1999).

> Gender policies have gained legitimacy and support only when framed by liberal feminism, promoting policies for equal access to men's spheres, with no major challenges to the current system (Marshall: 1999:65).

Smyth (1989) agrees that affirmative action policies, for example, have gone a long way in removing structural impediments to the progression of women into leadership positions. However, he also argues for the necessity to go a step further beyond arguing for better representation of women in management positions and questions the very concept of management and how it is perceived. In so doing, the aim would not only be to argue for more numbers of women in the positions of authority, but to question the practices that inform the selection and recruitment of candidates.

Blackmore (1993) argues that historically, the consolidation of male hegemony in administration has been connected to the expansion of bureaucratic organization in education, the feminization of the occupation, and the emergence of teaching as a 'semi-profession'. "Gender, therefore cannot be separated from the ways in which children are

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taught, schools have been organized, and curricula have been shaped" (Blackmore 1993: 27). Thus, sound gender policy should improve significantly the outcomes of all girls, enable principles of opportunity to choose, enable the capacity to make choices, provide information on which to base preferences, and provide a climate of tolerance in which to explore alternatives (Kirp, Yudof and Franks, 1987). In order for it to significantly improve women's lives, gender policy should also enable meaningful freedom of upward mobility.

Enslin and Pendlebury (2000) argue that the primary purpose of policy in a democracy is to improve practice in the interests of the public good. For gender policy to achieve this aim, women should be present in gender policy making structures because their absence may result in gender related issues that make it onto the agenda being distorted, inadequately discussed and perhaps partially included in the actual policies that are made. When policies are made to address gender inequity, implementation (which takes place in organizations where women do not make implementation decisions) may be partial or lacking altogether. Wrigley (1992) states that women have suffered disadvantages in state educational provision, and these disadvantages, arise at the level of schooling although they are mostly pronounced at the point where education becomes relevant for occupational preparation. If women are not in positions to decide on routinised practice, policy directed change, may be short lived.

2.5   GENDER AND ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Women are believed to have made progress in attaining some high-level posts within organisations due to a number of interventions put in place to assist them world wide. However, the situation still needs a lot more attention since the highest positions are still mostly occupied by men. Some interventions have worked better than others and there are different factors influencing the outcomes. In their attempt to analyse why many intervention strategies haven't reached the desired effects in getting women to participate in high level positions in the US, Ely and Meyerson (2000) provided a framework that

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looks at the strategies put in place and the extent to which they have and have not been successful.

This section presents the four frameworks identified by Ely and Meyerson for understanding why gender inequities exist within the workplace. For Ely and Meyerson, women have generally made significant progress in accessing the power positions within organizations and have started "chiselling through the glass ceiling" but the glass ceiling is not yet shattered. The first three frameworks they identify are 'traditional', defining gender in terms of sex-role socialization and have a liberal feminist underpinning. The fourth approach is 'non-traditional' and conceives of gender as a system of oppressive relations reproduced in and by social practices. These approaches are outlined in detail below, highlighting the different feminist perspectives informing some aspects of them.

2.5.1   Assimilation approach

The first approach to eradicating gender inequities within organizations is called a "fix the women" approach (Ely and Meyerson, 2000; Meyerson and Fletcher, 1999). This approach is based on the sex-role socialization that produces individual differences in attitudes and behaviours between men and women which have led women to have fewer skills to compete with men for executive positions. Ely and Meyerson (2000) argue that this approach stems from the liberal strain of political theory which hypothesizes that individuals rise and fall on their own merit. The fix the women approach views gender as an individual characteristic marked by one's biological category as male or female. Individuals are socialized into their respective sex roles and women's ability to acquire the appropriate traits and skills equips them to compete with men. This is in line with the liberal feminist argument that women have as much potential as men and have to be given equal rights and opportunities to develop their potential. When women are not able to acquire these necessary attributes, that is, when this socialization does not occur, women are blamed. If women could acquire these skills and learn the 'know-how to play the game', they would be able to compete on a par with men. For example this is when

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companies train women on assertiveness, leadership development and decision making with the aim of "assimilating" (Meyerson and Fletcher, 1999) them into the organizations in order to enhance the applicant pool of women to fill the executive positions.

The vision of gender equity in this approach is that women are similar to men but they just lack the skills that would enable them to compete equally. Women therefore have to be skilled to enable them to compete on a par with men. Again this is aligned with the liberal feminist assertion that individual women should be as free as men, which presumes sameness between men and women that should determine women's social, political and educational roles. According to this approach education and training of women for management positions is the key to easing the difficulties organizations have in recruiting women into positions of power traditionally held by men. Access to education is seen as fundamental since the provision of equal education for both sexes creates an environment in which individual women's potential can be encouraged and developed.

Within this approach there is an underlying assumption that equality for women can be achieved by just providing women with the necessary training without the need to re-work the structural and cultural lives of the organisation. The efforts are made with the aim of "fixing" the women in order to enhance the qualified women applicant pool that can fill these previously male occupied positions. Liberal feminism also aims to achieve full equality of opportunity in all spheres of life without radically transforming the present social order, which leaves the social order intact. This is the major criticism of the approach that it leaves the male dominated system intact while at the same time it blames women as sources of the problem (Ely and Meyerson, 2000).

Ely and Meyerson admit that better education has undoubtedly increased the number of eligible women in the applicant pool for management positions and training has in most cases helped them acquire the necessary skills to be on equitable positions with men. However, even with these interventions women have still not gained significant presence

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in management positions of educational institutions. The interventions informed by this approach are criticized on their assumption that all women have similar needs while in reality they address the needs of a minority and further create class differentials amongst women. There is also a potential of creating backlash among men who see the programmes giving women an unfair advantage over them, since the target is on women only. These interventions are also criticized on the grounds of leaving the existing organizational structures and cultures intact since they are meant to assimilate women with a minimal disruption of the status quo.

Schmuck (1986) does not endorse the view of assimilation to help women fit into the male defined organization life. She warns of the danger of viewing women as needing to be trained or educated up to the level of men instead of being valued for what they bring to the field of management. Reiger (1993) reiterates that the "assimilationist" model of women entering the public world suggests they enter in men's terms, and that "is clearly not the answer (1993:25)". Blackmore (1999) is also not in favour of this approach even though she admits that gender equity educational policies in most Western states have tended to be framed by liberal feminism. She argues that this is an attempt to change individual women and girls to be more like men and boys on the assumption that a critical mass would produce cultural change, and the argument is that a critical mass would not enable change if the social order benefiting men is not disrupted. Interventions under this approach have admittedly made significant progress in enabling individual women to have the same skills as men. But women generally remain marginalised because the existing power relations remain untouched.

2.5.2 Celebration approach

With the lack of success from the assimilation approach, the second approach taken to rooting out gender discrimination posits that instead of fixing the women to fit right into the male dominated management field, women should be accommodated with their differences. Similar to the first approach, this approach still views the root of differences

as a socialization process, but argues that instead of eliminating women's differences, they should be celebrated. This view is informed by radical feminism that in order for women to receive their full autonomy, they have to celebrate their womanhood because women share more in common with other women than with men regardless of race, class or age (Beasley, 1999).

Interventions in this celebration approach aim at giving women a voice so they could articulate their ways of being. Women are not regarded as flawed due to their feminised differences, but those differences are celebrated. Consciousness raising and training to make people aware of the differences between men and women such as their ability to collaborate and listen to people's concerns in the work place are some of the interventions suggested in this approach. Thus, the approach does not view the internal barriers as weaknesses, but as strengths that can be used to benefit women. Internal barriers such as lack of confidence and fear of failure are not necessarily viewed as weaknesses, but as strengths that women could utilize for effective management and leadership. For instance women could use their lack of competitiveness to solve conflicts, a skill needed for effective management, unlike men who would be less likely to employ such strategies (Cubillo and Brown, 2003).

Cubillo (cited in Cubillo and Brown 2003) further found in her earlier research that the so-called women's lack of confidence was not necessarily a lack of faith in them but had more to do with women's unfamiliarity with the territory. This initial fear of failure tended to be more reduced once women were aware and familiar with the situation. Women have been excluded from the field of management in education for a long time, and it is therefore not surprising that they would feel fearful of this unknown territory since the system views them as "outsiders in the inside working inside the discourse that is not of their own making" (Blackmore, 1999:107). Thus, women in management positions would be regarded as having the institutional power and authority, but are outside the male culture that dominates the field.

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However, this approach still has its own shortfalls that led to the introduction of the third approach. The approach is criticized for its potential influence on the perpetuation of sex stereotypes which could lead to an even more sophisticated form of sex segregation. The attempt to preserve women's difference in this approach is found problematic because it does so at the expense of women's transformation and liberation from the oppressive conventions of femininity (Di Stephano, 1990 cited in Ely and Meyerson, 2000).

Telling people to value the differences does not necessarily mean that they will, and women who use their feminine skills and styles are only valued at a minimal and marginal level. That is why according to Meyerson and Fletcher (1999) women are applauded for holding teams together and are even told how valuable their contribution has been but when promotion and rewards are distributed, individuals who assertively promoted their own ideas or came up with a onetime technical fix are the ones recognised.

Ely and Meyerson (2000) further argue that a fundamental flaw of the celebration approach is "its failure to recognise that the feminine itself has been partly constituted by its existence within the male-dominated social structure it ostensibly seeks to oppose" (2000:110), hence the approach may actually channel women into dead-end jobs and reinforce unhelpful stereotypes. They see this as a clear attempt to refuse to criticise the feminine which ironically assumes that women have not in some ways been damaged by their social experiences. And therefore the wish to celebrate women's goodness seems to perpetuate their subordination. Furthermore, interventions in this approach target a limited group of women and most likely those who already have advantage due to their privileged social class. The particular versions of feminine they are based on are assumed to be "universal and enacted in the same way with the same meaning across all groups of men and women" (Ely and Meyerson, 2000:110) but in the process they actually ignore the attributes of the majority of women's attributes who may not be so privileged.

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2.5.3 Equal opportunity approach

The third approach focuses on equal rights through the elimination of structural barriers to women's recruitment and advancement. The equal rights and equal opportunities notion in education is supported mainly by liberal feminism through its advocacy for formal laws and policies that outlaw discrimination against women.

Gender is still framed as sex differences in this approach but these differences are seen as a result of differential structures of opportunity that block women's access and advancement. These structures include hiring and promotion processes that reflect sexist attitudes toward women. Interventions in this approach are aimed at creating equal opportunities for women and men within the organizations by dismantling the structural barriers to equality. This is the same view advocated by liberal feminists that women have as much potential as men and have to be given equal rights and opportunities to develop their full potential, with the assumption that it will result in equitable distribution of genders across the various divisions of labour and throughout existing social hierarchies (Middleton, 1993).

Interventions in the equal opportunity approach are largely in the form of policies designed to eliminate or compensate for structural barriers that make it difficult for women to compete with men. Examples of these strategies include institution of affirmative action policies, and revision of recruiting procedures with the aim of increasing the proportion of women in positions of power traditionally held by men.

Ely and Meyerson (2000) state that interventions in this equal opportunity approach have had a significant number of good returns in terms of improving women's conditions within the organizations. Their observation was that some organizations informed by equal opportunity strategies have been able to attract and promote more women but mostly at entry and middle management positions. Progress has also not been the same for different companies and the model cannot therefore make any universal claims.

Women still play on an unequal playing field since the approach makes no suggestions for levelling out the playing field. The interventions in this approach sometimes work for women who have already proven themselves and women who are more class-privileged and this reinforces sex stereotypes and generates backlash amongst men who feel excluded from such programmes (Ely and Meyerson, 2000). The approach therefore has as its major flaw, although it targets organizational policies and structures, the insufficient challenge to the fundamental sources of power and social interactions between men and women that reinforce inequalities. With these limitations came the introduction of the fourth approach.

2.5.4   The work culture approach

The last approach takes a non-traditional route to understanding gender inequities and draws mostly on some post-structural feminist strands. For this approach gender is not regarded as a basis for discrimination, but a complex set of social relations enacted across a range of social practices that exist both within and outside formal organizations. These social practices range from formal policies and procedures (work rules, labour contracts, managerial activities, job descriptions, etc) to informal patterns of everyday social interactions within formal organizations (organisations' norms about how work is done, relationships required to do the job, distribution of roles and responsibilities, etc). According to Ely and Meyerson (2000), these social practices tend to reflect and support men's experiences and life situations by placing higher value on masculine identity, since they have been created largely by and for them and are based on male experiences. Because these social practices are so deeply embedded in the culture of organizations, they are perceived gender neutral and regarded as a natural way organizations operate. The interventions by the first three approaches that are informed mostly by liberal feminism leave these social practices intact, resulting in unsustainable progress that only benefit some individuals, whereas the fourth approach sees these social practices as "subtle and insidious sources of gender inequity" (Ely and Meyerson, 2000:115) that must be rooted out of the organizations.

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The problem in this approach lies in the traditional notions of male and female, masculine and feminine dichotomies (Reiger, 1993) that are reflected by the daily social practices inherent in all organisations. The social practices are designed by and for some privileged men that appear to be neutral but uphold gender as fixed, ranked oppositions. This representation of gender as oppositions originates and preserves male privilege and views 'management' work as part of the public domain associated with men and thus privileges men and disadvantages women. This approach acknowledges the difference in the way women and men are affected by these social practices which are determined by their historical background, race, ethnicity, social class and other issues of diversity.

This approach therefore starts on the premise that gender inequality is deeply rooted in our cultural patterns and organizational systems and can only be repaired by a persistent campaign of incremental changes that discover and destroy the deeply embedded roots of discrimination driven by both men and women together. The target is to benefit both groups by creating a world where gender is not an issue. The intervention here therefore starts with the identification of the problem and the premise that unless these gendered social practices are acknowledged as problems and therefore disentangled, gender inequity will not be uprooted from the organizations. It acknowledges the differences in experiences shaped by these social practices, and therefore suggests no single solution to all gender problems within organizations.

Although this approach appears to have the ability to tackle the gender discriminative social practices identified problematic in the first three approaches, its limitation is linked to resistance to change and difficulty of sustainability (Ely and Meyerson, 2000), since it makes no attempt to identify the endpoint, but continuously disrupts the social order and revises the structural practices and regards the process of change as both means and ends. It is also problematic for the study because it claims no universal solutions for all organisational problems and yet the study argues for the provision of clearly articulated policies as a starting point in combating the gender problem. The study takes into

consideration the social and gender imbalances created by the historical regime of racial segregation and the traditional view of women and their role in society. It therefore argues that these imbalances must be structurally addressed through policy and legal measures before focus is put on the cultures and social practices.

2.6   DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed the relevant literature revealing factors pertaining to the under-representation of women in education management and theories that have been used to explain the phenomenon. I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter that I make no attempt to repeat studies that have been done, but that the intention was to highlight a few examples in order to illuminate the intensity and complexity of the subject in question. It is evident from the discussion above that women's participation or lack of it in education management has been a concern in many countries for a long time and a lot of research has been done on the subject. It is also evident that a number of strategies, particularly policy interventions, have been put in place to address the problem but progress has only been minimal in most cases. The strategies presented by Ely and Meyerson's (2000) typology and Meyerson and Fletcher (1999) reveal the uniqueness of organisations and difficulty in making universal strategies. However, if policy interventions are to become successful, government policy cannot be based on individual experiences, yet they have to cater for differences within schools as organisations and within women as a group.

The first three approaches to understanding gender in organisational change are largely informed by liberal feminism. In fact, Ely and Meyerson (2000) argue that some shortcomings of these three approaches are linked to the different strands of liberal feminist theory with its limited conception of gender which lead to the organisations' failure to achieve fully their gender equity goals. Liberal feminist interventions are declared insufficient to disrupt the pervasive and deeply entrenched imbalances of power in the social relations between men and women (discussed in detail in the next chapter). All these approaches have only made limited progress in advancing women's equity in

organizations. The reason behind this is that they proffer solutions that deal with the symptoms of gender inequity rather than the sources of inequity itself (Meyerson and Fletcher, 1999). Although the work culture approach highlights the social practices ignored by the first three approaches, it proffers no general and sustainable solutions to the gender problems within organisations and treats organisations as separate entities.

This treatment of the approaches to gender inequity in organisations further highlights the complexity of the whole gender problem within private organisations, within schools as organisations and within the whole education system. Unless there is recognition of how gender problems are conceptualised, the treatment of the problem will always be superficial. Perhaps we need a deeper theoretical framework that treats gender inequity not only as an organisational issue, but as a social problem in order to put into perspective the core of the problem and to deal with the nuances influencing the course for gender equity in positions of power. Hence, feminist theories take centre stage in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

FEMINISM AND OTHER ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Many feminist authors such as bell hooks, Chris Beasley, Jill Blackmore, Sandra Acker and others have acknowledged the complexity and diversity of 'feminism' as a concept and agree that there are tensions and contradictions within the theory. Although there are tensions, feminists are all concerned with understanding why inequalities between men and women exist (Letherby, 2003) and have always been concerned with ways of changing women's position in society for the better, to liberate women from the practices and structures that perpetuated their unequal status. The different perspectives within feminism share the same ideas in terms of what gender oppression means, but they differ in terms of analyzing its origin and what constitutes women's liberation. Feminism as a theory therefore lays the foundation for the 'patchwork' that is being used as a conceptual framework for the study.

Kelly et al (1995) state that feminists cannot argue for theory that emerges from the research because they start from a theoretical perspective that takes gender as a fundamental organiser of social life. They add that any piece of research addresses what has happened before by either adding in the levels of complexity or challenging previous perspectives. "What research should produce is modifications, re-workings, extensions and/or critiques of existing theory, and the creation of new concepts" (Kelly et al, 1995: 243). Although they were arguing from a quantitative research perspective I share the same view. I started this research from a feminist perspective that looked at women's experiences in and into education management from a disadvantaged point of view.

Using different feminist theoretical constructs this chapter builds towards a framework that underpins the study. The framework developed in this chapter is a patchwork of

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feminist theories and gender approaches that explain the findings in a way that makes sense for the researcher. Feminist theory broadly was found useful in this regard and in particular some aspects of liberal, black and post-structural feminist perspectives. The constructs borrowed from these perspectives are used together with approaches to understanding gender in organizations to expose the dominant male-biased discourses and practices in which the participants were submerged. These discourses and practices exist as 'normalities' within policies and social practices in educational institutions and the society as a whole. These discourses and social practices are regarded as normal because they have been designed by and for men in the profession that has always been male dominated, but they ironically continue to function as obstacles against women's attainment and performance in education management even when equitable access is officially declared.

A feminist framework was found relevant for the study because it brings about awareness of the injustices women suffer because of their sex, and attempt to suggest ways to improve women's lives. Thus, feminism addresses the question of women's subordination to men, by addressing how it arose, how and why it is perpetuated, how it might be changed and what life would be like without it (Acker, 1994:43). Although the study is not intended to dwell on how men came to occupy more positions at the management level, it makes reference to why male domination in education management is perpetuated, by relating some of the factors contributing to the status quo; it shows **how** male domination is perpetuated by revealing the constraints related to increased women's participation in education management; it reveals some of the gendered practices women face in their attempt to get into education management – practices that continue to leave women outside the management domain. This is done with the understanding that in order to understand women's situation well, it cannot be viewed in isolation, but has to be viewed in relation to that of men and the structures and cultures in which they operate.

Feminism is a broad theory that involves several perspectives which take different political hues (Blackmore, 1989), but the hub of all feminist theories is that men and women should be politically, economically and socially equal. Weedon (1987) sees feminism as a politics directed at changing the existing power relations that structure all areas of life between men and women in order to achieve this equality. The initial position of feminism is that women are not treated fairly and therefore the commitment to develop strategies of change to create full rights and opportunities for women is its primary focus (Measor and Sikes, 1992). Feminists therefore question and challenge the origins of oppressive gender relations and attempt to develop a variety of strategies that might change the relations for the better. It is within these intervention strategies that feminists take different positions, hence the variety of perspectives within feminist theory.

Blackmore (1989) argues that although feminist theory places emphasis on women's personal experience, it does not necessarily reject all that is masculine. Feminism does not just deal with issues of justice and equality between men and women, but also offers a critique of male dominated institutions, values and social practices that are oppressive and destructive (Mannathoko, 1992) by placing emphasis on the centrality of gender divisions in the way society works. Acker (1994) and Measor and Sikes (1992) show that feminist theory guides understanding to gender inequality and acts as a guide to how the inequalities can be eradicated.

As indicated, there are several feminist perspectives, but instead of discussing each perspective, the discussion here focuses on some constructs within the so-called "traditional" approaches to feminism, and the post structural feminist perspective, selecting relevant concepts to understand and explain the gender inequalities in education management. The chapter therefore builds the framework by outlining assumptions underpinning feminist theory in general, explaining briefly some perspectives within feminism and showing their limitations in explaining the current study, thereby working towards the construction of the patchwork.

In this chapter, I also present other frameworks used to analyse policy and the experiences of women principals. More central to the construction of the thesis, is the management route framework that enabled the dissection of both policy and related experiences of women principals. Feminist critical policy analysis and the policy functions frameworks are also employed and were mainly applicable to the interrogation of policy. Together, the feminist theory and these analytical frameworks shape the analysis of this inquiry.

3.2 LIBERAL FEMINISM

The initial argument in this study is that laws and policies that were meant to grant women equal opportunities have been passed since 1994, yet the difference with regard to women in education management has not been significant. This section briefly reviews liberal feminism's advocacy for legal reforms and policies and its shortcomings in an attempt to provide an explanation for the impact or lack of it of education policies and programmes addressing gender inequities in education management.

Liberal feminism is based on the political philosophy of liberalism, which commences from the belief that all individuals have rights to freedom and autonomy. The argument for liberal feminism was based on the belief that women have as much potential as men and should therefore be given equal rights to exercise their potential in order to remedy the injustices done to them. According to Measor and Sikes (1992) education has always been important for liberals since it replaces ignorance and prejudice by knowledge and enlightenment. The development of legal frameworks to ensure equal access and equal opportunity for women in educational settings is also important. Thus, the equal rights and equal opportunities notion in education has clearly always been supported by liberal feminism through its advocacy for formal laws and policies that outlaw discrimination against women.

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Liberal feminism's political aim is that of equitable distribution of the genders across the various divisions of labour and throughout existing social hierarchies (Middleton, 1993). It further aims at altering women's status and opportunities within the existing economic and political frameworks. It concentrates on removing barriers that prevent women from attaining their full potential, whether such barriers are located in school, the individual psyche or discriminatory labour practices, which result from sex discrimination. It further aims at altering women's status and opportunities within the existing economic and political frameworks. It concentrates on removing barriers that prevent women from attaining their full potential, whether such barriers are located in school, the individual psyche or discriminatory labour practices that result from sex discrimination. Liberal feminists further argue then that any laws, traditions and activities that inhibit equal rights and opportunities between men and women must be abolished (Weiner, 1994 and Abbott and Wallace, 1997).

Liberal feminists assert that individual women should be as free as men and this presumption of sameness between men and women should determine women's social, political and educational roles, and that any laws, traditions and activities that inhibit equal rights and opportunities must be abolished (Weiner, 1994; Abbott and Wallace, 1997). Liberal feminists see access to education as fundamental since the provision of equal education for both sexes would create an environment in which individual women's potential can be encouraged and developed. They also assume that equality for women can be achieved by democratic reforms, without the need for revolutionary changes in economic, political or cultural life (Weiner, 1994). This is the point at which liberal feminists differ from other feminist campaigners such as radical feminists who believe that revolutionary change is the way to go.

3.2.1 Criticisms of liberal feminism

Liberal feminism is criticised by radical feminists for seeing women as isolated autonomous individuals who have the power to change their situation and does not see

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the individual woman as a member of a sexual class whose oppression or situation results from the fact that she is a woman. This is the point where radical and other feminists are in sharp contrast. Radical feminism sees women as members of one gender group and as victims of patriarchy. Socialist feminism criticises liberal feminism's ignorance of the reality of a sexual class system (Eisenstein, 1986) and the emphasis on the provision of the very laws and equal opportunities. Although socialist feminism criticizes liberals for their emphasis on the very formal legal rights and the provision of equal opportunities on the grounds that they ignore the problems of poverty and economic oppression preventing women from taking advantage of opportunities (Measor and Sikes, 1992), which is a very valid criticism for the study, the latter argues that the liberal stance on equal rights and opportunities should be built on and not discarded completely.

Although amongst most education feminisms liberalism appears to have offered more for education, it nonetheless has major shortcomings. Liberal feminism is rooted in the rational/irrational and public and private dichotomies, the epistemology which essentially prevents women from entering the political world by defining them as irrational. These dichotomies are inherently sexist and liberal feminism cannot achieve equality under these principles.

Liberal feminism is regarded as being based on a contradiction that cannot be resolved since it suggests that by nature men and women are different. It identifies rationalism as a masculine trait and suggests that women's lack of it is part of her nature. Thus, liberal feminism aims to achieve full equality of opportunity in all spheres of life without radically transforming the present social order, which leaves the social order intact and thereby opens up the gap that for this study is filled up by approaches that take into consideration social practices that continue to oppress women.

3.3   RADICAL FEMINISM AND THE THEORY OF PATRIARCHY

Radical feminism is distinguished from other feminist approaches by its theoretical stand point that sees 'patriarchy' as the main form of domination. Patriarchy is defined as a trans-historical system of male domination over women pervading all aspects of culture and social life (Abbott and Wallace, 1997). In patriarchy, men have power over women irrespective of culture, class or racial differences, but what differs considerably is the degree and the character of this power since there is no universal pattern (Measor and Sikes, 1992). Patriarchal relations are structural, which means that they exist within the institutions and social practices of society (Weedon, 1987). The power of patriarchy is realised mainly by radical and post-structural feminists. For radical feminists patriarchy is the fundamental form of women's oppression (Bryson, 1992; Measor and Sikes, 1992; Beasley, 1999). Sex discrimination arises out of patriarchal structures and can take overt and covert forms (Coleman in Bush and West-Burnham, 1994) despite the legal abolition of forms of discrimination.

Radical feminism sees women's sex as the source of their oppression hence difficult to eradicate. It attributes the existing inequalities to patriarchal forces and male-dominated power relationships manifested at every level of society: the family, the school and the workplace. For radical feminists, the solution is to uproot the sexist behaviours and practices from society as part of the challenge to patriarchal forces by means of abolishing the existing legal reforms and structures. The study recognizes the power of patriarchy through what Walby (1990) calls modern forms of patriarchy where women are allowed access to the public spheres but are subordinated to men by new forms of patriarchy that exist outside the homes.

Bryson (1992) identifies four aspects that she claims distinguishes radical feminism from other approaches. The first one is that radical feminism is a theory of, by and for women, and as such it is based on women's experiences and perceptions. It therefore sees no need to compromise with existing political perspectives and agendas. Secondly, radical

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feminism sees the oppression of women as the most fundamental and universal form of domination driven by patriarchy. Thirdly, women as a group have similar interests which unite them in a common sisterhood transcending divisions of race and class. As a result women have to struggle together to achieve their own liberation and it is only within women's own institutions that women would have their ways, and enjoy their full autonomy (Beasley, 1999). Fourthly, radical feminism sees the traditional concepts of male power extending to the private areas of life through the family and sexuality and these are seen as very powerful instruments of patriarchy.

The difference with liberal feminism lies in the fact that for radical feminism, legal structures are too polite to take power away from men who will not give it up willingly, (Measor and Sikes, 1992). Unlike liberal feminism that calls for legal frameworks to eradicate gender discrimination, radicals are suspicious of the state and view it as inherently patriarchal. Liberal feminists see the state as a neutral institution from which women have been unfairly excluded in the past, but which can in principle be used to their advantage through provision of equal legal frameworks that improve the situation of women. Radical feminism on the contrary, is sceptical of the state and its ability to improve women's situation since its structures are made by men and embody men's interests rather than those of women (Bryson, 1992). While I agree with radical feminists that legal frameworks alone cannot improve women's situation, I also argue that legal frameworks are necessary to equalise the playing field between women and men in a society that inherited inequalities from the past.

3.3.1 Criticisms of radical feminism and patriarchal theory

According to Bryson (1992) the use of patriarchy by radical feminist has been heavily criticized on the grounds that firstly, the radical feminist theory of patriarchy is said to be descriptive and not analytical. As a result it is unable to explain the origins of male power and consequently unable to provide strategies of ending it. Secondly, other feminist argue that radical feminists fail to distinguish between various forms of male power and see all

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men as enemies. They ignore the issues of race and class and the fact that not all men have the ability to oppress women. Consequently, this view leads to separatism which does not have great appeal for the majority of women (Bryson, 1992 and (Measor and Sikes, 1992). Thirdly, radical feminism is said to be ahistorical and based on the experiences of the middle-class that obscures the different problems faced by working class women. Lastly is sees women as passive victims of the evil men and sees men as incapable of being anything better. "it sees women simply in the role of passive victims, rather than the co-makers of history and the agents of change in the future" Bryson, 1992:186-7).

3.4   BLACK FEMINISM

Black feminism challenged radical feminism for its ignorance of race and class oppressions. In addition to other perspectives, the study draws from black feminism in acknowledging that black women principals in the study went through different experiences to that of their White and Indian sisters on the bases of their race, class and sex without attempting to homogenise black African women. The study takes into full consideration the impact racism had on the progress of black African women principals and this is endorsed fully and separately by black feminist thought. Weiner's claim citing hooks (1984) that a feminist theory ignoring racism cannot be meaningful, particularly in a context like South Africa that carries so much historical racial inequity, is fully supported.

> Feminist theory would have much to offer if it showed women ways in which racism and sexism are immutably connected rather than pitting one struggle against the other, or blatantly dismissing racism (hooks, 1984: 52).

Black feminism advocates argue that, historically, feminist theory has suppressed Black women's ideas by limiting theories advanced as universally applicable to women as a group to white middle class women's experiences. This is argued mainly by Patricia Hill Collins (1991) and bell hooks (1984). Collins (1991) argues that the notion of a generic

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woman promoted through feminist theories is a white middle class one, hence feminists' inability to challenge the hegemony of mainstream scholarship to all women. Black feminist thought therefore arose as the need to challenge racial and sexual oppression while socialist feminism exposes class oppression. The argument is that black and working class women's experiences differ from those of the middle class and more colour-privileged counterparts, and therefore feminist theory cannot be legitimately used to explain experiences of all women.

Bloom and Erlandson (2003) citing Collins (1991) posit that black feminism is underpinned by four main assumptions namely: (i) that the content of thought cannot be separated from the historical and material conditions that shaped the lives it produces; (ii) that black women as a group share certain commonalities; (iii) diversities between and among black women based on class, religion, age and sexual orientation are real; (iv) that although a black woman's perspective exists, not all black women may recognize or accept it.

Abbott and Wallace (1997) highlight the need for the recognition of difference of experiences between black and white women, which is central to black feminist argument. This perspective would therefore provide theoretical explanations for the unique or different experiences of black African women in the South African context that was influenced mostly by their historical apartheid background and their social status that denied them a lot of opportunities as compared to White women. The black feminist movement started in the US as a challenge to radical feminists for ignoring the white patriarchal oppression of black women on the basis of their sex, colour and class. A further argument cited by hooks (1984) was that patriarchy has different meanings for black women and that it is not possible for them (black women) to pin-point their oppression to one source. While they accept white middle class men as the main oppressor, they at the same time regard black men as sexist and contributing to a large extent to the sexist exploitation of fellow black women, thus leading to black women suffering dual oppression of sex and colour.

Black feminism is in harmony with post-structural feminism through their common emphasis on attending to the differences existing between and among women of the same race and ethnicity. They both highlight the differences between women and "resist homogenizing accounts of women as a unified category" (Beasley, 1999:101). The argument here is that South African women in general have been affected by the patriarchal nature of the society in terms of its treatment of women, but over and above gender oppression, black women also suffered race oppression that denied them even further and only on the basis of their colour, the opportunities enjoyed by their White sisters.

Although black feminism seems to make sense for the different experiences of black African women, and the differences amongst them taking into consideration the impact class and ethnicity, the study is first and foremost about policy intervention and its impact on gender. For policy to be able to intervene in a meaningful way, women have to be viewed as a categorical group since policy cannot address individual interests. Policies can cater for differences between groups of women such as racial groups and ethnic, but not on individual differences resulting from cultural and traditional practices. In arguing that programmes built towards affirming women should cater for individual differences, black feminism's emphasis on differences amongst women of the same race and ethnic group goes beyond the study's main argument.

Black feminism is criticised mainly by African feminists who argue that black feminists' racism, for example, is particular to American women's unique history of slavery (Msimang, 2002). As a result, black feminist theory could not accurately explain the experiences of African women even though they do share some commonality of being black and women. This is mainly because the contexts of these two perspectives were so differently grounded as a result of two diverse experiences.

3.5 AFRICAN FEMINISM

Of all the different perspectives I have read in trying to find a feminist view that best explains the women principals' experiences in this study, African feminism as presented by Arndt (2002) came closest. African feminism does not assume homogeneity in women, the assumption that problems of all women in Africa can be solved with one universal solution. This is the view also shared by black feminism and post-structural feminism. While African feminism takes into consideration the diversity of social realities within the African context, it still makes room for a common denominator that defines African feminism. According to Arndt, African feminism gets to the bottom of African gender relations and in particular, the problems of African women. In the process, African feminism illuminates these problems, their causes and effects and criticises them. The aim is to upset these deeply rooted social practices in order to transform gender relationships and conceptions in African societies and improve the situation of African women. African women in this context should not be understood to mean the South African categorical description of Black African women, but in this context, the term "African women" is used to refer to all women living in Africa. The rationale behind this conception is that African women have all been impacted upon and affected by colonialism, apartheid and patriarchy whether it is in a positive or negative way. Their experiences are therefore informed by these mechanisms which have characterised the South African history.

One of the aims of African feminism is its attempt to discuss gender relations not only in the context of patriarchy, which is the main focus of the radical feminists, but in the context of, amongst others, colonialism, racism and socio-economic exclusion. Arndt (2002) calls these oppressive mechanisms of women and the people of Africa. Secondly, this view of feminism incorporates the "cooperation or complementarity" (Arndt, 2002:37) with men where men are seen as potential allies in the struggle against gender discrimination. This also includes the affirmation of motherhood and the family and scrutiny of patriarchal manifestations in a different way from radical feminism. The

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difference here is based on the fact that although it scrutinises patriarchy and the traditional institutions, African feminism identifies and acknowledges those traditional institutions that are supportive of women from those which disadvantage women. "Complementarity" is understood in the context where not all men are evil oppressors of women, but where men complement women.

African feminism differs from radical feminism in that it does not hold only men as responsible for discriminating against women. But it acknowledges the existence of "woman-on-woman discrimination" (Arndt, 2002:38).

Within this view of feminism there are further different versions identified as reformist, transformative and radical African feminism. These versions will not be discussed here in detail but reformist African feminism has some relevance to the liberal view of feminism that criticises men as individuals and not as a villainous group of oppressors of women, as seen by radicals. Transformative and radical views on the other hand maintain the fundamental critique of patriarchal social structures although to differing degrees. In sum, although African feminism responds exclusively to the needs of African women, it shares some underpinnings with several other views of feminism discussed above, such as the consideration of third world women made by black feminists.

Although African feminism is found to have resonance with African women experiences to a higher degree than any other view of feminism, it is still criticised for overvaluing women's agency in the face of colonialism at the cost of more complex and fully developed systems of knowledge (Andrade, 2002). Andrade borrows from Nancy Rose Hunt who accuses African feminism of a naïve unproblematised celebration of agency, which assumes that women have the autonomous capacity to change their situation. Hunt believes that this analysis overplays African women's ability to escape the depth of patriarchy and colonialism which is so much embedded and informs social practices. She argues for a more theoretically sophisticated approach.

3.6 POST-STRUCTURAL FEMINISM

Adding to the patchwork, the study also draws from post-structural feminism with its emphasis on the creation of new ways of knowing (Weiner, 1994), which rejects the view that feminist knowledge is in any way more adequate than other forms of knowledge. Post structural feminism seeks to analyse in more detail the workings of patriarchy in all its manifestations (ideological, institutional, organizational and subjective). It views social relations in terms of plurality and diversity instead of unity and consensus as viewed by traditional feminists. Thus, the view of women as a group is what makes post-structural feminism different from the so called traditional feminism, such as liberals and radicals. For the latter two perspectives all women are discriminated against, with radicals taking a step further to viewing all men as oppressors within patriarchy. Post-structural feminism rejects the treatment of women as a homogeneous category but emphasizes plurality of differences between and within women and the diversity of forms of power shaping their experiences (Weedon, 1987; Beasley, 1999). Beasley reiterates that,

> Conceptions of women as a homogeneous group are regarded as actually installing a hegemonic female subject which censors out historical, social and other forms of diversity both within and between women, (Beasley, 1999:82).

According to Scott (cited in Weiner, 1994) this view of diversity amongst subjects enables the articulation of alternative and more effective ways of thinking and dealing with gender issues.

Yates (1993) juxtaposes 'pluralism' (understanding women's inequality as operating differently as their race, class and culture differ and not taking a common form) and 'essentialism' (understanding women's inequality in some common process related to all women) and highlights the dilemma that has been a concern for feminist theorists. She argues that although these constructs are direct opposites, a pluralist understanding of gender needs to be seen in the light of an essentialist view. But at the same time in order

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to work out appropriate strategies and refine our understanding of sexism, careful empirical studies on women are needed so that gender is understood in concrete terms which always take class, ethnic, age and culture forms into consideration. Post-structural feminists are critical of 'universal' or 'normal' treatment of procedures or accounts of women as a group and as a result question any assumption of shared identity among women. Instead of mobilizing political struggle around women (advocated by liberal feminism) post-structural feminists focus on destabilizing the manifold operations of power.

Central to post-structural feminism is the assumption that realities are socially created and that there is a close link between oppression and practices of the individual and society at large. A post-structural feminist analysis exposes the historical and contemporary oppression of women of all races both in organizations and societies through the daily interactions that lead to the creation of multiple identities based on gender, social class and race. According to Aveling (2002), post-structural feminism conceptualizes subjects as having the power to make choices and not as complete subjects who are simply acted upon. Taking this view therefore considers women principals in this study as active agents of their own situation and victims of circumstances at the same time. Humans are not just passive victims of social reproduction, but are actually active agents participating in the creation of their own realities (Gardiner et al, 2000).

Deconstruction and analysis of our own socially constructed realities and multiple identities can help us understand our struggles and location in society, and empower us to reposition and rename our contributions to personal and public worlds, and to understand their intersection. Subjectivity is seen as socially constructed, and the nature of the self is considered unstable and changeable. The self is constantly being created and recreated through new forms of discourse and new forms of social relationships (Gardiner et al, 2000:31).

3.6.1 Subjectivity

Subjectivity in post-structuralism is used to refer to "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of self and her ways of understanding her relations to the world" (Weedon, 1987:32). Subjectivity is made possible through the discourses that the individual has access to, through a life history of being in the world (Davies cited in Grogan, 1996), and different discourses provide a range of modes of subjectivity and the ways in which particular discourses constitute subjectivity have implications for the process of reproducing or contesting power relations.

3.6.2 Language and discourse

Language and discourse are central concepts in the post-structuralist framework. These two concepts refer to the all-encompassing experience of individuals negotiating their way through everyday interactions with sets of commonly shared words, phrases, and symbols (Grogan, 1996). Weedon (1987) defines discourses as:

> Ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects which they seek to govern. Neither the body nor thoughts and feelings have meaning outside their discursive articulation, but the ways in which discourse constitutes the minds and bodies of individuals is always part of a wider network of power relations, often with institutional base (Weedon, 1987:108).

Discourse is not just about language or texts, but also includes a hierarchical structuring of statements and terms and beliefs (Grogan 1996 citing Scott, 1988). In the analysis of language and discourse, terms are usually looked at in contrast with their opposites, thereby choosing one meaning over the other. This choice also displays the hierarchy implied in these "binary oppositions" and the interrelationship since one is defined in terms of the other. Because of this interrelationship, to see discourse through a post-structuralist lens is to see which values are silenced and the extent to which others are

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promoted (Grogan 1996 citing Capper, 1993b). This clearly involves power relations since the person who articulates the term that takes precedence over the other has more authority.

Blackmore (1999) defines discourses as a systematic set of meanings that circulate around practices of particular institutions. "Discourses regulate how much we understand who we are, as well as how we understand our limits and possibilities in the social order" (Kelly 1993 cited by Blackmore 1999:16). "Discourses about women in leadership are informed by wider discourses about politics of gender relations," (Blackmore, 1999:16). Post-structural feminism emphasises discourse in order to provide a lens through which women's liberation, starting from the home to the organisation, can be understood. Greene (1988 cited by Grogan 1996) explains that illusions about the social reality must be exposed if women (and even men) are to achieve their freedom that would enable them to choose what constitutes their common world. Grogan (1996) further argues then that such interrogation can be achieved through hearing, in context, the voices of women participating or wishing to participate in education management. The feminist post-structural framework enables women to understand their context relating to the sources of power and their social relationships and helps them to be able to dislocate them, thereby enabling their successors means of challenging their social structures as well. Baxter (2002) posits that feminist post-structuralism discourse analysis

> is much more than simply an effective tool with which to deconstruct the cultural processes responsible for constituting structures of oppression. It provides a way of understanding the world through a rich plurality of voices and perspectives, which may lead to a greater recognition and connection between people's competing viewpoints and ultimately may prompt social and educational transformation (Baxter 2002:5).

3.6.3 Criticisms of post-structural feminism

At this juncture I found it useful to look briefly at what post-structural feminists' opponents put forward. Feminism and post-structuralism are two distinct theories that

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have been merged. Post-structuralism on its own aims to understand the human condition, (Grogan, 1996) or humanism as put by Foucault (1984). It advocates the dismantling of social structures but offers no hope in bringing about social change, which is in sharp contrast with a feminist approach. Feminism on the other hand is committed to the advancement of women and this view is shared by all the different perspectives within feminism. Putting post-structuralism together with feminism allows for the identification of social structures that have been oppressive to women's interests and to take social responsibility for change (Weedon, 1987). Described by Grogan (1996), feminist poststructuralist is a theory that "identifies possibilities for social change by inquiring into the origins and manifestations of both institutional knowledge and beliefs and individual knowledge and beliefs" (Grogan, 1996:34). Post-structural feminism with its "leaving no stone unturned" approach and sceptical treatment of everything views everything as dangerous, while in feminist terms, everything is political. Marrying these two conceptualizations binds us to constantly review the world and how it is worded (Adams, 2000).

Many writers have debated the compatibility of these two theories particularly with educational research. As indicated above post-structuralism on the one hand, resists the "final fixing of meaning as a grand-narrative" regardless of how politically or theoretically justifiable that meaning might be, while feminism on the other hand is rooted within emancipatory traditions (Baxter, 2002). Thus, the appropriateness of post-structural feminism for political action is questioned since it "rejects absolute values and verges on relativism" (Weiner, 1994).

For these reasons, this study is not classified as a post-structuralist one, although I find some themes of post-structuralism such as 'non-homogeneity' of women useful in explaining some of the findings. Thus, the one aspect of feminist post-structuralism that comes close to explaining part of the findings is its emphasis on 'pluralism' versus 'unity', although I am not using pluralism to explain the differences in women's experiences because I argue for political mobilization of gender inequality, fighting

strategies through policies and policy cannot be based on individual cases. Without attempting to merge and trivialize the individual women's experiences and treating them as if they are a homogeneous category, I acknowledge the unique differences of their cultural, social, political and economic backgrounds that characterised their different experiences, while at the same time I acknowledge that there are commonalities amongst women in general and amongst women of particular groups which enables policy intervention.

3.7   SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The above section has attempted to outline the theoretical underpinnings for the study. It showed the strengths and weaknesses of the discussed approaches in as far as explaining this study is concerned. With that background this section attempts to summarise the conceptual themes or constructs found useful for the thesis. Thus, the section attempts to explain which aspects of the explained theoretical and conceptual perspectives were found useful and why. As indicated earlier, the thesis is informed by theories of feminism in a 'patchwork fashion' that singles out no feminist perspective in its entirety as sufficient to explain all the aspects of the findings. Although I use liberal feminism as the base of the theoretical framework for this study, I acknowledge its limitation in dealing with the social practices that continue to hamper progress in uprooting gender discrimination, and although other theories of feminism offer valid criticisms of liberal feminism, they do not provide sufficient argument for education, nor do they offer sufficient framework for policy and legal reforms on the situation of women, which is the crux of the study.

It has been established by a number of perspectives countering the liberal feminist perspective that satisfactory participation of women in education management will not be achieved through revolutionary actions that enable more women to get into management in big numbers without uprooting the subtle social practices of discrimination. But successful eradication of gender inequity in education management will be achieved

through a destruction of the deeply embedded roots of gender discrimination that does not only ensure access, but retention as well through incremental steps that benefit women and men and the organisations themselves.

A post structural feminist analysis shares a lot of commonality with the fourth approach that Ely and Meyerson (2000) (discussed in chapter 2) suggest, which call upon consistent assessment and revision of the culture that exposes the male-biased social practices both within the home and the work place. I acknowledge the importance of these two approaches while I borrow heavily from liberal feminism and its equal opportunity approach. Although liberal feminism receives so much criticism from its opponents, most changes in organizations are acknowledged as a result of the liberal feminist intervention, (Blackmore, 1999; Weiner, 1994). From the so-called traditional approaches to understanding the gender gap problem, liberal feminism remains the closest to getting permanent solutions (Weiner, 1994).

Finally, I link the study to feminist theory because it addresses women's experiences with regard to their lack of participation in education management. Having given the above outline about feminist theories, in summary, the reasons I drew mainly from feminism to explain the findings are three-fold: firstly, using a feminist perspective means insisting that women matter in the way they live, think and organize (Brock-Utne, 1989). Women have been displaced from or submerged in both organizational and political theory, and this invisibility of women has permeated the everyday commonsense notions of leadership (Blackmore, 1994). This according to Sarah Fildes (cited by Blackmore, 1994) can be explained partially by the conceptual language and terminology, which have implicit masculinist values and models. The use of certain concepts often sets agenda and boundaries of a discourse whether in theory, practice or policy. This in turn determines the direction and force of the final analysis. An essential aspect of feminist theory therefore is to "question all that is given, to question what is not included in the discourse as much as what is, and what has been reinterpreted in a manner which displaces women's interests" (Blackmore, 1994:98). Feminist post structural analysis exposes the

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'normalized' male biased practices in which schools as organizations are structured and how knowledge and power are connected and the use of 'positionality' to deconstruct the educational discourses (Weiner, 1994).

Secondly, the study required a theory that binds the macro to the micro in ways that explicate the complexity of women's experiences in acquiring management positions. The use of different constructs within feminism is regarded useful for this study because it links the micro politics of schools and the broad structural and cultural practices underpinning change. It focuses on how gender reform policies for women have been produced, read and acted upon. Thirdly, feminism as a theory was found useful in amongst other factors, enabling the understanding of gender issues in education management and enabling the making of theoretical recommendations which are capable of enactment, and enabling the identification of actions to be taken.

In addition to using a theory that recognizes the importance of legal reforms, the study also needed a theory that looks beyond provision of legal and democratic reforms and into social practices that disable legal reforms to reach desired goals. As Cubillo (2003) puts it, "more women now than ever before are slowly chiselling through the glass barrier to take on leadership positions, but one can hardly claim to hear glass ceilings shattering around us" (Cubillo and Brown, 2003:280). I argue that the glass barriers are not just above, but all around women through social practices informed by the perception of male domination.

Several perspectives and approaches guiding this analysis have been used to explain the findings and as Weiner (1994) indicates, different analyses generate different solutions and strategies for change. I used liberal feminism for its emphasis on knowledge dissemination and removal of structural barriers through legislation and policy-making. The argument is that government interventions in the form of legal reforms and policies demanding equal opportunities and equal treatment are the starting point to guarantee equitable participation of women in the management of educational institutions.

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However, because policies and laws on their own are not sufficient to ensure equity, a perspective that challenges the structures and cultures within society had to be introduced to make its contribution to the 'patchwork'. This is where post-structural and black feminisms come in. Both approaches see no differences between men and women but argue for equal opportunities for both sexes. Although I draw from these perspectives, I make no claim whatsoever that the latter is more adequate than other feminist perspectives I referred to. I argue from a point that all feminist perspectives have strengths and limitations and that all the discussed perspectives contribute to the understanding of what goes on in education management in as far as women are concerned.

Although other theories of feminism offer valid criticisms of liberal feminism, they do not provide sufficient argument for education, nor do they offer useful frameworks for policy and legal reforms on the situation of women, which is the crux of the study. Weiner (1994) argues that different perspectives of feminism generate different research questions for education. Liberal feminism is centred on women's individual rights and equal opportunities, provided by the law and clearly articulated policies. It focuses on, amongst others, women's under-representation in education in order to campaign for change. But because these legal reforms are also not enough on their own to guarantee sustained equality, support structures and institutionalization of policy plays a crucial role. Byrne (1978) argues that separate educational provision for girls meant inferior facilities and restricted features, yet the same treatment may still produce unequal outcomes if previous socialization is ignored. That is why the provision of policies and legislation guaranteeing equity at the legal level is not sufficient on its own to ensure deep and sustained change in combating gender discrimination.

Despite the critique levelled against liberal feminism, the study identifies with it because of its emphasis on equal opportunities and "investment in woman power" as men's equals (Acker, 1993). In this research I argue that, in an education system that has inherited so much historical inequity as in South Africa, formal laws and policies that actually prevent

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discrimination are a prerequisite in fighting the gender imbalances even though these are not sufficient on their own to eradicate these inequalities. The South African education system (as many other education systems) is also dependent on the female work force. It therefore follows that equal opportunities by means of law, policies and other developmental programmes should be created for women with sufficient qualifications and who aspire to be in the management of the teaching profession.

However, the study borrows from other perspectives within the feminist theory in order to address the gaps left by liberal feminism and its limited emphasis on women's equal rights. In addition to arguing for equal rights and opportunities for women in South Africa, I further argue that policies and laws are not sufficient on their own to tackle the gender inequality problem. That is why I further use other perspectives and constructs to explain some of the experiences of discrimination women encounter despite the implementation of laws and policies.

3.8 FRAMEWORKS FOR ANALYSIS

This section presents other analytical frameworks used in the study.

3.8.1   Feminist critical policy analysis

The study focuses on policy analysis on gender issues first and foremost and then goes on to explore the experiences of women who got the principalship posts. Linked to feminist theory, a feminist critical policy analysis as a framework is therefore used to understand the gendered nature of the selected policies (as will be seen in chapter 4). According to Marshall (1997), feminist critical policy analysis melds critical theory and feminism to challenge the traditional approaches to policy analyses that have dominated policy research thus far. It draws its focus on power relations from critical theory and because it centres on gender, it states a clear values base and identifies the formal and informal processes of power and policy that affect women's advancement and full development. Shaw (2004) posits that feminist critical policy analysis can be utilized as a tool to

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analyse emerging educational policies because it encourages us to understand the broader context in which policy is developed and enacted and to understand the particularities of the lives of those most affected by policy. The examination of affirmative action through this framework was therefore useful because it focuses on how the policy benefits women as direct recipients of the policy.

Like most feminist research analyses, feminist critical policy analysis posit that first and foremost gender must be the central focus of the research and thus its analysis relies on the lived experiences of women as told by women themselves. The aim of feminist critical policy analysis is not to develop a universal understanding of women's experience, but it focuses on the different contexts and how they affect the outcome of a particular policy. That is why feminist critical policy analysis relies on data collected on the lived experiences of women as told by women themselves.

According to Shaw (2004) this framework allows the researcher to place gender at the centre of analyses since policy analysis that poses as neutral is both inadequate in developing a full understanding of education policy and obscures a the differential effects of such policies on the most vulnerable population – in this case women in education management.

3.8.2   The management route model

The "management route model" adopted from Van Eck and Volman (1996) is used to analyse policy on the under-representation of women in education management because it clarifies the different complex factors that influence women's career path to the management positions. Women's lack of upward mobility in education is not attributed exclusively to either personal or social factors as some literature suggests, but a organizational factors with an emphasis on working conditions and the role played by policy add a significant dimension. Thus, there is some interplay amongst these factors that result in the ultimate status of women in education management. The 'management

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route model' exposes gaps within policy that addresses gender issues in education management specifically and it was found directly relevant for this type of analysis.

The model distinguishes three phases that influence the career path to management positions, and phases in which women encounter more obstacles than men. The first phase is the **anticipation phase**, which prepares women for the management function. It focuses on the development of the knowledge and skills needed for a management position. Educational institutions are characterised by a horizontal structure that has very few people at the top and huge numbers of practitioners who officially have the same status. In many countries including South Africa, women educators have traditionally been denied the prospect of participating at the same level with their male counterparts, which resulted in more males at the management level and more women as lower level practitioners. Male managers have distributed opportunities and rewards such as attending workshops, responsibilities to run departments and to act on their behalf informally to the benefit of men, thereby denying women the experience they would need to participate in management. Training is therefore viewed as playing a very important role at the personal level in this phase to prepare women for access into management positions. The anticipation phase therefore includes acquisition of qualifications, participation in informal networks and the support by sponsors, which enable teachers to acquire a higher profile and provide the support and opportunities that are essential for promotion to important positions (Van Eck and Volman 1996:405). Personal and organisational factors are at this phase influenced by the social factors such as how the division of work and the management qualities of men and women are perceived.

The second phase in this model is the **acquisition phase**, which focuses on access and entry into management positions. Job application skills and the ambitions of the candidates are very important in this phase. Informal networks and support from sponsors mentioned in the anticipation phase are also very important in this phase to help women get appointed into management posts. How candidates are assessed and clarity of the selection criteria backed up by national policy and regulations advancing women's

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chances to be appointed in management positions play a crucial role at this phase. Organisational and social factors are involved here, since management has been viewed as a male activity.

The third phase is the **performance phase** where the actual management function is performed. In this phase, emphasis is placed on the fact that the under-representation of women in management positions is a problem even for women who are in these positions. So informal networking for support at the organizational level is therefore very useful in this phase since the personal, organizational and social factors have an impact on the performance of women in management positions. This framework enabled the dissection of the policy design to consider the three phases determining women principals' career path. The framework also enabled the analysis of the practice related constraints to increased female participation in education management.

3.8.3   Policy functions framework

The third framework shows how the documents provide a framework for the development of gender equality through three different functions, which show that policy operates at three different levels. In her article, De Clercq (1997) suggests that policies must be analysed in different ways depending on their nature and scope. She outlines three functions of policies that are employed for this analysis. These functions are firstly, the **symbolic level** where policy points towards the vision of the ideal future that policy makers are working towards, but remains more rhetorical about these ideals; secondly, the **regulative level** where policy introduces regulations, rules and laws that should be enforced to assist with the reaching of the ideal vision; and thirdly the **procedural level** which refers to guidelines and explanations of who should take action and through which mechanisms. This framework was useful in establishing the extent to which the analysed policies could be implemented and whether they could reach the desired goals.

These three frameworks shaped the analysis and although they focus on different issues, I found them to complement each other in interrogating the role of gender policy in education management. Feminist critical policy analysis specifically addresses the gendered nature of the policy content thereby placing gender at the centre of the inquiry, while the management route model and the policy functions frameworks focuses on the different roles played by policy in addressing the problem in question.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

As a starting point, I make an attempt to draw a distinction between feminist research methodology and research methods both of which form the central focus of this chapter. Harding (1987), Maguire (1987) and Reinharz (1992) outline the reason behind the difficulty in defining feminist research as the connection between research methods, methodology and epistemology even though they are distinct concepts that refer to different aspects of the research process in the traditional and feminist discourses. However, these feminist scholars try to disentangle this confusion by defining *methods* as techniques or tools of data gathering that could be qualitative or quantitative and are chosen by the researcher; *methodology* as "a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed" (Harding 1987:3), while *epistemology* on the other hand is a theory of knowledge that answers questions about who constructs knowledge, whose knowledge is validated and what constitutes knowledge (Harding, 1987; Stanley and Wise, 1990; Skeggs, 1994). Feminist researchers would therefore propose women as legitimated agents of knowledge hence the involvement of women in their research process.

My understanding of feminist research is thus informed by Reinharz's (1992) assertion that feminist research is guided by feminist theory, which in turn is guided by:

- A belief that women universally face some form of oppression or exploitation;
- A commitment to uncover and understand what causes and sustains oppression in all its forms;
- A commitment to work individually and collectively in everyday life to end all forms of oppression (Maguire, 1987:79).

The understanding of feminism as a theory discussed in detail in the previous chapter, informs the use of feminist research methodology in this study. For purposes of this research I use Jayaratne and Stewart's (1995) and Mickelson's (1994) understanding that feminist research methodology must be taken to refer to a much broader theory of how to do feminist research. These scholars understand feminist research methodology as a broad concept that is partly about technique, partly about correcting the incomplete canon of substantive knowledge, partly about epistemology and political goals of social transformation.

The chapter firstly describes briefly feminist research methodology and why it was found particularly suitable for this study. Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) state that since there is no certain or absolute knowledge against which the truth of everything can be measured, feminist researchers like all other social researchers have to establish and defend their claims to knowledge of social life. They add that "if feminist knowledge is to be believed, it has to be made believable" (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002:2). This is the attempt made in the first section of the chapter – to defend the use of the production of feminist knowledge and to make feminist knowledge produced in this study believable. This section is followed by a detailed description of the research design, procedures followed to select all participants, as well as methods employed to collect the data.

4.2   FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Most feminist researchers do not agree on any one particular definition of feminist research methodology, but instead agree on the commonalties of the themes underpinning feminist research. Weiler (1988) outlines the major themes that occur within feminist research methodology and one of these themes, which I found particularly relevant to this study, is the fact that feminist research is politically committed to changing the position of women in society by rejecting the possibility of value free research. Weiler (1988) refers to this political commitment as an overt one to women's rights, which reflects women's own personal experience of subjugation within a male dominated society. This

commitment in feminist research should also allow women to speak out and discuss their experiences in their own words.

In agreement with Weiler, Lather (1995) further asserts that the overt goal of feminist research in the human sciences is to correct the invisibility and distortion of the experiences of women in ways that are relevant to ending women's social position of inequality. According to Lather, citing Callaway (1981) "this entails the substantive task of making gender a fundamental category for our understanding of the social order, to see the world, from women's place in it" (Lather, 1995:295).

Further, in her attempt to define feminist research, Morris (1995) argues that women have previously experienced research as alienation. For Morris and Lather, to see feminist research from a more innovative and interactive perspective is informed by the second wave of feminist research which de-emphasises prediction and control. Feminist research therefore starts on the premise of creating knowledge that is not alienated. Stanley (1990) defines this "unalienated knowledge" as "knowledge which concretely and analytically locates the product of the academic feminist labour process within a concrete analysis of the process of production itself" (Stanley, 1990:12). This in simple terms means research that does not view women as objects, but as subjects and 'knowers' who are concretely involved in the production of knowledge that they can identify with. Thus, feminist researchers start with a political commitment to produce useful knowledge that will make a difference to women's lives through social and individual change (Letherby, 2003).

Although most of these feminist writers argue that there is no distinct feminist method, that all methods as defined above can be used in all types of research, they do nonetheless agree on what makes feminist research different from traditional research. First of all, feminist research is distinguishable by the types of questions it asks, the location of the researcher within the research process and the intended purpose of the research. Letherby (2003) and Brayton (1997) argue that feminist researchers are concerned with challenging the mainstream research and their questions and therefore population and

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methods are always political. Brayton quotes Skeggs (1994) who argues that feminist research begins from the premise that the nature of reality in society is unequal and hierarchical and aims at changing social inequality as its major role, thereby grounding the research in political and academic terms.

Secondly, for feminist research to be considered feminist, it has to be guided by beliefs and concerns that are feminist. According to Brayton (1997) feminist research differs from traditional research because it actively seeks to remove the power imbalance between researcher and subject. This relationship is restructured to validate the perspective of the participants on the premise to remove this hierarchical relationship. This results in the change of terminology, whereby the researched is called the 'participant' instead of 'subject' which could be indicative of people having something done on them, or 'informant' which could imply people from whom others get information (Letherby, 2003).

Weiler (1988) adds that feminist researchers start their investigation from their own subjective oppression, thereby identifying with the participant. Brayton (1997) reiterates that the unequal power relations between the researcher and the participant are restructured in order to validate the perspective of the participant. The removal of this hierarchical relationship is done by means of involving the participants at all levels of the research process. One way in which this can be realized is to ask women participants to verify the finalized information since they are experts of their own personal experiences. However, Brayton (1997) and Letherby (2003) both make readers aware of the problem arising in this change of terminology that the use of participants could imply an equality in the participation which could give the researched more control. In this current study, this equality between the researcher and the participant gives the latter the ability to give meaning to their own experiences in their own terms without necessarily implying that participants have more control.

Thirdly, Brayton (1997) believes that what makes feminist research feminist are the motives, concerns and knowledge brought through research processes. She believes that feminist research focuses on issues that are important to women. Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) are in support of this and cite Code (1991) and Nelson (1993) who agree that:

> Regardless of their epistemological and ontological differences, what distinguishes feminist researchers (of whatever gender) is some shared political and ethical commitment that makes them accountable to a community of women with moral and political interests in common. Feminist research is politically *for* women; feminist knowledge has some grounding in women's *experiences*, and in how it *feels* to live in unjust gendered relationships (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002: 16)

Although there appears to be some consensus on the point that feminist research focuses on issues that are important to women as a starting point for doing research, Lather (in Holland et al, 1995), on the contrary, argues that to do feminist research is to put social construction of gender at the centre of one's inquiry and this does not necessarily imply focusing on women's issues. Lather (1995) describes feminism as a lens that brings into focus particular questions and through the questions it poses, feminist research argues for the centrality of gender in the shaping of our consciousness, skills and institutions and the distribution of power and privilege. "Feminist researchers see gender as a basic organizing principle which shapes the concrete conditions of our lives", (Lather, 1995:295). Thus, in researching women's experiences,

> ... the goal of feminist research in the human sciences is to correct both invisibility and distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women's unequal social position (Lather, 1995: 295).

Harding (1987) and later Brayton (1997) argue however, that a mere inclusion or addition of women in research is not sufficient to qualify it as feminist research, but what makes feminist research feminist is the involvement of women as participants in the research. Thus, there is more to feminist research than work done by and about women (Stanley, 1990). Accordingly, Stanley (1990) argues that even though the concept 'woman'

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suggests that by virtue of being, women share common experiences of oppression, those do not essentially derive from the biological fact. However, to say that women share experiences of oppression does not necessarily mean that their experiences are the same. The social contexts within which they live and work and make sense of their lives differ broadly across the world and between different groupings of women.

Lastly, research is also seen as a conscientisation process that empowers oppressed participants (Harding, 1987; Lather, 1995; Cohen et al, 2000). In the best of feminist research, the purposes of research and analysis are to provide useful information that will empower people so that they can challenge and fight their manipulation, control and exploitation by the powerful; with the objective of transforming the status quo (Mickelson, 1994: 134). Cohen et al (2000) argue that gender shapes research agendas, the choice of topic and choice of data collection techniques. Birks (2002) reiterates that because feminist research is not just research about women but research for women to be used in transforming their sexist society, how this is played out in the research process is the result of choices being made by the researcher.

> Having the research question come from a women's collective or organisations is one way into staying grounded within the women's movement. The commitment to feminism as the underlying motivation to feminist research means that research and action cannot be separated (Birks, 2002:1).

Although the position on themes characterising feminist research methodology appears unanimous to some level, Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) take the argument further and challenge whether feminist methodology is indeed distinctively feminist. For this position they raise the following points:

Firstly, that feminist methodology is not distinguished by female researchers studying women. Women do not have a special claim to know gender because feminist consciousness is not derived from the female body. Those who are materially and socially more or less female do not necessarily share full political interests or experience a common social existence.

Secondly, no research technique is distinctively feminist because feminists have and can experiment with a variety of quantitative, qualitative and politically sensitive research styles that suit their purpose of making diverse women's voices and experiences heard. Feminist research does not logically or necessarily require qualitative techniques. Thus, "no research method is consistently or specifically feminist" (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002:15).

Thirdly, there is no ontological or epistemological position that is distinctively feminist since feminists have interacted with a range of existing positions. They posit that there are differences between realists, empiricists and relativists and although feminist researchers are required to reflect critically on the place of the researcher in the process of knowledge production, this is a requirement for all social research.

Fourthly, feminist methodology is only distinctive to the extent that it is shaped by feminist theory, politics and ethics and grounded in women's experience. Feminist methodology like any other social research cannot be independent of the ontology, epistemology, subjectivity, politics, ethics and social situation of the researcher.

Despite these challenges posed by Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002), they conclude nonetheless, that what makes feminist research distinctive is the particular political positioning of theory, epistemology and ethics that enables the researcher to question existing 'truths' and explore relations between knowledge and power. To substantiate this point, Reinharz cites Dale Spender who asserts that:

> At the core of feminist ideas is the crucial insight that there is no one truth, no one authority, no one objective method which leads to the production of pure knowledge. This insight is as applicable to feminist knowledge as it is to patriarchal knowledge, but there is a significant difference between the two: feminist knowledge is based on the premise that the experience of all human beings is valid and must not be excluded from our understandings, whereas patriarchal knowledge is based on the premise that the experience of only half the

human population needs to be taken into account and the resulting version can be imposed on the other hand (Reinharz, 2002: 7-8).

How feminist knowledge is produced depends entirely on the choice of techniques made by the researcher. Lather (in Holland et al 1995) agrees with Jayaratne (1983) that feminist theory should be used on a whole range of methods to add its own perspective. They add that quantitative methodology and qualitative methodology can and should form part of feminist research since the former can provide information not attainable through qualitative methods and vice versa. Stanley and Wise (1983) argue that methods in themselves do not mean anything, but what matters, as Harding (1987) also adds, is the different ways in which feminist researchers carry out these methods of evidence gathering.

Although Birks (2002) further asserts that since it begins with the standpoints and experiences of women, feminist research therefore uses qualitative methods that are thought to value subjective, personal meaning and definition, commonalities and giving voices to the oppressed as compared to quantitative methods that are constructed in terms of testing theories and making predictions in an objective, value free manner that detaches the researcher from the participants and the research process. Jayaratne and Stewart (1995) argue that "both types of methods can be effectively utilized by feminists and can be implemented in ways consistent with feminist values" (Jayaratne and Stewart, 1995:222). In this sense, the procedures commonly used in quantitative research which are inconsistent with feminist values can be altered without abandoning the quantitative strategies which have a potential of being useful to feminists. This latter argument seems to concur with what Usher (1996) argues, that feminist social research uses methods that are both qualitative and quantitative and adds its own perspective in order to create diverse innovative approaches to analysing human activity.

Cohen et al (2000) also cite Jayaratne (1993) who challenges the exclusive advocacy of qualitative feminist methodology by arguing for feminist quantitative methodologies that counter sexist quantitative data in the social sciences. Jayaratne argues that feminist

researchers can do quantitative research without selling out to the positivist male-dominated academic research community, and she calls this "beating quantitative research on its own grounds". Jayaratne and Stewart (1995) argue that there can be no single, prescribed method or set of research methods consistent with feminist values, although there are no methods antithetical to such values either. While every researcher has the liberty to make an independent assessment about the appropriateness of a given research question and purpose, feminist researchers should at the same time be critical of both quantitative and qualitative research which is used against women and must be able to marshal the richest and most persuasive evidence in the service of women, (Jayaratne and Stewart, 1995: 230).

It is evident from the above discussion that there are competing positions on whether feminist research is distinctively research on women or not. The position I take in this study is that feminist research is guided by the principle that feminist research methods are methods used in research projects by people who identify themselves as feminist or as part of the women's movement focusing on issues that are important to women as a starting point for doing research as Reinharz (1992) states. Although Reinharz agrees that feminist research methodology is characterized by the utilization of a multiplicity of research methods, which counter the male-dominated research that is used against women, Mickelson (1994) argues that the deconstruction of traditional commitment to truth, objectivity and neutrality are aspects of traditional research that do not apply to feminist research. Concurring with Birks (2002) as cited above, he therefore argues for a more subjective and qualitative approach that does not distort participants' meaning of their own experiences. The following section tackles this issue in some lengthier detail.

4.3   QUALITATIVE DESIGN AND FEMINIST METHODOLOGY

In this section I justify the choice of qualitative methods over quantitative ones. This is the stand I am taking for this study in particular and should not be interpreted as a general statement towards these two techniques. Usher (in Scott and Usher, 1996) and Brandon

(1997) state that women's experiences were initially reflected through the use of quantitative methods that distorted the personal meaning and definition of women's experiences by de-valuing subjectivity and voices to the oppressed. Quantitative research has therefore been criticized on the grounds that it translates individual experiences into predefined categories that distort women's experiences and result in silencing the very essence of women's voices that reveal their emotions and actions (Jayaratne and Stewart, 1995).

Usher (1996) further shows that feminist theory used qualitative approaches because they respected the inclusion of women's experience, which were advocated by interpretive research methodology. Interpretive research, according to Cohen et al (2000), begins with the individuals and sets out to understand their interpretations of the world around them. Similarly, feminist research focuses on the individual experiences and on how meaning is given and understood and interpreted by the individual women themselves. Thus, Cohen et al (2000) conclude that the move towards a collective, egalitarian and emancipatory qualitative research is necessary if women are to avoid colluding in their own oppression by undertaking positivist, uninvolved and objective research.

Olesen (in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) posits that the arena of policy analysis has been largely quantitative and male dominated and as a result has not been receptive to feminist qualitative research. He sees this as a gap that needs to be addressed by present feminist researchers as feminist research has failed to do so in the past. "Qualitative research can make an important contribution to our understanding of the framing and making of policy" (Olesen in Denzin and Lincoln 2001:217).

In trying to establish the similarities between quantitative and qualitative research, Brayton (1997) further argues that both qualitative and quantitative research share 'control' as a common methodological and epistemological agenda. In quantitative research, control is suggested through variables that are objectively and neutrally controlled so as not to distort the results. In qualitative research on the other hand, the

researcher captures the best representation of social reality with the aim of presenting or conveying meaning and experience in the most realistic way. The researcher thus has control over the degree of accuracy of the data in representing the participant's reality. This element of control depicts a degree of sameness between quantitative and qualitative paradigms.

In the light of these arguments, many feminist writers presently agree that feminist research should not be exclusive to any research method as has been seen above. Feminist theory now uses a wide range of methods and "immerses itself in the greatest range of subject matters, challenging the false homogeneity of much that passes for understanding the social world" (Usher, 1996:131).

Thus, there are many debates about the use of quantitative or qualitative methodology in feminist research. I employed a qualitative feminist research methodology for this study because I wanted to show women managers' experiences in and into management through their own perspective aiming to challenge the status quo. Cohen et al (2000) suggest that the need to change the status quo is the starting point for social research. Feminist research validates multiple and diverse perspectives, in particular the value of examining these perspectives to clarify one's own beliefs and values, and for the pedagogical opportunities to help one to consider the viewpoints of other individuals (Gardiner et al, 2000:29).

A qualitative feminist methodology enabled me to understand the complexity of the women's experiences from their own perspective as the voice of the marginalized. It allowed me to explain the women's experiences in their own terms, since it "validates personal experience, and is theoretically informed by an understanding of marginality, given women's history of social and cultural subordination in the public world", (Gardiner et al, 2002). "Individual women's understandings, emotions and actions in the world must be explored in those women's terms" (Jayaratne and Stewart 1995:217). Marshal and Rossman (1989) also posit that human behaviour cannot be understood

outside the framework that informs their own thinking, feelings and actions. For purposes of this study I therefore take a view that the qualitative research approach is a hallmark of feminism because of its inclusion of women's experiences advocated by interpretive research methodologies (Usher, 1996). However, this should not be interpreted as a general advocacy of qualitative approaches over quantitative ones for feminist research.

Mickelson (1994) thus, concludes that although there is enormous diversity in feminist research methods and techniques, and although experiments and survey research are used, qualitative approaches to the production of knowledge are used more often by feminist scholars because they find interviewing more appealing. This according to Mickelson is because interviews offer access into people's ideas, thoughts and memories in their own words while at the same time the interviewer can observe the non-verbal communication and emotions of the participants. If one of the characteristics of feminist research is to have an emancipatory goal, studying the women who have been culturally and socially oppressed is in line with this principle. Qualitative approaches in feminist research are conversational and were therefore found suitable for researching women school principals who face a number of deterrents in their attempt to get into management positions. I used interviewing method to study the women principals' experiences. These interviews focused on 'life stories' of particular aspects of women principals' lives.

4.4 FEMINIST INTERVIEW RESEARCH

The interviews held with participants in this study used a variety of semi-structured and open-ended approaches. Johnson (1994) defines an interview as a social encounter between two people that has a particular focus and purpose. Interviews are "initiated by the interviewer, with a view to gathering certain information from the person being interviewed" (Johnson, 1994:43). Different types of interviews are identified as structured interviews that are more like questionnaires except they are administered by the interviewer. Structured interviews require careful design and leave little scope for the interviewer to deviate from the set pattern of questions. Semi-structured interviews have a bit more scope for participants to express themselves at greater length. Unstructured

interviews are not standardised and are used for in-depth inquiry where the interviewer's role is to ensure that the participant's responses have some relevance to the broad research questions.

Reinharz (1992) states that feminist interview researchers tend to use the terms unstructured, intensive, in-depth, open-ended interchangeably. She defines semi-structured or unstructured interviewing as a qualitative data gathering technique that differs from ethnography in the sense that they do not involve long periods of researcher participation in the life of the participants. Unstructured and/or semi-structured interviewing also differ from survey research and structured interviewing by including free interaction between researcher and participant. In this research approach the researcher plans to ask questions on a given topic but allows the data-gathering conversation itself to determine how the information is obtained.

Holland and Ramazanoglu (1995) state that unstructured interviews are modelled on a conversation between two or more participants. But as a 'social event' the interview has its own interaction rules which may be more or less explicit and more or less recognised by the participants. In this case the interaction rules may be decided by the interviewer who may be more skilful at eliciting responses from women interviewees. In this research, although I allowed women to narrate their experiences in their own terms, I maintained a minimal control in terms of directing and redirecting the participants to keep focus and enable them to talk about their experiences without feeling inhibited. The issues of control and power therefore become crucial in shaping the production of data for interpretation.

In this respect, Holland and Ramazanoglu (1995) identify a conflict between the ethical requirements of a researcher and the needs and interests of the women participants. They cite Measor (1985) who states that the interviewer enters the social world and perspective of the interviewee yet she has to be alert to its configurations, thereby giving the

researcher "the power to define the research situation and to reconstitute the content of the interview in her own terms" (1995:283).

Reinharz (1992) states further that feminist researchers find interviewing more appealing because firstly, it offers them access to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher. She further asserts that interviewing is particularly important for the study of women because "in this way learning from women becomes an antidote to centuries of ignoring women's ideas or having men speak for them" (Reinharz, 1992:19). Secondly, feminist researchers find interviewing appealing because it is consistent with many women's interest in avoiding control over others and developing a sense of connectedness with people. This study was aimed at understanding the content of education gender equity policies and understanding the experiences of women school principals with regard to the phases they go through on their route to management of schools. In order to understand these experiences, a qualitative feminist methodology was sought which allowed women to narrate their experiences in their own words.

4.5   THE RESEARCH DESIGN

This section deals mostly with how the study was implemented and covers the following topics: The research site, the research participants, data collection procedures (including issues of access) and data analysis.

4.5.1   The research site

The study was conducted in KwaZulu Natal, one of the nine provinces in South Africa. KwaZulu Natal is mostly inhabited by the black African Zulu speaking people who form about 80% of the 9.4 million total population of the province (Stats SA, 2001). Most schools in the province are black African schools and most participants in the study were black African women principals. At the time of the study, the province was divided into eight educational regions, which were further divided into districts and the latter into

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circuits headed by the former circuit managers or Superintendents of Education Management (hereafter called SEM).

I was granted permission by the education regional offices to conduct research with the school principals and with some district officials (SEM). I was also granted permission to conduct this study by the female principals who participated in this study themselves. As will be seen, the study only dealt with individual principals and their experiences and not with the whole school as such. I explained the purpose of the study and the processes to be followed to all the relevant participants. Some other general and very valuable information which included statistics and policies were also sought from district and provincial offices such as the office of the Gender Focal Person (GFP) and the Education Management Information Systems (EMIS).

4.5.2 The research participants

The sample of this study was very selective and purposive. Cohen et al (2000) state that in purposive sampling, cases to be included in the sample are handpicked on the basis of the latter's suitability for the researcher's specific needs. Thus, the sample is chosen for a specific purpose. The idea was to purposefully select the participants who would best answer the questions, hence the gender bias in the population and sample of women principals.

Although the study is focused mainly on the experiences of women principals, the sample also comprised men who are key decision makers in the employment of school principals. For purposes of this research these men were the SEMs and school governing body chairpersons. However, I did not necessarily make a deliberate attempt to have men in my sample, but these men just happened to be occupying these powerful positions in the district and governance of schools respectively.

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The main research participants were women principals of secondary schools in KZN who got promoted into principalship after 1994. This included twenty-four African, two White and two Indian women principals. This sample restricted me to a certain category of women principals which narrowed down my sample from a larger population of women principals who would have otherwise wished to participate in the study. Twenty-eight women principals were interviewed in all. The other group of participants were SEMs and School Governing Body (SGB) chairpersons who had recently participated in the selection and recruitment of school principals. This also purposively narrowed the sample down to a limited group of participants who participated in the employment of principals within the stipulated time frame. However, with the latter two groups of participants, the research site was limited to one region due to time and financial constraints. It would have meant extensive travelling which would have required more time to expand the sample to other regions. I felt that the sample from one region was sufficient to triangulate evidence from women principals. No gender restrictions were placed on these participants. Ten SEMs and ten SGB chairpersons both of which groups included men and women were interviewed. Three of the ten SEMs were women and two of the ten SGBs were women. Thus, all in all a total of forty-eight (48) participants were interviewed. A detailed description of these participants and how and why they were chosen is presented in the sections to follow.

4.5.2.1 About the researcher

By now it must be obvious that I am presenting this study in the first person. I am deliberately showing involvement and taking responsibility of what I am writing as Letherby (2003) argues should be the case. Letherby adds that feminist research should be about production of "accountable knowledge in which the reader has access to details of the contextually located reasoning process which gives rise to the findings" (2003:9). The acknowledgement of the self in research and writing makes it clear that the production of knowledge is a dialectic loaded in favour of the researcher. Letherby quotes

Stanley and Wise (1993) who argue that "to ignore this personal involvement is to downgrade the personal" (Letherby, 2003:8).

To situate myself within this research, I am a young black African woman aspiring to become an academic. When I undertook this study, I was in my late twenties and very conscious of my inexperience in feminist research and in academia after teaching only on a part-time basis as a full-time student. But I was mature enough to want to face the challenges of this white male-dominated profession in South Africa at the time. I developed an interest in gender issues when I was doing my Master of Education degree with the guidance of my promoter – a black African woman in her early fifties, through whose experiences I realised that upward mobility for African women in academia was quite a challenge.

Having said that, I would like to briefly state why I undertook this research as a way of locating myself, my interests and biases within this research. My reasons for undertaking feminist research were twofold: firstly, when I did my research for a master's degree, which looked at women teacher's experiences on the B. Ed (Honours) programme, I noticed that the majority of principals in the primary schools were female and male in the secondary schools. This for me became an issue because the majority of teachers across the education sector were females. If women could teach why did they have to be managed by men, especially at the higher secondary levels? In my interviews with the women I studied I also observed that these women did not view their experiences through the gender lens. This led them into perpetuating their own oppression since they viewed all these oppressive practices as normal simply because they were women.

While I wanted to explore this notion of non-feminist participants further, in my doctoral research I became very conscious of not imposing my own views and meaning on the women principal participants' experiences. Oakley (2004) argues that there is often a lack of fit between theory and practice that results from a feminist researcher interviewing women who are themselves not feminist. My own biases in this kind of research were

further informed by my own views and perceptions that made me aware of the ethical implications of imposing my own beliefs on the participants. I therefore approached this study with a very open mind and to my surprise most women were actually aware of gender issues. However, I believe my position as a woman researcher put them more at ease to talk freely about gender issues and that had a lot of bearing on the richness of the data collected.

Secondly, through my literature search, I realized that women in South African educational management were under-researched, particularly black African women. As they were a previously disadvantaged group, I envisaged it would be interesting to find out what, if any, were the positive results of the initiatives of the new democratic government in terms of addressing gender inequality in the management of schools. My biased interest in these aspects was based on my gender. As a young aspiring female academic, I felt the urge to contribute to the theoretical debates around the management of schools in South Africa through the gender lens and to contribute towards the production of new knowledge informed by women's experiences. I therefore acknowledge my own biases as the primary data collector and interpreter in conducting this research through a feminist lens.

At this stage in my life I had realised that women had traditionally been and continued to be excluded from positions of power and from the public sphere in general. However, I had also realised that attempts were being made by government and the private sector to get women to participate in all spheres of life, but progress was rather slow. Women continue to be less represented in education management and that was a concern for me. Investigating this disparity from women's own point of view became my area of interest. Could it be the attempts are more superficial or window-dressing? Could it be because most of the employers are still men who believe women's place is still in the home? These were questions informing my own perspective about this discrepancy. As a novice in research I knew it was not enough to just sit and speculate and therefore when I got the opportunity to do this research for a doctorate degree I decided to examine these issues.

4.5.2.2 The research assistant

I would have wanted to do all the research interviews myself, but I had a language barrier. Most of the school governing bodies in the rural areas were not comfortable in having the interviews in English. As a Zulu third language speaker, I did not feel comfortable in conducting the research myself and that is where I needed a Zulu first language speaker. The research assistant was a male African master's student who was doing his own research in policy studies. I briefed him about the research and guided him on how I wanted the research to be conducted and what sort of issues to probe. Before he came on board I had interviewed three school governing body chairpersons myself so I was able to brief him with a bit of insight. I sat with him in the first two interviews and afterwards we together analysed how they went. He conducted five interviews on his own. I was confident that threats to content validity would be minimised by the training I had provided.

4.5.2.3 The women principals

Although a feminist study does not necessarily mean a study that is exclusively on women, this study was a female study and I was therefore not worried by the gender imbalance in favour of females. The focus of the interviews was on the female participants' firsthand experience in preparing and applying for principalship as well as functioning as principals. The women principals of secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal formed the unit of analysis for the study. The sample of the women principals who participated in the study was drawn from the whole province after I obtained information of their schools and addresses from the provincial EMIS. Initially I had intended to have interviews with women principals from all regions who were the principal posts after 1994. The reason was to see whether these women principals got employed as a result of the changes brought by policy interventions to try and bridge the gender gap in the management of schools. The intention was to have the sample representative of women from both rural and urban KwaZulu-Natal. But most of those who were willing to

participate were from the rural areas and very few were from the urban schools located in towns and townships. That is why the bigger part of the sample was women principals from the rural areas.

After getting the details from one of the provincial education offices, I initially sent out letters and a brief questionnaire to all women principals informing them about the study and asking for their biographical details as well as asking them to participate in the study (see Appendix B). According to the information obtained from the provincial office, most details were incorrect as some schools were not even headed by women as indicated. As a result, the initial return rate was very low. A total of four hundred and thirty two (432) questionnaires were sent to the schools and only seventy-eight (78) of them, making only eighteen percent (18%) were sent back in time. Out of these 78, more than half of them were men and others were women who did not want to be interviewed. That left me with only twelve (12) women who were eligible for the study. It was evident from this exercise that the actual number of secondary schools headed by women was actually much lower that what was initially provided.

With this low return rate, I called one regional office and asked for telephone numbers of the different districts within the chosen region. This was an attempt to increase the sample of the women principals since the districts were much closer to the schools. From the district offices I asked for the particulars (telephone numbers) of secondary schools run by women. This then provided me with a list of other women principals who had not returned the questionnaire and those who had not received it at all due to different logistical problems. This information further proved that the actual number of women principals of secondary schools was very low. I also observed during this exercise that most district offices did not have the gender disaggregated data on school principals. Names were there but no records existed to indicate the gender of the principals, such that with the faxed information records would only show for example, *Mkhize, PM* as the name of the principal with no title. I had to call back most of these district offices and it

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was only then that officials would give principals' names and were in a position to tell whether they were male or female.

I then had to call the principals using the telephone numbers provided by the district offices, telling them about the study and asking them to participate. I ended with a sample of thirty (30) women principals in all who were interested in participating. There was at least one principal from each of the eight regions with the majority (15) coming from one region. The point was not to generalize these women's accounts to all the women principals in South Africa, but to contribute new information that could help in the making of policy based on some women's experiences and practices in their own environment.

All these women were asked to fill in the questionnaire providing their biographical details and other relevant information. The overall response rate to this survey reflected still more African women principals' willingness to participate in the study. After this process I had a total of fifty-eight (58) filled questionnaires from the female principals in the whole province. Out of these, only 12 of them were non-Africans. To limit the number even further, some of them got the principalship post before 1994 and were therefore not regarded as part of the study because they would not have been affected by policies that were put in place after 1994. Some of those who fell within the desired target group did not want to participate in the study. Seventy eight percent (78%) of the responses were from female principals in the rural areas, while only twenty-two (22%) were from the urban areas and townships. The information from the department did not indicate the physical location of the schools headed by women so my initial intention to have a representative sample of rural and urban principals fell off. Finally, I had twenty-eight (28) women accessible and willing to participate.

The initial intention was to have an almost racially representative sample of women principals in order to highlight the differences existing within different cultures which I had predicted to be a problem in the notion of women as principals of secondary schools.

However, most women principals from the White and Indian races were not keen to participate and that resulted in the racial bias on the side of the participants. Of the twenty-eight (28) women willing to participate, twenty-four (24) of them were black Africans and only the remaining four were two (2) White and two (2) Indian. These were the twenty-eight women principals who participated in the study. The following table presents a summary of the biographic profiles of the principals:

Table 4.1: Women principals' biographic profiles

Teacher	Population Group	Age	Marital status	Highest Qualification	1st year of teaching	Date of principalship
1. Fundi	African	41-45	Single	BA + FET	1983	1998
2. Pat	African	46-50	Married	BA + HED	1978	2000
3. Sindi	African	51-55	Single	BA	1982	1995
4. Zipho	African	36-40	Married	FED	1990	2001
5. Sile	African	36-40	Single	B.PAED+FDE	1989	2000
6. Thandi	African	56+	Single	B. ED	1966	1998
7. Nandipha	African	41-45	Single	M. ED	1984	2003
8. Lindi	African	36-40	Single	B. ED	1992	2000
9. Carol	African	31-35	Married	FED	1991	2001
10. Thembi	African	46-50	Single	FED	1976	2000
11. Duduzile	African	41-45	Married	B. PAED	1982	1987
12. Phumi	African	56+	Married	BA + HED	1966	1987
13. Vuyelwa	African	51-55	Single	B. ED	1973	1993
14. Gugu	African	36-40	Single	B. ED	1992	1998
15. Zama	African	36-40	Married	BA	1983	2001
16. Sibo	African	46-50	Single	B. ED	1979	1995
17. Lungi	African	36-40	Married	B. ED	1987	1998
18. Thandiwe	African	41-45	Married	B. ED	1977	1996
19. Xoli	African	31-35	Single	B. ED	1990	1996
20. Gumi	African	36-40	Single	B. ED	1987	2000
21. Thully	African	46-50	Single	B. ED	1986	2002
22. Zandi	African	46-50	Married	FDE	1974	2001
23. Biziwe	African	36-40	Married	BA	1988	2002
24. Thando	African	-30	Married	B.ED	1997	2001
25. Shervanni	Indian	51-55	Married	BA (Hons)	1973	1999
26. Devi	Indian	51-55	Married	B. ED (Hons)	1971	2001
27. Molly	White	51-55	Single	UED	1973	2002
28. Hally	White	56+	Married	UED	1966	1998

Age

Age is an important factor in understanding the individual women's career and its development. In order to get ready for principalship, women had to grow in the teaching profession and gain experience. Their age in relation to the time they joined teaching and the time they became principals is relevant to understanding the dynamics involved in the progress women teachers make in the profession. The number of years they spent as teachers before promotion is also important in understanding these dynamics. It is noted as a limitation that a comparison with the male counterparts could have illuminated these differences better, but the study was not about comparing men to women principals, but rather focused on women's own experiences.

The age of the majority of the women participants shows that the policies of the apartheid regime would have impacted directly on their choice of career and their development thereafter, and that the impact of these policies filtered through to the relatively younger women who would be expected to have much more choice in career. The table also reflects the fact that the majority of the principals were elderly and in their middle age. Only three (3) principals were less than thirty-five (35), and the rest were thirty six (36) and above, and the majority of these (8) were between 36 and 40 and two above 56.

Marital Status

I had anticipated that the majority of women principals would be single given the nature of their work that does not tally with the responsibilities and demands imposed on their personal life by family life. But there was no significant difference in the studied women principal's marital status. More than half of the women principals were married with families and even those who were unmarried, had children of their own or those of relatives living with them.

Half of the women, as the table shows, were married and lived with their families which in some cases included husbands and children. Younger women lived with their children and husbands while older ones only lived with their husbands since children had moved out of the home.

The other remaining women principals were single (never married or divorced), but had or had had children and therefore had similar responsibilities with regard to child rearing. So most of those women dealt with similar issues as those of married women who lived with their husbands and children at the time they got employed as principals as will be seen in the following chapters.

4.5.2.4 The SEMs and their participation in the study

The choice of SEMs as participants in the study was based purely on their intense involvement as departmental representatives in the recruitment and selection of school principals and their close interaction with principals thereafter. The SEMs' involvement in these processes was revealed by the preliminary analysis done on the female principals' interviews. The preliminary analysis done on the female principals' interview responses revealed the direct engagement of SEMs as district officials on behalf of the education department in the recruitment of school principals although the main employer is the school governing body. SEMs were therefore regarded as the ideal group in the department to corroborate evidence from the female principals, as they work very closely with the school governing bodies in the recruitment of school principals.

Sampling the SEMs

The sample of the SEMs was drawn from one region because if its accessibility. The intention was to get a different perspective from a group involved in the recruitment and selection process that would triangulate evidence from the women principals. One region was therefore regarded sufficient for this purpose and this was based on the assumption that the departmental procedure would be more or less similar in all regions.

The one region that was involved at this level had five district offices, each of which was made of an average of four circuits with the smallest district having three circuits and the biggest having six. From each of the districts, circuit managers were selected using the random sampling method. The circuits were listed under each district and every second

circuit was chosen for its manager to participate in the study. The number of circuit managers from each district was determined by the number of circuits in the particular district. The following figure is an illustration:

Fig 10: A diagram illustrating how SEMs were chosen

		Circuits				
District 1	CA	CB*	CC	CD*	CE	
District 2	CA	CB*	CC			
District 3	CA	CB*	CC	CD*	CE	
District 4	CA	CB*	CC	CD*	CE	CF*
District 5	CA	CB*	CC	CD*	CE	

*Marks the chosen circuits

As this was a random sample, I did not necessarily take care to include a balanced gender sample and most of the participants at the circuit level were men. Thus, out of the ten circuit managers interviewed, only three of them were women. This was, however, not an unrealistic gender representation of the circuit managers in the whole region, since from the twenty-four (24) circuits of the five districts in the region at the time of the interview, only five (5) of the managers, which makes about 25%, were women. All the five districts in this region were managed by men, under a male regional manager. This further enhanced the fact that the higher the education ladder goes, the fewer the women. A clear illustration of the hierarchy in the education department at that time is illustrated in figure 2 below.

Permission was sought from the regional manager to conduct research with the SEMs. The latter were then contacted through telephone and asked to participate in the study by way of responding to a few questions in an interview set up. Given the nature of their work, which was mostly characterised by the school visits and lots of meetings, circuit managers were hardly found in their offices. Thus, some of the initially chosen circuit

managers were replaced by others from the same districts in cases where they were not found or could not make time for some other reason. No particular care was taken to include circuit managers from all geographical areas (rural, urban and township) as the composition of the circuits had already taken that into consideration. The composition of the circuits also took into consideration the inclusion of different school types (e.g ex - DET, ex- HOD and ex-Model C schools) in one circuit. Thus, all in all, ten circuit managers were interviewed comprising seven men and three women, and all types of schools from all geographical areas were represented.

4.5.2.5   School governing bodies

The third group of participants in the study was a group of school governing bodies (hereafter referred to as SGB). SGBs were involved in the study because of their direct involvement in the employment of school principals. The South African Schools Act of 1996 mandates every school to have a governing body made of all stakeholders representing the school. The Act further gives this SGB the powers to elect suitable candidates to fill all the teaching posts within their respective schools including that of principals.

The research draws mainly on the experiences and perspectives of the women school principals who got their posts after 1994, but I also use evidence from circuit managers and school governing body chairpersons on the implementation of policy. The latter two groups are involved because they are most closely involved in the recruitment and selection of school principals and because they provided a different perspective of a policy implementer versus that of policy recipient from women principals. Thus, interviews with SGBs and SEMs were done to triangulate evidence from the women principals on some of their experiences and to gain a perspective on some of the powerful men and women involved in the processes of selection of principals. The three sources of data thus allowed the enrichment and triangulation of the data, which would not be possible if any of the groups were omitted.

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4.5.3   Access

4.5.3.1 Getting access to the women principals

After getting authorisation and securing participation of the participants, the crucial issues for me became accessibility to the women principals since most of them were from the rural areas. I asked the participants to choose their most suitable venues and time for the interviews. Women principals preferred venues outside the school premises because there would be no interruptions.

In the initial questionnaire sent to principals they had provided their telephone numbers which I used to contact them for interview appointments. Getting the principals on the phone was not easy as some schools did not have telephones and some personal cellular phones were out of reception network because of the rural location of some of the schools. That being the case I resorted to other measures which included "hijacking" some workshops for women in management held by district offices and meeting with the women there to set appointments for the interviews.

Setting appointments with the principals appeared problematic even with those who showed interest in being interviewed. The will of participants therefore played a crucial role in getting them to finally commit by way of appointment. Principals hold the most senior positions at school level and this makes them powerful officials. As Walford (1994) indicates, the powerful in education are very busy people and as a researcher I was practically relying on their mercy and goodwill for them to make time for the interviews. Some would change and postpone appointments at the last minute while others would even miss appointments. I tried to confirm appointments a day earlier or give a reminder in the morning of the interview day in order to avoid travelling long distances only to be told when I got to the school that the principal had an urgent meeting with departmental officials.

4.5.3.2 Gaining access to the SEMs

SEMs are government officials who according to Walford (1994) may be regarded as very powerful indeed. As a doctoral student interviewing the SEMs and school principals this was "researching-up" rather than "researching down" as would have been the case if I was researching learners or teachers in training. However, my status as a doctoral student played a role in allowing me easy access into most of the participants' spaces.

Accessing the circuit managers was not easy as they were mostly out in the field, as indicated above. The starting point at this level was to contact the district managers to seek permission to interview their circuit managers in their respective districts. This exercise proved quite useful on several occasions where circuit managers raised questions on issues such as "why me?" or "I need to check with my superior before I allow you to interview me". In these cases they were then told that permission had been gained from their authority.

The following structure illustrates the provincial management hierarchy within the department of education as it existed at the time of the study in KwaZulu-Natal and how school principals directly report to circuit managers:

Fig 11: The educational management hierarchy in KZN

Superintendent General

↑

Regional Directors

↑

District Managers

↑

Circuit Managers/ SEM

↑

School Principals
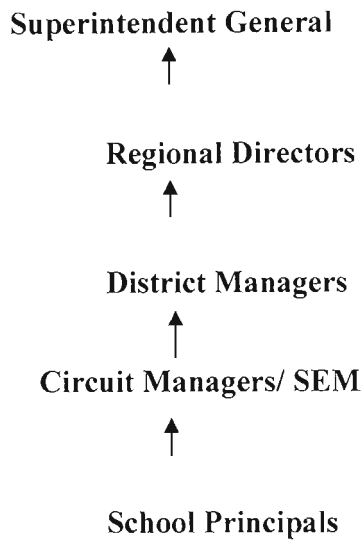
The initial step of contacting the district managers was not problematic. Most district managers were found in their offices except in one case where the district manager was on leave. In this case, the circuit managers were contacted directly. The region selected out of the then eight in KwaZulu-Natal was selected because it was most accessible to me. It was made of five districts that covered both rural and urban areas. The managers of these five districts were consulted and in two of them I was asked to address the circuit managers in a meeting to explain what I wanted. I made a presentation to the district manager and circuit managers in two districts and in the rest the district manager gave permission right away to contact the circuit managers. After making the presentation I was asked to leave my contact details for circuit managers to contact me when they had time. Only one female circuit manager called. I then took the initiative and called the circuit managers and made appointments and this worked better as I was able to set appointments and finish the ten interviews in less than two weeks.

4.5.3.3 Accessing the SGB

Deem (1994) defines school governors as the locally powerful as they have a word in employing the school personnel. Most governing body chairpersons are elected as such because they are prominent members of the community in one way or another. They

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could be local councillors, business people, and teachers in other schools or holding some important position in their workplace and as such are respected by the schools and the communities around. All SGB chairpersons were accessed through school principals and these were not necessarily SGB chairpersons of the schools whose principals participated in the study, but were SGBs who participated in the employment of principals themselves. Although the purpose of the study was thoroughly explained to both the school principal and SGB chairperson concerned, some still refused to participate.

I deliberately sought to interview SGB members who had actually participated in the recruitment and selection of principals. I therefore asked SEMs to help me identify such SGB members. SGB members who had participated in more than one selection and recruitment process were ideal for the study, but they were also rare, as the tenure for one member to serve on the board is only three years unless they get re-elected. It was not easy to access some of the chairpersons who were working, and in this case arrangements were made to meet after work or during the weekend. For some of the schools governing body chairpersons were not working and they were willing to participate and were met at the school principals' office.

4.5.4   Data collection

The initial step to collecting data for the study was to get policy documents for analysis, and these were obtained from the provincial government offices as well as the government website. Although the study was based in KwaZulu-Natal, policy documents analysed were national. The choice of these documents was based on the model used for analysis (The Management Route Model, by Van Eck and Volman, 1999), which is explained in detail in the following chapter. As will be seen, the model describes the three phases which women go through in preparing them to function in management posts. The documents selected were legislative (Acts) and White Papers made after 1994 addressing gender and other issues of inequity.

The second step involved sending questionnaires to women principals asking for their biographical details and asking them to participate in the study. This was followed by conducting interviews with women principals of KwaZulu-Natal public secondary schools. Subsequent to these interviews, SEMs and SGBs were interviewed. Some SGB members were not comfortable in doing the interviews in English and this is when the assistant researcher became necessary.

The management route model alluded to above was also used to collect and analyse data on the experiences of women principal participants. Thus, data were collected according to the three phases identified by the model as will be seen in the chapters presenting the data.

4.5.4.1 Interviewing the women principals

While I agree with Letherby (2000) and many others that all methods can be used to gather evidence in feminist research, I chose to use interviews for this study. Long distances were travelled to the places of interviews with the women principals. Verma and Mallick (1999) indicate that amongst other problems, interviews are heavy consumers of resources as it is normal for the researcher to go to the researched, thereby increasing the amount of time and expense taken up by travelling. This was absolutely true for the interviews conducted in this study. I travelled long distances of up to eight hours a trip in one day.

For some women principals, the place of interview posed a possible threat to content validity as not all places provided freedom to speak for the women principals. There were significant differences between the places of interviews which had a huge impact on the outcome of the audibility of the interviews on tape. Most interviews were held in the principals' offices at school. The disadvantage of this was that in most cases the principals shared the office with the school's administration clerk. And due to the length of the interviews in some cases it was not practically possible to dismiss the clerks as they needed to be answering telephone calls for the school while the principal was busy

with the interview. These principals were therefore not as free to talk about some issues in the presence of the administration clerk(s). Here I would ask the principals the same question when they walked me out to the car and before driving off I would quickly scribble it on my notebook to be part of the transcription. This was a validity threat issue that I addressed by sending back the final transcripts to the principals and asking them to verify, correct and make some additions to the original transcripts.

Other interviews were held at home where there were interruptions from children but these generally provided more privacy than the schools. Others were held in the car where there would be some noise from other cars or people passing by, or in public libraries and restaurants where the output was disturbed by a variety of factors from music in the restaurant and noise from public library visitors. These were clearly threats to content validity but were also minimized by sending back the transcripts to the participants.

I used broad open-ended questions allowing respondents to talk about unanticipated directions as they recounted their experiences. I first asked questions about the women principals' background in order to understand how they arrived at this level and what their experiences of getting the management posts have been. Participants were generally more open and acknowledged in great detail their awareness of gender inequalities around them.

4.5.4.2 Interviewing the SEMs

The negative effect of the tape recorder used for recording the interviews was noted with some SEM participants who felt uncomfortable with the use of the instrument. I assured participants of confidentiality of access to the data but others asked to have the tape after transcriptions for fear that the information could fall into the wrong hands. The participants were granted this request. However, these participants who initially expressed discomfort with the use of the tape recorder gave lots of other valuable data

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after the formal interview, which were not recorded. This could have been a serious validity threat had I not actually allowed them to talk and took notes from what they said.

The intention was to visit the circuit managers and have a face-to-face interview with them, but because of their scarcity (as indicated above) and the inaccessibility of the area of the informant, their tight schedule during the day or other logistical considerations, two of the interviews were done telephonically. SEM interviews were semi structured and for those done through the telephone responses were written by hand as the respondents spoke. Interviews that were done face to face were tape recorded and later transcribed. In this case transcription was not done verbatim (as was the case with the female principals' interviews), but only relevant details were transcribed and responses written below the questions. The reason for this was to ensure consistency/ uniformity as interviews done telephonically were not tape-recorded, but only important relevant points were handwritten during the interview and detailed notes written afterwards. For analysis purposes, all responses were typed and a transcript was developed for each participant. Analysis was done manually with codes being developed from the data.

The questions asked the circuit inspectors covered aspects on recruitment and selection processes, policies and programmes put in place to address gender inequity, the support offered to women principals both in and into management and the status of women in management in their respective circuits. These were questions formed out of factors emerging after the initial analysis of the female principals' interviews. As has been indicated, the purpose of the interviews with the circuit managers was to corroborate evidence given by the female principals on their experiences on recruitment processes and support given thereafter. These interviews were fairly short compared to those of female principals and lasted about thirty minutes on average.

4.5.4.3 Interviewing the SGB

SGB interviews were all done in person by the researcher or the research assistant where applicable because of the language barrier. Because the sample was so purposive, issues of accessibility were looked into well in advance and they became the main deciding factors on which SGBs were to be visited. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim for the analysis that was made later.

For the SEMs and SGBs the focus was in their experience and perspectives in recruiting and selecting of principals and supporting them once they were on board.

4.5.5   Data analysis

As the initial step to data analysis all interviews were transcribed verbatim. Although qualitative research analysis is sometimes accused of being unsystematic and unscientific, Jayaratne and Stewart (1994) ague that qualitative analysis is rigorously systematic in its own way. They cite Hornstein (1991) who spells out a detailed procedure in the analysis of a phenomenological account. It should be noted that this study is not necessarily rooted within phenomenology, but I use some of the phenomenological features to clarify some of the procedures followed in data analysis. The first stage that Hornstein outlines is where the researcher uncovers the structure of an experience and scrutinizes each participant's report to uncover its meaning and identify the themes. Secondly, the researcher constructs the analytic categories that emerge from the identified themes. These themes are allowed to emerge from the data. Lastly, the researcher describes the relationships amongst the various categories in order to identify the pattern of the experience. This approach is clearly highly systematic and I followed this procedure in analysing the data in this study.

I analysed data during and after data collection. During data collection I would write notes on emerging themes and some reflections on the data collection process. With the

transcribed data, I developed codes based on some of the themes that continued to emerge from the data and some patterns observed during data collection.

4.6   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) posit that a feminist methodology implies that the researcher bear moral responsibility for their politics and practices. "Feminist investigations of the social world are concerned not just with truth, but also with how knowledge is produced and authorised" (2002:14). I sought authorisation from the relevant authorities for conducting this research in the education environment. Although my focus was on principals and not the schools as such, the participants were still nonetheless servants of the public within the education sector and it was essential to seek necessary authorisation.

I explained the purpose of the research thoroughly to all participants before I obtained their consent. To the women principals a questionnaire that was administered to collect biographical data was also used to ask them if they would like to participate further in the study and be interviewed. This was to address Punch's (1988) warning that careful attention and preparation has to be given to the research process before the actual fieldwork in order to avoid a whole range of unexpected political and ethical issues. I respected the rights of the "would have been participants" who did not want to participate in the study and those who for various reasons did not like their interviews to be tape-recorded. Cohen et al (2000) note that the question of ethics in research is a highly complex subject. Some participants had concerns about disseminating information that could be traced back to them and put their jobs on the line if certain facts were reported. These included some women principals who felt that their experiences were sensitive since they felt they were victimized by particular authorities of theirs who were still in the education system. They feared that they could be victimized further. Other concerns included department officials (SEMs) who wanted to give typical examples of particular cases of discrimination but felt that cases are too obvious to conceal.

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Participants in this regard were assured of maximum confidentiality and anonymity which included presenting data in a non-traceable manner through aggregation and the use of pseudonyms where names were necessary. Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that anonymity and confidentiality are often promised the respondents quite superficially by the researcher. The reason being use of a different name may not exactly conceal the identity of the respondents and sometimes unless the case is clearly explained to the respondent the latter may not see how anonymous they will be to other people reading the report outside the case. To avoid cases like these, the actual names of district offices and regions were not used. Indeed pseudonyms were used in the presentation of findings as Miles and Huberman (1994) and Cohen et al (2001) state that it is the obligation of the researcher to protect the anonymity of the participants unless arrangements to the contrary are made in advance. I also explained thoroughly that it was necessary for me to use the tape recorder because it was mainly to be able to capture all the necessary data and allow a flow of the conversation without having to stop the participants in order to write something down or ask them to repeat. Cohen and Manion (1994) state that in writing the interviews, the researcher may unconsciously emphasise responses that agree with her expectations and fail to note those that do not.

Although anonymity and confidentiality were assured all participants at all costs, some participants still felt reluctant to disclose some of their experiences and observations and specifically asked not to be quoted on particular issues even though they wanted to talk about it. Cohen et al (2000) indicate that 'betrayal' is applied to occasions where data disclosed in confidence are revealed. They call this a breach of trust which is often a result of selfish motives of personal or professional nature. This breach of trust is also what Kogan (1994) refers to as immoral and self-defeating not to observe. There were a few cases where participants would say "I wish to say off the record". I had to oblige and switch off the tape recorder even though what they said would in most cases be the most valuable piece of information and even though I personally felt I could conceal their identity so that whatever they said could not be traced back to them. But where they insisted and showed serious discomfort I would switch off the tape because I also wanted

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to develop a mutual trust relationship. Kogan says, "people have a right to be sensitive to the effect of what they are recorded saying, and their apprehensions do not have to be fully rational to be legitimate" (Kogan, 1994:75-6).

To address issues of ethical procedures and to seek further authorisation, numerous letters were written and endorsed by my supervisor to be given permission to conduct research within some of the premises of the Department of Education[8]. However, one problem experienced in this regard was that no response was provided despite numerous telephone calls following up on the written letters. In some instances this let to information not being obtained while in other instances I had to visit the offices in person and there I would be given a verbal go-ahead. Only one letter of authorisation was received from the DOE and it is attached as Appendix I.

4.7   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have discussed the use of feminist and qualitative research as preferred methodology found suitable for this study. I have also defended the use of qualitative research without necessarily giving it precedence over other research techniques. For this study, the aim was to focus on women principals as the main recipients of policy and it was therefore pertinent to the study to hear their voices and let their experiences be heard without tempering and quantifying them which would have been the case if the quantitative paradigm had been used.

I have also attempted to explain feminist research and used different interpretations of the concept in trying to locate this study within the feminist knowledge production. This discussion was followed by procedures followed in implementing this study and the justification of the use of interviewing as a data collecting tool. Finally, ethical considerations were addressed as suggested by Cohen and Manion (2001).

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[8] See for example Appendix G and H.

CHAPTER 5

GENDER DISCOURSE IN POST-APARTHEID EDUCATION POLICY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on policy addressing gender inequality at national level as the starting point for transformation. It focuses on legislation and white papers put in place between 1994 and 1998. A few policy documents that address issues of inequality are selected and analysed using the "management route model" (Van Eck and Volman, 1996) and the framework adopted from De Clercq (1997). The policies analysed in this chapter serve several other functions but the analysis is made on the basis of the three functions suggested by De Clercq and the three career phases suggested by the "management route model". The model identifies three different career phases (preparation, acquisition and performance) that women go through to get to management positions. These phases were used to determine the selection of these analysed documents. The discussion in this chapter is based on how these policies address gender equity at the different levels of the public service which include education. In this chapter I firstly define national policies and describe the models used for analysis. I then make a detailed descriptive analysis of the policies and their gender related content.

5.2 DEFINING NATIONAL POLICIES

Sutherland (1999) argues that "national" is a wide and vague term whose different interpretations have to be recognised. In some countries national policy is expressed in a written constitution, and for a national gender policy the constitution would be affirming equality between men and women thereby leaving very little need to develop a specific policy on gender. National policies are not only expressed by central governments since in other cases federal states and provincial governments are responsible for making national policies. In South Africa, no specific policy for gender was developed between

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1994 and 1998, but gender equity was addressed broadly through a number of legislative acts and broad generic policies.

For purposes of this study the definition of national policy includes legislation as one form in which the government realised policy, as well as broad generic policy in the form of white papers framed at the national level. I acknowledge the limitation in the choice of policy initiatives, but this analysis is done on the premise that every form of policy at the provincial and/or lower levels is informed by the legislation as well as policy at the national level. That is why the analysis includes both legislative Acts and broad generic policies in the form of White Papers. I further acknowledge that there could have been amendments to legislation post 1998, but the understanding is that policy has to be allowed some time in order for it to have an impact.

5.3 THE LEGAL CONTEXT: 1994-1998

This section reviews some of the main legal documents that were meant to address all forms of social justice. The selected documents are analysed with a specific focus on non-sexism in education and its redress, although the documents themselves were meant to address other principles such as non-racism, democracy and many more. The six major documents analysed in this section were chosen because of the emphasis they place on equity in education and training (which play an important role in both the anticipation and acquisition phases) or equity in employment (which is important for the acquisition and performance phases).

5.3.1   The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

The cornerstone to all the legal documents and policy recommendations is the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, which basically guides all other Acts and policies by guaranteeing equal benefit of the law. The Constitution affects the lives of all citizens because it is aimed at social transformation. It sets the general

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context for the development of other policies that are more specific to particular sections of the public service and the private sector. It promotes, amongst others, the principles of redress and equity. Section 9 of the Bill of Rights is the primary starting point that enshrines human rights and equal protection before the law and prohibits unfair discrimination against all grounds including gender. The Constitution states unequivocally that:

> *Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law, (Section 9.1).*

> *Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken, (Section 9.2).*

> *The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including gender, sex, etc, (Section 9.3).*

The Constitution thus, establishes a legal control over the equal treatment of all people by guaranteeing equal protection and benefit of the law for every citizen, as well as prohibiting unfair discrimination on all grounds.

Section 29 also offers citizens the right of access to education as a tool for the development of the nation, which many marginalised groups see as a means to escaping the limitations of poverty and exclusion (DoE, 2001). The government thus perceives education as a primary tool in challenging gender oppression and enhancing the development opportunities of girls and women, since it provides equal opportunities to both boys and girls and eliminates inequalities between men and women.

The Constitution further recognizes gender inequality in particular and proposes the establishment of a Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) as an independent state institution that deals with gender issues and works across all sectors of government including education. According to the Act, the function of the CGE is to promote respect for gender equality and protection, development and attainment of gender equality and to advise and make recommendations to Parliament or any other legislature with regard to any laws or proposed legislation which affects gender equality and the status of women (Chapter 9:187). This is a clear expression of its non-sexist vision but it does not address in detail how the CGE as an independent state institution is to go about promoting gender equality, and thereby ignores the fact that men and women do not have equal opportunities.

The Constitution therefore remains rhetorical about the changes needed in the ideal nation since it does not spell out how these changes should be achieved. As a legislative document it guarantees equal access to education and although this provision is important for the personal level in preparation for management, education cannot alone change the gender imbalance. The act makes provisions for affirmative action practices, which is important for the affirmation of women into management, but does not outline how these affirmative action practices are to be carried out. The Constitution's emphasis on equal treatment and affirmative practices of the disadvantaged is very important for both the anticipation and the acquisition phases since the provision directly translates into preparing and getting women in management posts which they did not occupy in sufficient numbers before. But the detail on how to achieve and go about these practices is lacking. The Constitution's attempt to bridge the gap is again very rhetorical and symbolic since it does not provide the go-ahead for both the anticipation and acquisition phases.

The Constitution recognizes gender inequality as a big challenge for a democratic society but ignores the fact that not everybody has equal opportunity by assuming that gender equality will be achieved through its expression of an ideal non-sexist society. Gender

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equality is about relations between males and females, and laws alone cannot change unfavourable gender relations. Laws however, should specifically define ways in which gender sensitisation should be dealt with, and provide a framework enabling the achievement of desired outcomes. Thus, although the Constitution provides a strong basis for gender equality in South Africa, it fails to realize that ideals expressed in laws alone cannot change gender relations. Thus, the Constitution guarantees formal gender equality before the law for everyone, and establishes the body that deals with gender issues, but does not offer ways to go about compensating for the historical disadvantage.

5.3.2 Employment Equity Act, 1998

Gender equity in employment is mainly stressed in the Employment Equity Act of 1998. Like other legislation and white papers which attempt to redress past and current discrimination in the work place, this Act generally prohibits unfair discrimination in any employment policy or practice on all grounds, particularly race, gender and disability. It aims at achieving equity in the work place through eliminating unfair discrimination and promoting equal opportunity. The Act further tries to ensure that black people, all women and people with disabilities have equitable representation in all occupational levels.

With regard to equity, the Act first of all requires each department and private sector to take active steps in eliminating all forms of discrimination against previously disadvantaged groups, which are described clearly as blacks, women and disabled people. Secondly, it calls for *annual equity plans* negotiated between employers and employees setting out steps to minimise discrimination and enhancing representation, and a *series of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms* to ensure progress. Thirdly, it calls for the *analysis of employment policies, practices and procedures* in order to identify employment barriers, which adversely affect people from designated groups. This is an attempt from the Act to ensure equitable representation of people from designated groups.

The Employment Equity Act also requires employers to stop discriminating against women in the provision of training and to refrain from other forms of structural discrimination. The Act considers education and training as part of the broader package of mechanisms to reduce gender inequality. It therefore promotes the general advance for women although it does not ensure that women have both the skills and experience required for the male-dominated positions, as well as opportunity to fill these jobs, which are important for the anticipation and the acquisition phases. Although education and training are important at the personal level in preparation for higher positions, they alone do not guarantee equal opportunity with regard to male dominated jobs, but the politics of the broader framework in which training is embedded also play a crucial role (Samson, 1999). What is also important is who provides training, on what, and how, in order to avoid the perpetuation of the male view of management. Thus, although the Act views training as a tool for transformation of gender inequality in the workplace, and training is considered important at the personal level for the preparation of the management function, the Act does not ensure that women have the opportunity to enter these previously male dominated positions. It assumes that with the right training women will automatically acquire positions to which they have been traditionally denied access, without even mentioning the type of training necessary to achieve this goal.

Chapter 3 of the Act focuses on affirmative action, which is meant to ensure that suitably qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equally represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce. This is also important for the acquisition phase. The Act requires all employers with fifty or more employees to implement affirmative action measures or equity plans in consultation with unions and employees. According to the Employment of Educators Act (1998) the NDOE is recognized as the legal employer of all educators in the public schools and therefore falls within the category of employers compelled to comply with the Act's regulations. However, this leaves a gap as the same Employment of Educators Act and the South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996) recognize the public school through its governing body as the employer of persons in the service of a particular school. Educators from

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schools which may have fewer than fifty educators are clearly not to enjoy this benefit from their organizations.

The Act sets out fines for non-compliance and thus serves a very regulative function which introduces a regulation that is to be enforced to assist in the achievement of its ideal vision of equity. But in this regard too, the Act makes some provisions for consideration in the evaluation of whether companies do comply or not. Amongst these provisions is the consideration of the economic and financial factors relevant to the sector in which the employer operates. It is therefore obvious that depending on these provisions, some fines could be reduced or even waived and this could negatively affect implementation. Like other policies, the Act is also symbolic in the expression of its commitment to promote equity.

The Employment Equity Act seems to represent an advance for women, but it does not acknowledge the differences amongst women as a target group and assumes that women are a homogeneous group (Samson, 1999). Samson further notes that the Act has a number of critical weaknesses, which are most likely to prevent it from having a positive impact on the eradication of gender inequality. These weaknesses are related to its definition of the target groups and the provisions for non-compliance as has been seen. It also fails to recognize that all target groups are also made of men and women. Black and white women have had different levels of education and training and job opportunities in the past and there are also differences amongst women themselves. There is a possibility therefore of advancing women who are already privileged (Samson, 1999) and leaving the poorest of the poor poorer. These limitations affect the very target of the Act, which relates to the eradication of gender discrimination in the work place. They affect mostly the level at which women enter the work place since it does not spell out how representation should be enhanced and how employment practices have to be monitored in order to ensure that women do not continue to be subjected to discrimination and even alienation within the management posts that they may acquire.

5.3.3 Skills Development Act, 1998

The Skills Development Act (1998) is one of the legal policy initiatives put in place in 1998, which put particular emphasis on education and training. The Act was meant to guide the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) which in turn was proposed in order to improve workers' wages and reduce the wage gap, create career paths for workers and most importantly, to remove discriminatory practices built on gender bias by ensuring fair access to training.

As the name suggests, the Act is targeted at the development of skills essential for promotion and thus, enhancing representation at all levels including management where traditionally women have been denied access. However, the Act focuses on the role training can play to boost productivity and competitiveness and does not mention anything about workers' wages, how to develop the skills of workers (which is important for the performance function) and how to ensure fair access to training in order to remove the discriminatory practices built on the gender bias, which is important for the acquisition phase. The Skills Development Act, as does the Employment Equity Act, also focuses more on the advancement of the individual workers instead of collective empowerment of the designated groups and thus risks advancing only certain individuals who are already at a better advantage within a group.

The training aspect that the Act emphasizes could be useful for the preparation phase and even the performance of women in management through emphasis on acquisition of skills that could help women sustain their positions of authority, but the act is completely gender blind. One of the Act's objective was to *"improve employment prospects of those previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantages through education and training"*, but the Act does not show how gender discrimination and/or discrimination in general will be redressed and does not specify or define the categories of people who were previously disadvantaged. It does not specify who should take action in as far as redressing gender discrimination is concerned and makes very

little reference to gender. Thus, although the Act emphasizes education and training, the omissions it makes limits it from addressing any of the career phases women go through in education, yet it was meant to address the development of skills essential for promotion.

The Act also makes an assumption that 'gender equals women', since it makes a requirement that out of the five community representatives on the National Skills Authority, one must be a woman who will represent other women. This also happens to be the only time it makes reference to women. It thus fails to recognize the fact that women are not a homogeneous group by assuming that one woman can represent all women. As Samson (1999) puts it, by so doing, the Act frees other stakeholder groups from the responsibility of addressing gender issues in their constituencies.

The Act fails to recognize the differences between women themselves, and like the Employment Equity Act in this regard, it is bound to fail to address the needs of the neediest group of women. Samson further mentions that the Employment Equity Act and the Skills Development Act both emanated from the Department of Labour and were being negotiated over the same period of time. However, the Skills Development Act does not promote equity for women and does not make any reference to gender at all yet the promotion of gender equity seems to be the central value in the Employment Equity Act. Thus, as Samson observes, women are not granted seats on the Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) yet, amongst others, SETAs were also meant to address the training needs of women.

The Skills Development Act is therefore highly symbolic because it remains rhetorical about its desired changes but lacks the procedural function that should realize the practicality of its ideals. It is also regulative by its nature as a legislative enactment since it establishes legal control over the requirements of education and training, yet it fails to spell out the structures and processes for the implementation of its requirements. Because it does not address gender, it supports the anticipation phase at a very symbolic

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level but does not show how its requirements should be achieved. Thus, it offers very little for the anticipation phase due to its unsupported emphasis on education and training, and offers nothing at all for acquisition and performance phases.

5.3.4 Employment of Educators Act, 1998

The Employment of Educators Act (1998) sets up the conditions of service and outlines procedures for appointments and promotions of educators. It regulates the relationship between employer and employee and established the South African Council of Educators (SACE), which regulates the ethical conduct and professional discipline of educators. The Act broadens the determination of the educators' employer, so that even a public school can be seen as the employer of educators through school governing bodies as stipulated in the South African Schools Act of 1996. It guarantees equality and equity in the employment of educators and emphasizes the need to redress the imbalances of the past in order to achieve broad representation.

The Act aligns itself with the principles of the Constitution in the employment of educators by requiring that attention be paid to equality, equity and other values and principles of democracy. However, that is as far as it goes with regard to equity. The Act is not very detailed in spelling out how to achieve this broad representation and how to redress the imbalances of the past. It does not make any specific reference to gender and does not define groups affected by the imbalances of the past. Thus, gender issues are not explicitly addressed and this is the major shortfall of the Act. It is therefore not clear how the Act suggests the redress of imbalances with regard to gender when these issues are just assumed. The lack of these concrete strategies for gender equality is what makes this Act less procedural in terms of gender redress. The Act does not express sufficient commitment to the eradication of gender bias since it does not define how gender sensitivity will be dealt with in the employment and promotion of educators. Its reference to conditions of employment is not specific to gender, but general to all educators even though women's conditions of employment have been different to those of men in the

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past. It therefore offers very little for the social and organisational factors in the acquisition phase, yet it was meant to address the employment and promotion of educators.

5.4   THE WHITE PAPERS: 1994-1998

This section examines the policy documents that were also meant to address matters of redress and equity, but are not legislation. It must be noted here that the difference between the legal documents and the generic policy documents to be discussed in this section is that the latter are not prescriptive to any sector of government but provide the overarching principles that need to be integrated within the policies, practices and programmes of the different government and private sectors. Although these policy documents do not have a legal binding, they also played an important role in the analysis because they express the ideals of government in achieving redress and equity.

5.4.1   The White Paper on Education and Training, 1995

In South Africa, education and training constitute the foundation for the reconstruction in terms of empowering citizens to take part in the processes that lead to a democratic society, as reflected by the Constitution. Because education and training are primary tools for bringing about development and empowerment of the people, they therefore form the basis for the achievement of other goals towards development and transformation. The White Paper on Education and Training (1995) addresses inequalities quite broadly in terms of ensuring equal access to educational institutions and into all subjects. Sections 10, 11 and 12 address the reduction of educational historical inequalities through affirmative action measures on learners' access into schools and choice of certain curricula. This is also backed up by the South African Schools Act (1996) which makes schooling compulsory for children of between seven and fourteen years of age and guarantees learners equal access to basic and equal education without any form of discrimination.

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Although the sections discussed above seems to be focusing more on learners' access to schools, paragraph 63 to 69 of the White Paper on Education and Training proposes the affirmation of women in employment positions. The White Paper mentions the proposition of

> *...affirmative action strategies for increasing the representation of women in professional leadership and management positions, and for increasing the influence and authority of women teachers,* (Section 66(4).

This is the one section that delineates a specific area in which gender differences occur with regard to the issue of women in leadership and management positions.

Other sections on gender address the Gender Equity Task Team (GETT) whose mandate is to address specifically gender equity issues in education. This is the section that addresses gender issues in particular in this White Paper. One of the terms of reference of the GETT is to advise the Department of Education on the establishment of a permanent Gender Equity Unit (GEU) which will work closely with the provincial departments on all aspects of gender equity in the education system. Amongst other aspects on which the GEU is to focus, are on areas that need attention in as far as gender equity is concerned such as: sexism in curricula; gender imbalances in enrolment; subject choice and career paths; legislation to counter and eliminate sexism and sexual harassment; and developing close relations with all relevant units. Thus, gender equity concerning access into all areas of study and employment is stressed as a value to be promoted in the White Paper.

The White Paper on Education and Training (1995) emphasises equal access to education and training, and this is important at the personal level where women get prepared for the management positions. If people have equal access to training, which is also backed up by affirmative action strategies emphasized in section 66, then more women educators have a chance of improving their qualification in preparation for the management function. Gender equity is stressed as a value to be promoted in this document and this is also important for all acquisition phase of the management route. The proposition of affirmative action strategies for increasing the representation of women in professional

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leadership and management positions is also very important for the acquisition phase since it ensures that more suitably qualified women will be given the opportunity to participate in management positions on a more equalised playing field. The White Paper also serves a regulative function by proposing the establishment of the GETT to address specifically gender equity issues in education.

The White Paper acknowledges the poor representation of women among the rank of school principals and suggests that reasons for this are deep-rooted in the society at large. It proposes the establishment of a GETT as an attempt to deal with the situation. It suggests guidelines for the proposed Gender Equity Unit and outlines duties of the GETT and the subsequent GEU and thus assumes a more procedural function. This policy document seems to be addressing a whole range of issues ignored by the ones discussed above. However, the one shortfall of the White Paper is the lack of procedures for monitoring the implementation of its principles. In its emphasis on education and training, the White Paper also assumes that with training and education women will automatically achieve equal representation in management. It overlooks the inherent experiences of inequality between men and women and therefore excludes aspects relating to particular skills training and work experience (which could be relevant for preparation and acquisition) in its address of equity.

5.4.2   The White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service (1998)

The White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service states its goal clearly as "*to speed up the creation of a representative and equitable Public Service and to build an environment that supports and enables those who have been historically disadvantaged by unfair discrimination ...*"(p5), and defines explicitly women as a previously disadvantaged group. It acknowledges that women have been disadvantaged by doing low-level work and being given mostly the non-decision making positions in the hierarchy of occupations and the predominance of males at the management levels even where women have sufficient qualifications and experience. It therefore calls for the eradication of the disadvantages caused by the discriminatory practices that will enable

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women, black people and people with disabilities to benefit on a fair basis from the opportunities that are offered by an equitable Public Service. It also calls for the creation of conditions that women need to overcome the barriers that block progression up the employment hierarchy for all women irrespective of rank, and suggests the creation of an environment that affirms them.

The White Paper in general is very important for the acquisition phase since it emphasizes the affirmation of women at the employment level of the public service. It explicitly identifies women as one of the groups that were disadvantaged by the legacy of the past discrimination, and which therefore need to benefit directly from the steps that need to be taken to correct their disadvantaged status. Smyth (1994) states that affirmative action policies have gone a long way towards removing structural impediments to the progression of women in leadership positions, but argues for the necessity to go a step further beyond arguing for better representation of women in management positions. He therefore questions the very concept of management and how it is perceived. In so doing, the aim would not only be to argue for more numbers of women in the positions of authority, but also to question the practices that inform the selection and recruitment of candidates. According to the Wolpe et al (1997) in the GETT report, getting women into management positions is only an initial step in the process to bring about gender equity in management from a quantitative point of view. "It does not deal with any of the qualitative issues," (Wolpe et al, 1997:195). The White Paper does not only enforce, superficially, the advancement of bigger numbers in women's positions of authority but also makes reference to paying particular attention to the employment practices, thereby acknowledging the presence of sexist attitudes prevailing in the employment of women within the educational institutions, yet it does not address mechanisms of dealing with them. Affirmative action has become one of the key strategies to redress historical imbalances (Wolpe et al, 1997), but the ways in which it is implemented may ultimately be disempowering for women if certain preliminary steps are not in place.

5.5   SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The above discussion shows that all documents have a symbolic function to serve, that of a non-discriminative society, but not all of them outline procedures of how to reach this ideal picture. The regulative function is realized by the fact that it is regarded illegal to discriminate against women on the basis of their gender, and this clearly comes out of most of the analysed documents. Symbolism and regulative functions are clear in these documents even though some documents are more detailed than others with regard to enforcing gender equity principles. It is at the procedural level where actions to be taken with regard to closing the gender gap are not necessarily outlined. This is not to trivialize the role played by symbolism and regulation in policy-making, but it suggests that government recognizes gender inequality as a problem, commits to addressing it but does not necessarily go into detail in terms of outlining the processes that could change the attitudes within the educational organizations. The table below summarises the analysis using de Clercq's policy functions framework as discussed above:

Table 5.1: Summary of the symbolic, regulative and procedural functions of policy:

	Symbolic function	Regulative function	Procedural function
The Constitution of RSA Act 108 (1996)	Guarantees equal protection and benefit of the law for every citizen and prohibits unfair discrimination on all grounds.	Allows for affirmative action practices in order to achieve equality. Proposes the establishment of the GCE.	Outlines the functions of the CGE although it leaves out the mechanisms through which it is to work.
Employment Equity Act (1998)	Prohibits unfair discrimination on any employment practices.	Allows for affirmative action practices in order to achieve equality. Makes provision for training. Requires department to take active steps in eliminating all forms of discrimination Sets out fines for non-compliance	Outlines the affirmative action measures to be implemented by every employer of more than fifty. Calls for annual equity plans negotiated between employers and employees setting out steps to minimise discrimination and enhancing representation, and a series of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure progress.
Skills Development Act (1998)	Emphasises the improvement of employment prospects of the previously disadvantaged.	Establishes legal control on the requirements of education and training.	Spells out details of SETAs and learnerships, but does not specify who should take action in redressing gender discrimination.
Employment of Educators Act (1998)	Guarantees equality and equity in the employment of educators and emphasizes the need to redress the imbalances of the past in order to achieve broad representation.	Establishes SACE. Establishes legal control on the employment and promotion of educators.	Outlines procedures for appointments and promotions of educators.
White Paper on Education and Training (1995)	Emphasises equal access to education and training.	Proposes the establishment of the GETT to address specifically gender equity issues in education.	Suggests guidelines for the proposed Gender Equity Unit. Outlines duties of the GETT and the subsequent GEU.
The White Paper on Affirmative Action of the Public Service (1996)	Defines women as the target group to be affirmed in reaching the equitable representation in the Public Service.	Calls for the eradication of the disadvantages caused by the discriminatory practices. Calls for the creation of conditions women need to overcome the barriers that block progression up the employment hierarchy for all women irrespective of rank.	Sets out steps that need to be taken to develop and implement affirmative action programmes, and outlines various players within these programmes.

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It is evident that very important steps have been taken since 1994 to put gender equity on the policy agenda. But the management route model as an instrument used for analyzing policy from the perspective of the under-representation of women reveals the lack of balance in policy meant for gender issues in education management. Many Acts were passed between 1995 and 1998 establishing some independent commissions to look specifically at women and gender issues. But for women in management, policy shifted towards the acquisition phase only at a very symbolic level. Many policies put in place emphasized education and training as means towards achieving equity without outlining the exact measures to be followed. By so doing, these policies ignored the very impediments towards women's attainment of educational qualifications.

The discourse of equity in education policy is quite broad and is expressed through a number of legislative documents and other policy statements as has been seen. At the legal level, equity is covered broadly from race, gender and disability. As a result most legislative documents such as the Constitution, the Skills Development Act and the Employment Equity Act do not address any of these in detail and gender issues are therefore discussed quite discursively. A more specific focus on gender issues is seen in the two White Papers in this analysis. The White Papers define women as a previously disadvantaged group with some fair degree of scope compared to the legislative documents. Table 5.2 below summarises the management route model as a framework for analysing the policy documents:

Table 5. 2: Summary of the management route model

	Anticipation Phase	Acquisition Phase	Performance Phase
Constitution of RSA Act 108 (1996)	Offers the right of access to education.	Prohibits unfair discrimination. Makes provision for affirmative action.	
Employment Equity Act (1998)	Emphasises education and the implementation of appropriate training measures.	Prohibits unfair discrimination in the employment practices. Calls for recognition of qualifications, experience and the ability to do the job that calls for support.	
Skills Development Act (1998)	Emphasises education and training.		
Employment of Educators Act (1998)		Realises the need to redress the imbalances of the past at the appointment level, although it does not specify women.	
White Paper on Education and Training (1996)	Emphasises education and training.	Calls for affirmative action strategies for increasing the representation of women in professional leadership and management positions.	
White Paper on Affirmative Action on the Public Service (1996)		Ensures equal treatment and affirmation of women at the employment level; Calls for the creation of conditions women need to overcome the barriers that block progression up the employment hierarchy for all women irrespective of rank.	

The acquisition phase is addressed mainly by the White Paper on Affirmative Action and the Employment Equity Act with its provision of a framework for recognizing discrimination and developing tools that will address it. The legal level supports mostly the acquisition phase by prohibiting unfair discrimination, providing for affirmative action and calling for the recognition of qualifications and experience as the Employment Equity Act does. The anticipation phase is supported by the emphasis on training and

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education, which is important for the preparation needed to get women into management positions. However, the performance phase is short of support from the legal level. The documents do not reflect any support for women as members of the designated groups who are already in the affirmative action positions in the field that has previously been dominated by males. Thus, the law is evidently very weak in the performance and anticipation phases where resistance to gender transformation also takes place.

It is evident that the government's commitment to a non-sexist society is enshrined in a number of legal policy documents. As Chisholm and Unterhalter (1999) observed earlier, gender equity is being pursued in South Africa through the Constitution, the establishment of a Commission on gender Equality and through various strategies and policies and women's groups. The legislative enactments discussed above guarantee formal equality through their power as legislation which assumes that in a democratic society every citizen has the right to be protected by the law. The documents put emphasis on the elimination of gender discrimination to ensure equal rights before the law. These documents however, do not address the concrete experiences of inequality and therefore overlook the fact that these citizens do not have an equal playing field. Specific issues like women's under-representation in educational management are not addressed although there is reference to paying particular attention to the designated groups in order to achieve broad representation and equity. Thus, at the legal level generally, the issues of under-representation and inequity are realized but are not addressed in detail. The under-representation of women in management positions in particular, is addressed silently within the broad subject of gender inequality, which is also addressed along with other forms of social justice such as race and disability.

Formal equality often ignores the more concrete experiences of inequality and may exclude the sectors of the population that have been discriminated against in terms of access, skills and training and work experience. Smulyan (2000) argues that gender discrimination influences access and entry into positions of school leadership as a result of lack of access to information and skill expectation. This is what the analysis shows us

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with regard to the legal framework. It would therefore appear to be difficult to enforce the principles of equality since women would not know how to challenge discrimination. This happens because concepts of equity are usually premised upon a notion of equal opportunity, in whose absence equity should be attached to the concept of justice that bridges the gap between formal equality and fair equality (NDOE, 2001).

5.6   CONCLUSION

The chapter has illustrated the commitment of South Africa in taking the right measures to ensure gender equity in education through government policies between 1994 and 1998. Although a lot has been done during this period, there is no direct policy measure at this level that addresses the under-representation of women teachers into education management, and there is no direct gender policy at the national level. Various legislative Acts and broad policies make reference to gender issues and in some as has been seen, the incorporation of gender issues in education management is weakly integrated into the overall conceptualizations. The management route model has revealed a lack of specificity on gender issues by some policy initiatives, and lack of balance in policies addressing gender in education management. There have been excellent policies put in place to address social injustice and particularly policies that enabled the previously disadvantaged groups access to all areas of previous designation. But the management route model has revealed that it takes more than just policy on access to allow women to participate equally with their male counterparts in education management. If policy is that important in ensuring access then it should be equally important to ensure retention at management positions.

I found the management route model particularly useful in identifying the areas of focus in terms of the different stages policy needs to focus on in addressing the gender gap. Secondly, the model provided a particular focus that the study needed to interrogate the role of policy on why women are not sufficiently represented in education management. Feminist critical policy analysis enabled an understanding on why women do not always

benefit from the formal government initiatives by exposing the barriers to implementation and exposing the broader context in which these policy initiatives work.

The analysis has also shown that policy mostly functions at a very symbolic level. The discourse of equity in education policy is quite broad and gender issues are therefore discussed quite discursively especially by the legal documents. For women in management, policy shifted towards the acquisition phase (access) only at a very symbolic level (putting emphasis on training and development of skills without assigning specific bodies to facilitate the implementation). Access into management positions is supported quite symbolically by the legal documents prohibiting unfair discrimination, providing for affirmative action and calling for the recognition of qualifications and experience. But the documents do not reflect any support for members of the designated groups who are already in the affirmative action positions. These documents do not address the concrete experiences of inequality and therefore overlook the fact that these citizens do not have an equal playing field. Thus, the performance phase has no policy support, which would most likely make it difficult for women to stay in these positions if there is no support.

Assuring women's entry into management at policy level without supporting them once they are there is not enough. The legal principles of equality are not easily enforced because they are not clearly articulated, and that in turn makes it difficult for women to prove discrimination. This may lead to the quick entry and departure of women into management as observed by Chisholm (2001) in her study of why women do not stay in education management. It ignores the roots of inequity by assuming that expressing the ideal of equal rights and equal treatment would automatically put more women in positions of power, which in turn automatically gets rid of gender discriminative practices in organisations. As Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) put it, the realities that drive organisational practices are still predicated on traits stereotypically associated with men, and "those realities drive organisational life and organisational practices mirror societal norms", (2000:129). Intervention is not only about setting policies, but as a starting point for women's emancipation as a historically disadvantaged group, clearly articulated

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gender policies could enable women proper preparation, access and effective performance in management positions, particularly in an occupation where they constitute the majority.

The analysis has also shown that the post 1994 policy context undoubtedly provides a level that guarantees formal equality. Although there is no policy directly addressing issues of gender in education management, the chapter acknowledges the limitation in scope that has excluded many other policy frameworks that take further the provisions of the legal policy. There are many debates in the country currently on the lack of participation of women in management in both the public and private sector. The lack of balance, revealed by the management route model at this legal level of policy, opens up more questions that need to be researched and further suggestions for policy specifically addressing issues of gender in management in general and education management in particular.

As the final point, the analysis was based on policy texts, which attempted to do content analysis. Taylor et al (1997) argue that policy is more than just text and that to analyse policies simply in terms of words written in formal documents is to overlook the nuances and subtleties of the context which give text meaning and significance. Humes (2000) reiterates that text can be read "on the lines" and "between the lines", thereby subjecting analysis to discursive threads. Confining policy analysis to internal linguistic deconstruction may not be enough, but "attempting to explain the ideological context within which discourses are developed and come to dominance is an essential part of the process" (Humes, 2000:48). I acknowledge this as a limitation. Nonetheless, this interrogation of gender equity content in policy documents challenges the claim to redress gender inequity which policy makers and legislatures assume, and opens up more research questions in terms of who policy makers are and what their agendas are. The analysis could help to expose the political character of official accounts of policy and challenge the ostensibly neutral stance adopted by bureaucrats (Humes, 2004). The subsequent chapters attempt to interrogate the implementation of some of these policies through an examination of the experiences of women who got these positions.

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CHAPTER 6

ON BECOMING A PRINCIPAL

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings on women principals' preparation for the principalship as perceived and experienced by the women principals themselves. The management route model used for the collection and analysis of data identifies the three phases of the management route (preparation, acquisition and performance) in which women are said to encounter more obstacles than men as explained in the previous chapter. For presentation of findings on the data collected, these three phases are used as a theme for this and the next two chapters respectively. The focus of this chapter therefore is on preparation as the first phase of the management route and presents findings on how the women principals who participated in the study did or did not get prepared for the principalship posts they were promoted into later in their teaching careers.

The chapter thus looks at factors that enhanced and/or hindered women principals' preparation for principalship. The chapter is organised into categories of description representing the anticipation or preparation phase as provided by the management route model. Although the model provided a set of three broad pre-conceived themes (as phases), it should be noted that what is discussed under each of these phases and under each of the broad themes emerged from the women principals' own frames of reference, hence the use of direct quotations from the transcripts.

6.2 CLASSIFICATION OF WOMEN PRINCIPALS

Generational differences were very clear from the narratives of the women principals. It therefore made sense to classify them in generations which grouped them according to the time they started teaching. The purpose was to have those with similar experiences together. Women of the older generations took longer to aspire to management as the

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cultural contexts and policies operated to their disfavour, whereas women of the younger generations saw some campaigns towards equal gender opportunities and they had early aspirations for management. Some of the younger women aspired for principalship as soon as they started teaching while for women of the older generations, management was still a bit remote when they started teaching. Most women of the younger generations were also more qualified compared to those of the older generations.

First generation (1960s)

From the twenty-eight women who were studied, three of them Hally, Phumi and Thandi classified as first generation women. They were all aged above fifty-six and had started teaching in 1966. For these women, teacher training was started in the early 1960s but there were differences in their initial teacher training which were determined mainly by their socio-economic backgrounds. Two of them (Thandi and Phumi) were black Africans while Hally was White. The two Africans went to the former colleges of education while Hally went to university for her first degree and teaching qualification. Phumi pursued her studies until she got a degree while Thandi only stayed with her two qualifications from the college.

Second generation (1970s)

Women of the second generation are those who joined teaching in the 1970s. In this generation there were nine women (Vuyelwa, Zandi, Sibo, Thembi, Thandiwe, Shervanni, Molly, Devi and Pat). Shervanni and Devi were Indian, Molly was White and the rest were Black African. The differences between women of the second generation were mostly based on their racial backgrounds and the opportunities that would have been available for them at the time. All the Black African women went to the former colleges of education for their first teaching qualification, except for Vuyelwa who went to a historically black university for her teacher diploma after being denied access into a historically white institution to study her passion – journalism. The rest then pursued their studies further through part-time and mostly correspondence study. Zandi and Thandiwe were able to obtain university degrees later in their careers while Sibo, Thembi and Pat

only went as far as their further education diplomas. Pat was registered for a B.Ed (Hons) degree at the time the study was being conducted. The Indian and White women all went to university for their first qualifications.

The third generation: The 1980s

The third generation is made of women who joined teaching in the 1980s. There were twelve women in this generation (Fundi, Lindi, Sile, Nadipha, Zama, Gumi, Lungi, Biziwe, Sindi, Thuli, Duduzile and Carol) and all of them were Black Africans. All of them except two (Carol and Nandipha) had children. Women of this generation mostly completed their matric before they went for teacher training and that was by and large what made them different from women of the previous generations. Policies had not changed necessarily, but more opportunities had begun to open up in terms of allowing them to study further if they could. They still trained with the former colleges of education and the historically black universities, but at the time they were being interviewed, ten of them had university degrees including Nandipha who had an M. Ed and Fundi who was registered for a Master's degree.

Fourth generation: The 1990s

Women principals in this generation started teaching in the 1990s and as their date of employment suggests, most of them were younger principals. One of these women was a nun (Gugu) and the other three Zipho, Thando and Xoli were all married and with children. All of these women were Black Africans.

6.3 WOMEN PRINCIPALS' EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Women principals interviewed all started their careers with teaching, as happens with principals of all schools in South Africa. The initial teacher training qualification, which is either in the form of a certificate, diploma or degree in education, is the starting point for formal preparation. Gupton and Slick (1996) identify preparation as a pre-requisite for ascending to top management positions in education, even though this does not guarantee

attaining the position itself. This preparation essentially means, amongst others, having the necessary credentials and qualifications for these top positions.

Historically, conditions of studying were different for all South Africans on the basis of their skin colour as seen in Chapter 1. Because of their skin colour, Black women principals' conditions of studying and training were characterised by poverty, lower quality (due to the Bantu Education Policy of 1948) as well as limited access to institutions of tertiary learning. The differences with the studied women principals were mostly in the way their careers developed. Some obtained their initial teacher training qualification before they started teaching, while others obtained the teaching qualification later depending on their circumstances but they all had to go through some initial teacher training course. This section focuses on women principals' education and training as a category in preparation for principalship. The section begins from the women's initial schooling experiences to teacher training and specific management training. The purpose was to show the women's level of formal preparation before they acquired the principalship positions.

6.3.1   Formal schooling

Preparation for women principals started typically with formal schooling before acquisition of higher professional qualifications. With the historical background of the different schools attended by women principals, the assumption was that some schools would have played a significant role in developing a preparatory inspiration role for teaching within the women principals as young schoolgirls and subsequent principalship later on in their careers.

To establish this, participants were asked to give their brief educational backgrounds until they completed their matriculation. The purpose was to get a sense of their formal preparation through education and training and the level at which they joined teaching as well as their memorable experiences that could have had an impact on their decision to join the teaching profession, and possibly an indirect or direct influence on their later

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aspirations for school principalship. The question was broad and open-ended and allowed women to recount their experiences from their early schooling to their highest qualifications.

The table below shows the level at which women exited formal education before they either started working or pursued their education further:

Table 6.1: Women principals' school leaving certificate

School leaving certificate	Grade 10	Grade 12
No. of teachers	5	23

All participants went through formal schooling until at least the current Grade 10. Out of the twenty-eight, twenty-three women exited formal education with a matriculation certificate (Grade 12) even though not all of them were able to pursue a professional qualification afterwards. Seven of these women had been to boarding secondary schools, which were very prestigious in those days but did not necessarily have any influence on their choice of career.

Five women, who left school at Grade 10 according to the table above, finished their matriculation later as practicing teachers through private study. Most of them had been to ordinary primary and secondary schools, which did not necessarily have an impact on their choice of career and its development thereafter. Two of these were women of the first generation while three were from the second generation. They all stopped formal schooling at Grade 10 because their parents could not afford to take them further, but it was also quite *"normal for learners to leave school at that point in those days"* as some of them put it. All these women matriculated and pursued further qualifications later through private correspondence study although at that point they were already qualified teachers.

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As part of their educational background, most women principals narrated the difficulties they experienced during schooling due to **financial constraints**, which forced some of them to leave and/or keep changing schools. Other financial problems were experienced upon completing schools where participants had no means to continue studying and as a result had to find employment. As indicated above all women who went as far as Grade 10 had financial problems, but even those who finished Grade 12 still experienced problems when it came to going to college. Some women participants' accounts revealed how important it was for them to start working immediately after schooling so they could also help other siblings at home or save some money to pursue their studies as reflected in the following extracts:

> ... *Then because of the financial problems at home, my background was very poor and so my mother couldn't afford some of the things because my father died when I was a little girl and we are seven at home. Then I had to take a job and see what is happening with the help of my former teachers who were teaching me at school. So I had to take this job, (Sibo).*

<div align="center">*****</div>

> *After matric, I was brought up by a single parent, my mother. And she was working in a farm as a cleaner. So after matric she talked to me and said it's better if I work because she didn't have enough money. She said she only had enough to feed me. Then I went to a junior primary school and I taught there for one year, (Nandipha).*

<div align="center">*****</div>

> ... *And then I went to a boarding school at St Peter's at Nqutu. I can't remember the years but that is where I finished my matric. And then after that my father passed away and then I couldn't go to college. Then I started looking for a job. I was employed as an unqualified teacher. It was very difficult during those days because educators who were qualified were looking down upon us. And I told myself that I had to be patient because I knew where I was going. I knew that one day I would be something. So it was just my beginning. I just wanted money so that I could go to a college of education, (Lindi).*

These women had completed their matriculation but could not go further. These were some of the reasons they started teaching before they were qualified teachers. This was

mostly the problem with women participants of all ages. Teaching was the closest available career option where they were able to go even without a proper professional qualification as evident from the extracts.

6.3.2   Teacher training

The second focus within the participants' education was their initial teacher training. Black women of the first and second generations mostly received their initial teacher training from the former colleges of education that were later closed down, while those of the later generations were able to go to historically black universities for their initial teacher training qualification. Black women of the first and second generations who did not have a matriculation certificate could only study for a Primary Teacher Certificate (PTC) that enabled them entry as qualified post level one teachers in the former Bantu primary schools. It must be noted that only Black African women were allowed to teach in the Black African schools without a matriculation certificate. Hence why, the two White and Indian women had proper qualifications before they started teaching.

Out of the six Black African women principals of the second generation, only two of them managed to go to a university after matriculation for their teaching diploma. Coincidentally, these were the only two women in this generation who admit that teaching was not really their passion. Their initial intention to go to university was to study for something else other than teaching. One initially wanted to go to a historically white university to do Journalism, but was denied access due to the then policies that restricted black people's entry into such institutions. She eventually went to a black university for a Secondary Teachers Diploma (STD). The other one was fortunate enough to be given entry into a white institution but due to her poor economic background she was not able to pursue her pharmacist passion and dropped out of university after one year of study. She managed to get a teaching post at a secondary school for a couple of years after which she went back to a historically black university for a BPAED.

Women of the third and fourth generations started teaching in the 1980s and 1990s respectively. Other than the fact that they were younger in age, their other most distinguishing factor was their having completed matric before they obtained a teaching certificate. Two of the third generation women were not able to obtain a teaching qualification before they started teaching because of their poor family backgrounds. But the rest, including all those of the fourth generation obtained their initial teaching qualifications from the historically black universities and former colleges of education. The following table summarises the women principals' entry qualifications into teaching.

Table 6.2: Women principals' first teaching qualifications:

Initial teaching qualification	PTC	STC	BPAED	UED	**Total**
No. of principals	5	12	7	4	**28**

Table 6.3: Women principals' highest qualifications in 2003:

Highest qualification	Diploma	Degree	Degree+ Diploma	Degree+ Hons	M.ED	**Total**
No. of principals	3	4	6	14	1	**28**

It is evident from table 6.3 that women continued studying such that at the time of the interview the majority of the women principals who participated in the study had university degrees. They had gone through different experiences which were mostly determined by their socio-economic backgrounds. For some women principals it was important to raise funds before they went to further their studies because of socio-economic reasons.

One of the three women who did not have a university degree was from the first generation, and actually never pursued her studies further after her first certificate and second diploma. Two others were from the second and fourth generation.

For most women principals from all generations studying for a teaching certificate without a matriculation certificate was not problematic because policies of the time allowed it, and that limited most of them to primary school teaching. These women had to upgrade their qualifications much later into their teaching careers. But for women of the latter generations, opportunities had begun to open up and they had the advantage of access into universities for a degree.

6.3.3 Management training

None of the women principals had received a formal qualification or training in management before they occupied management positions. Most of them received management training on the job, provided by the Department of Education (DOE). For most women this training usually came in the form of workshops meant for all managers in the schools and not necessarily women or new managers. So in terms of prior preparation, these workshops did not play a role.

Formal qualifications in management were received through private study after participants had assumed their first or even second management positions. This was after they had been promoted as either vice principals (which was not a formal position recognised by the department of education), heads of departments or deputy principals. For most of them, it was only after women occupied either of these posts that they decided to follow a career in the management of schools as most of them did not set out to become school principals.

Management training was received mostly through correspondence study and most of the courses were FDE or B. Ed in Management (albeit a few). Only seven women principals had a formal management qualification acquired after obtaining some management position. Four of them were doing a qualification in management at the time the study was conducted. Most of them got the training through the DOE workshops that were still provided to all managers even at the time of the interview. According to the participants,

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specific workshops for women managers only started recently (in the 2000s) and even then they were not to prepare women for management positions, but they were for women who were already in management. At least three women principals had not attended any of these workshops because they had not been invited. But the majority had been to at least one of them. So evidently, even though the women principals were aware of the workshops running throughout the province, not all of them get invited all the time.

Most women had obtained their first degrees at the time of the interview with one holding a masters degree and two of them were working towards their master's degrees. But none of these were in management or leadership. Table 6.1 above illustrated the qualifications women principals had at the time of the interview. However, none of them had a degree in management studies, but seven of them had diplomas in leadership and management all of which were obtained when they were already in management positions in the schools. They all had their majors in other specialisations including Educational Guidance and Counselling, Languages, Mathematics and Sciences. All of them except for three had received short courses of a day or two in management provided by the department for managers in general.

It is evident therefore that as far as training is concerned, most women were not prepared. It was a striking finding that none of them had a qualification in management before they considered applying for management positions and that some of them had actually pursued their studies in educational management and / or leadership even though they seemed to be settling in the field. Thus, as far as the training is concerned, there was a gap in the anticipation phase for women principals who participated in the study. Most women had the necessary credentials for the position, but very few of them actually had training in management before they assumed the principalship. Most of them received management training on the job. Specific management training did not play a role in preparing women for management positions in the schools since a few of them had formal management qualifications before they acquired the principalships. The anticipatory socialisation role played by training is essential for aspirant principals at the

personal level. But for these principals, this kind of socialisation only happened at a minimal level.

6.4   ON THE JOB PREPARATION

Acquiring the necessary academic credentials is not all there is to preparation for school management. Experience in the actual management (albeit at lower levels) also played a preparatory role in women's management career. In preparation for headship of schools, most women occupied other management positions such as head of department or deputy principalship. The diagram below illustrates the official promotion route for teachers from the lowest to the highest position in school management. The discussion that follows shows that although this is the official route, not all women principals went through it. In fact some women jumped from the lowest level to the top.

Fig 12: The official teachers' promotion route

Principalship

↑

Deputy principalship

↑

Head of Department

↑

Post level one
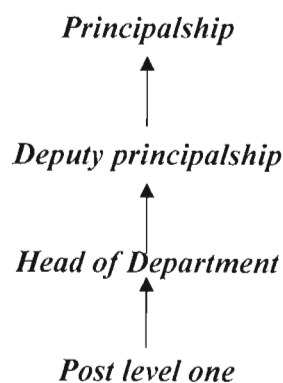
To determine their level of preparation in this regard, women principals in the study were asked to give an account of their own promotion route. Most of them went through most stages except for a few who skipped stages for various reasons. This promotion route appeared to have played an important preparatory role for women's acquisition and participation in principalship.

6.4.1 Junior management experience

Head of Department (HOD) is the first official level of management in the schools that was introduced with the new management structure in 1996 for all the schools[9]. Women who got this post only did so after this time. Before then only subject heads were in existence and were not remunerated for these positions. However, some women were promoted into principalship straight from post level one, while others occupied only one lower management post depending on how many posts were available in their respective schools. For those who became principals before 1997, HOD as a promotion stage was skipped since the post had not been formally introduced. For others there was an informal principals' assistantship that they were asked to occupy even though they were not financially compensated for it. This will be addressed in the next section.

When asked what they thought prepared them for principalship, women cited their experiences in these HOD, deputy principals and acting principalship positions of the schools to have played a big role, together with the training some received on these positions.

> **Q:**   *So what exactly do you think prepared you for this post?*
> **A:**   *Exposure to the work at school. I think I got exposed because the principal used to delegate almost everything to me as the head of department, (Fundi).*

<p align="center">*****</p>

> **A:**   *I did go for a two weeks training when I was an HOD, but it was training for when I was appointed as an HOD, it was sort of an orientation for the post. It also helped me because what we were taught during those two weeks, we were not only taught work for the HOD, we just taught about the whole management of the school, so it helped me when I started acting as a principal because most of the things I already knew about from my HOD post.*
> **Q:**   **So would you count that as one of the things that helped you get prepared for the principalship post?**
> **A:**   *Ya, there were also a lot of workshops that we attended as HODs (Lungi).*

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[9] Before then the ex-DET and homelands schools only had principals in the formal management structures.

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> A: *I think to my advantage was the fact that I had a female principal when I was head of department at my previous school and she was a very strong candidate for women's issues and she gave me the opportunity to learn a great deal under her. I looked at her style of management, I emulated it to a certain extent and I think she went the extra mile in terms of equipping females on the staff - level one or level two whatever you want, head of department or level one ordinary educator. She did much to give us responsibility and make us even confident of being able to achieve all the goals and I think I learned so much under her, all management skills, my PRO skills, my human relation skills and she gave me so many opportunities which I wouldn't have had if I had a male principal. So males generally can interact better with other males and having a female principal was an added advantage to me, it gave me an opportunity to learn so much more, more than I would have learned perhaps had I had a male principal, (Devi).*

Devi was an exception for having had a female principal. But the important and relevant part at this point is that they all learnt from and emulated their predecessors while they were on their junior management (HOD) post.

From the twenty-eight women principals interviewed, only three of them did not occupy any promotional posts before acting in the principalship position. But the rest of the other women became either HODs or deputy principals or both which they believe worked very well for their preparation for the principalship.

When the current management structure was introduced between 1997 and 1998, most of first, second and even third generation women had been in teaching for a long time and had acquired more qualifications. They therefore qualified for the promotions that were being put in place and these promotion posts played a significant role in preparing the women for principalship. The above extracts provide evidence that other than training, the promotion posts generally prepared women significantly even though there were a few exceptions of women who did not get this kind of preparation at all. In the latter case, acting in the post of the principal seemed to have prepared them for the actual official assumption of the position even though de facto, they were already principals.

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Three women of the first generation started teaching in the 1960s, but only got promotions in the 1990s without any formal preparation either through training or promotion. When they were promoted they all had university degrees and believe this influenced their promotion as seen below:

Q: *So when did you decide to become a principal?*
A: *In fact to tell you the truth I did not decide to become a principal. What happened is that we were working there at that school and the principal got transferred to another school .... And then the inspectors at that time when they came to the school I don't know what they did, but when they came to the school they said when they looked amongst the staff and the work that has been done they have seen the person that can act in the post of the principal. So it was just that and so I was asked to act. And whilst I was acting then they said because I had been acting I had to apply for the post. Now since I had only five years experience and at that time for a principal post you needed seven years. So they said I would act for 1987, 1988 and beginning of 1989 I applied. And I did not even know that I would be given the post. There were many people there and fortunately I got the post...*
Q: *Why do you think you got the post?*
A: *I had a degree and many people then did not have a degree, (Duduzile).*

*****

Q: *When did you decide to become a principal?*
A: *No, I didn't decide. At that time you were just promoted because of qualifications, because principals of secondary schools were expected to have degrees. So I had a degree and I was then promoted.*
Q: *I understand that then there were no deputy principal and HOD posts. Would that be the reason why you were just promoted into principalship?*
A: *I think so, because I had taught for a long time without any promotion, (Phumi).*

It is evident that qualifications did play in role in enabling women's access into the posts. But the point illustrated here is that both women got the positions without any formal preparation either through training or promotion.

Other than these two women principals, two more of the fourth generation (Xoli and Gugu) were asked to act in the post and later promoted into principalship without having

gone through the formal promotion route. Both of these women principals ended in these posts by default – their principals ceased to function and they were the only people with the *'highest qualifications'* (degrees) in the schools even though they both had limited teaching experience. So the university degree as a qualification appears to have played a significant role in facilitating the principal's promotion even though the training did not necessarily prepare them for management as such. The rest of the other women were promoted from one stage to another and acted in the principalship post before they applied and were appointed. All these stages together played a significant role in preparing women teachers for the principalship posts.

6.4.2 Apprenticeship

Other than the two official promotion posts (HOD and Deputy principalship) discussed above, some women principals had also been involved with what they called 'vice principalship'. Before the two official posts were introduced, principals formed the only management bodies in the schools since schools did not have grants to create other management posts. School principals would therefore choose their own assistants or vice principal where and when they needed extra help with management duties from the staff. The vice principalship or assistance role was therefore cited by a number of women principals especially of the older generations to have been extremely important in getting them prepared for heading the schools.

This assistantship position became a form of preparation long before women could have the opportunity to operate as official managers. For some it came out when they were asked how they got prepared for the principalship post while for others it was mentioned when they were asked when they decided to become principals. To both questions women principals mostly realised they could perform the management function when they were assisting their former principals.

Most of these women indicated how they were always willing to help even though they were not necessarily anticipating becoming principals themselves. Some women as

teachers were formally asked by the school principals to assist while others were cajoled into doing the work for the principals as reflected in the following excerpt:

... I don't know whether I was unfortunate or what because I usually did most of the principal's work even before I became a principal. The principals would give me everything to do. The first principal that I had gave me all these documents, and he said he knew I had a good handwriting and I am very neat. And so I had to do everything. The next principal when I came into the school would also ask me to do things for them, and so me too because I also wanted to show that I could do things I would say oh yes I will do it and I ended up doing everything. So I got no difficulty when I was promoted because I was familiar with most of the things, (Thandi).

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Yah. When I was still a teacher. In fact I would say I am not a very shy person, I used to come to the office and talk to the principal and ask him why things are happening the way they did. And I think he got an interest in that and that is why he recommended me to be the first assistant. And then as the time went by, he used to ask me to attend meetings as he was committed somewhere, (Sile).

The eagerness to help on the part of the women teachers who later became principals could be interpreted as a subtle interest that the women had in administrative matters as a starting point, and this enthusiasm indirectly rewarded them with lots of the much later appreciated experience. It became an indirect way of preparing these women principals for management of the schools, so that when they were officially asked to act in the principalship post or to apply there were no qualms as to whether they would cope or not. They knew they would do it because of the experience they had as principals' assistants. Directly or indirectly, this vice principalship seemed to have played a major preparatory role for principalship in most women principals' career as teachers. Traditionally, most principals were men and they usually had more than enough to handle and would therefore ask for assistantship from these women teachers.

Although this was not a formal appointment in the sense that there were no monetary benefits attached to it, women principals as teachers would still be expected to recognise it as an authority position. What was interesting and relevant to find out was why the

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principals chose them to be their assistants when in most cases they were not the most senior of the teachers in the schools. Some women did not know why they were chosen, as reflected in the following extract:

> *... when I came to this school, the principal of this school, I don't know why, but when I came he made me his first assistant for reasons I do not know. But the process then it was not subsidised. So I just worked as a deputy principal unpaid, for many many years ... (Thully).*

Others however believed it was because of the dedication they showed in doing their work that they were asked to assist as in the following response:

> ***Q:*** ***So why do you think you got the post? Why do you think there was so much support from your community for you to become the principals of the school?***
>
> *A:* *In fact I think I should go back to when I was appointed the first assistant. It was just my third year I suppose because from 1989 to 1991 I was just a teacher and in 1991 I became the first assistant. From the office to the staff room and the staff room accepted that though there were other people more experienced than me, but they actually accepted the recommendation that I should become the first assistant. It's because of the way I did my work. It was just commitment and dedication, and more sacrifice. So I think that is why the other members of the governing body also insisted that I should become the principal, (Sile).*

The presence of these vice principals seemed to have given some principals freedom to attend to their own businesses outside the school. But what was found interesting was that none of the ex-vice principals who participated in the study seemed to have had a problem with that. They never had a sense of being abused or overworked especially because they were not remunerated for the job. But they continued doing what they were asked to do and they regarded their experience as very valuable later on.

6.5   WOMEN'S AMBITIONS AND ASPIRATIONS

A few women had always aspired for principalship and did all they could to get the bulletin and applied for promotional posts. For women seeking principalship, it was

therefore vital that they sought these promotion posts to enable them to prepare for the top management position at the level of the school. Their responses to the question of when they decided to become principals revealed without ambiguity that they had always wanted to reach the highest management level in the school. The following excerpt reflects thus:

> *Q:*   ***So when did you decide to become a principal?***
> *A:*   *In 1998 I was promoted as an HOD in one of the primary schools around here. I think there was something that was guiding me. I wasn't satisfied there. I wanted to go a step further. I think I am ambitious. I want to reach the greatest I can reach. So I was there as an HOD but I knew that was not the end of me. So during that year the promotional posts were released and then I applied, (Lindi).*

<div align="center">*****</div>

> *Q:*   ***And when you first started teaching in 1997, were you aspiring to become a principal?***
> *A:*   *Yes, that was the aim behind my studying and everything, (Thando).*

Although Thando was the youngest principal interviewed, having started teaching in 1997, she had clearly aspired to become a principal. She had been lucky enough to have the opportunity to act in the post after such a short experience although that suggests she may not have been prepared. Coincidentally, unlike some other women who did not aspire for principalship, these two women would still aspire for principalship given a second chance. This is what one of them said:

> *Q:*   ***So if you were to be given a chance to start all over again, would you still aspire to become a principal?***
> *A:*   *Yah, because it is a step forward. After this post I think I am thinking of an inspectorship post. I can, it is a step forward, (Lindi).*

What was also interesting is the fact that they do not consider principalship as the glass ceiling or a permanent administrative position, but rather as a stepping-stone to higher positions. Thando's response to this question was also an emphatic *"yes"*.

Others however, did not realize they could manage schools until they were already in the post and they did not have the initial ambition to become principals because they regarded principalship a male job.

> Q: *When did you decide to become a principal ...?*
> A: *I never thought of myself as a principal (followed by laughter)*
> Q: *Why?*
> A: *The thing is I was teaching in a high school and I could not be a principal of a primary school because of my training, I was trained as a high school teacher. And during that time it was only males that were regarded as principals so I just told myself that I will never be appointed as a principal because I'm a female. I think the opportunity came when I was the HOD and the principal died, so automatically I was the only person in management, so I had to take over and run the school. During those two years I did discover that I do have the ability, I can be able to be a principal and that's when I got inspired. When the post was advertised I just told myself that I'm going to apply, (Lungi).*

Clearly, the reason she never aspired for the post was because she did not have as much insight as she did after occupying the management post. But her experience made her realize that she could manage and also indirectly prepared her for the principalship even though she never aspired to it.

Many women across generations did not seem to have had the ambition to progress into management positions. In fact for the most part of their teaching career they did not see themselves becoming or aspiring for principalship until opportunities presented themselves. They had always remained negative about their participation in the management of schools because they either lacked confidence or thought it was not a woman's job. Their lack of aspiration for principalship therefore stood in their way of progress since they personally made no effort. Many of the women principals confessed that they never thought of themselves as principals and two factors were picked up that seemed to have perpetuated this belief.

Firstly, it was prevalent for men to head secondary schools while women remained just teachers or principals of primary schools. Thus, principalship especially of a high school

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was men's terrain, something out of their own league as reflected in the following extract:

> Q: **You said you did not apply for the management posts earlier because it just never crossed your mind. But do you think there were some personal reasons that you were probably not aware of that prevented you from applying?**
>
> A: *I thought my position as a principal was in a primary school and not in a high school.*
>
> Q: **Why?**
>
> A: *In the area, I was the first female principal of a high school. So that is why I didn't think of applying because I thought it was impossible to get the post in a high school.*
>
> Q: **But then why didn't you apply for principalship in the primary school?**
>
> A: *I was teaching in a high school, I was now used to a high school and I didn't want to go back to a primary school, (Fundi).*

Fundi obviously entered teaching with no aspiration to ever get to top management.

Secondly, some of them regarded managing the schools to be a very unsettling kind of job with policies changing every now and then, and were just not willing to take on the strain. The following excerpt reflects thus:

> Q: **So tell me when did you decide to become a principal if you decided really?**
>
> A: *You know I must be honest with you this was not on my agenda. It wasn't my ambition to become a principal. I have always looked at them and never saw why one would want to be such a thing.*
>
> Q: **Why?**
>
> A: *Because of the stress and the strain. And you are always in firing line and I thought it doesn't really fit my way of my life with my family and so on. So that was more my family and my animals, that sort of thing that was the focus of my life. But I loved my teaching and I had to put both things together. And I thought hey deputy principal is around I can manage that, but I wasn't prepared to become a principal and I didn't have much time to do that. And I was further into it as it came along as it did and there was nobody else. There were two of us left at that time, there were three and the deputy principal, who was older than I was, very sadly got cancer and so she wasn't well enough to actually take over. If she had been well, I know she would have been in this post now. But she was a bit old so*

maybe she would have retired, I don't know about that now. So it looked as though it was in the hands of God, (Hally).

Some of the women principals however, were prepared to go just a step beyond post level one, so that even when they were going up the management ladder they felt comfortable where they were, but still remained adamant that they did not want principalship as such.

They realized that they had actually been heading for principalship when it was time to apply for the posts, and at that time they felt nothing could stop them because they had been indirectly prepared. So getting into the lower levels of management was an indirect preparation for them even though they later realized and appreciated the usefulness of the experience.

Women principals all joined teaching for various reasons which included lack of economic resources, unavailability of courses of first preference and of course the love for the profession for some Although most of the women principals expressed the desire to have wanted to join teaching, the majority of them had not aspired to become principals. For most of the women there was a kind of a turning point that encouraged them to seriously consider applying for the management posts in the schools.

For some who formed the majority, it was the urge and persuasion from other people (the staff, community or friends) and the level of confidence that these people seemed to have in the candidates.

For others, however, it was more about wanting to prove some point that "*I can make it*" type of attitude as was the case with Fundi and Nelly (refer to their stories in Appendix A).

> ***Q:*** **So when did you realize that you wanted to become a principal?**
> ***A:*** *When I was acting as a principal I experienced a lot of problems. The educators were resisting, they did not want me to manage them. And I told myself that I was going to manage them whether they liked it or not. So I decided at that time (Fundi).*

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It was interesting to find that most women principals did not set out to become principals even though they did not necessarily have a problem with teaching itself. This was revealed through their responses to the question asked Fundi above as to when she decided to become a principal.

This question came quite early in the interview and the respondents who did not have the ambition made it quite clear that they never aspired for principalship even though they loved teaching. But they were influenced by circumstances that made application for principalship seem inevitable. Because they lacked the ambition, they did not take the initiative to actively seek promotion posts, but it came their way in a manner that they could not resist. The following except is an example:

> Q: *Did you actually decide to become a principal?*
> A: No.
> Q: *Then what happened, why did you apply?*
> A: *In fact when I applied I applied because I had been acting. When I started acting I really have never thought of being a school principal. I was very afraid of the post, I was thinking in terms of applying for being an HOD, not as school principal. But after acting I thought...man, why not (Xoli).*

This extract also reveals how the respondent believed her career move was determined by fate since she did not necessarily make an effort to get promoted. An extract from Gugu reflects a similar experience:

> *... So after the long talks with the local and the chief inspector, the inspector asked whether there was anyone qualified who could act as a principal and they all pointed at me. The inspector asked me how many years I had been teaching and I told him five years and he said good, you will take over. Just like that.*

> *When I came back I couldn't talk in the car, I was really depressed and I felt I really couldn't take it. But all the people were excited calling me principal already. And to tell the truth, I hated it really, because I had seen how difficult it was to be a principal when I was at KwaNongoma. I had seen how the behaviour of the teachers and the learners and the local people was and I had seen that becoming a principal is just a nightmare. So I was just prepared to become a classroom educator and be satisfied being there. The only thing I thought was to*

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further my studies and become a lecturer if I did not want to teach at school anymore. That's what I was aiming at not to become a principal, (Gugu).

Xoli and Gugu were from the fourth and second generations respectively. It was interesting that although they both did not aspire for the principalship, neither of them tried to decline the offer even though Gugu was terribly unhappy when she was offered the post. Her unhappiness was mainly because she felt totally unprepared. Nonetheless, she accepted the offer and even went ahead to apply for the post when it was later advertised. Within this category of women who originally lacked the ambition, there were women principals who claim they did not aspire for principalship until they had an indication that they stood a better chance of being appointed. This was reflected in responses such as:

Q: **At what point in your life, in your training and studying did you decide to become a principal?**
A: *I never thought of becoming a principal, I once thought that I could be promoted and get a post anywhere either post level two or three but I never thought that I will be a principal. But I remember attending one workshop where they said that affirmative action is mainly considered; whenever you apply and there are males you are given first preference. Then I thought that maybe if I take a chance I might be taken because I'll be the only female and when I went there for an interview I had that in mind but I had to strive for it, (Gumi).*

Others did not necessarily rely on policies put in place, but on the confidence which community members or their superiors seemed to have in them as in the following excerpt:

... The principal asked me to be his first assistant because I would always come to his office and ask why things happened the way they did. He used to ask me to attend meetings when he was committed somewhere. It was then that I realised I don't have to apply for this post because I thought there was too much pressure that was put on people who are in positions. There was a lot of confusion with the policies and I was clear I did not want to work in a situation where there is a lot of confusion. And I used to appreciate the fact that those days where one would be recommended by the circuit to run the school are gone, people have to apply. I didn't think I would apply. But then when he went to the circuit office he asked me if I would mind him leaving me here at the school because he had been asked to

apply for the other post. And he said he could not see any one else to come and take the post except me. I said it's up to him to decide, and he said I should take the job. And then I filled in the forms for acting position and I became the acting principal. ... I felt I could make it because of the confidence I had gained and the trust that he had in me ... and that motivated me to apply, (Sibo).

Both Gumi's and Sibo's responses reveal factors that influenced acquisition of these positions and this is the issue to be discussed in detail in the following chapter. However, the relevance of their responses here is the revelation they make about women who claim they did not aspire for principalship yet at the same time reacted upon the slightest indication that they stood a chance to be promoted into principalship posts.

But for Zandi the problem was **lack of confidence** in her capability as a woman as she says:

> *A: Because of being a woman, the inferiority complex. The fear that because I'm a woman I cannot handle this. You know I was even afraid to apply for the HOD and deputy principal posts. ... I was having that inferiority because I was a woman, (Zandi).*

Sibo also had a similar problem which she was only able to overcome through help from her colleagues. Her response to the same question was:

> *A: I had personal problems, my personal problem was confidence at that time. I did not even act in an HOD post, no management post I had acted before. So that is why I was not that confident.*
> *Q: And how did you overcome that?*
> *A: Through some of my colleagues, I think the support from them helped, (Sibo).*

In summary, the general perception in this section is that the women principals did not have the ambition to become principals for various reasons ranging from lack of confidence, fear of responsibility and lack of exposure to management positions. This was more prevalent with women of the earlier generations who joined teaching mostly because few options were available to them and who joined teaching whilst most secondary school principals were still men. But the extent to which their lack of ambition

can be blamed on the women themselves is questionable since promotion posts were formally introduced in the schools as late as 1997, and most of the women interviewed started assuming the lower management posts then which is useful for preparation for principalship.

6.6   OTHER PERSONAL CONSTRAINTS

Women teachers' preparation for management posts was also affected by other personal issues which could not necessarily have affected their male counterparts although this could not be justly established by the study due to the bias in the sample of the main participants. These factors included child bearing and rearing, relocation reasons and other family related priorities. These were revealed through their responses to the following question: *What personal reasons prevented you from applying or aspiring for principalship earlier?*

6.6.1   Family constraints

The ages at which women principals started teaching had significant differences in terms of the impact they had on their promotion opportunities. Historically, for South African teachers to be promoted into principalship they needed seven years teaching experience and for them to qualify for study leave they needed eight consecutive working years' experience (Pandor, 1994). This worked negatively for women who had to interrupt this period mainly for productive reasons. For younger women in the study, who are mostly of the third and fourth generations, career breaks were not so much a problem, since policies allowed for maternity leave and did not recognize it as break in career. However, as has been seen in chapter one, maternity leave was unpaid until 1991 and taking this leave was not a viable option for women predominantly for economic reasons. For women of the earlier generations, leave was not granted at all and they had to resign if they needed to be away from work for accouchement purposes.

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However, the rate at which women broke their careers and lost their career time because of child-bearing and child-rearing was not noted as an issue by many women principals in the study. According to them, career breaks had not had a negative influence on their promotional opportunities as was the case with the women studied by Warren and O'Connor (1999). This was because unmarried South African women teachers were not granted formal and paid maternity leave until the 1991. For accouchement reasons most women had to either resign or take sick leave for a few weeks and then come back to work. Only one participant indicated she had to resign because she fell pregnant. The former did not happen with the other studied women principals.

In order to examine this aspect, women were asked specifically to mention the years during which they started teaching and at which point in their careers they stopped for accouchement reasons. This could not be divorced from the historical fact that for a long time South African women teachers were not granted paid leave for maternity purposes and as a result most of them did not take leave. For women in the study this was not seen as a problem and did not have a negative impact on their career development. So a questions such as; "What impact did your child-bearing have on your career" had simple responses such as:

> *I don't think that had a negative impact in my career because nothing disturbed me, it's just that at that time you wouldn't take a leave, you'd just continue teaching or maybe just take a sick leave for two weeks and come back teaching. As I said I started teaching at college. The reason that I had to return is just that I fell pregnant and at that time when you were a woman, you were employed on a temporary basis. But I had to resign in order to come home. So after resignation, fortunately I stayed only for two months because I resigned in 1975 and then in 1976 March I started teaching at this school (Zandi).*

Clearly for Zandi the fact she stayed at home for two months because she had to resign as a result of falling pregnant is not an issue although it meant that she had to start from scratch to build up her eight uninterrupted years of teaching for her to get a promotion.

Most other women of the later generations were entitled to a three month maternity leave and did not see getting a three months maternity leave as a break in their career hence their responses when they were asked questions like, "What impact did your child-bearing have on your career" had simple responses such as "No *impact because I still had my job".*

Hally's story brought a very interesting contrast to the experiences of the majority of women participants' accounts. She was the only one who was able to actually resign from work to have her first baby. She later came back and resigned again to have her second baby.

Some women principals' responses to this question revealed that to them family had always been more important than career building. The following excerpt concurs with this:

> **Q: What were your personal reasons for not wanting to apply for the principalship post earlier? Looking at you career history you have been in teaching since 1966 and you only got the principal post in 1998. What were the main reasons behind that?**
>
> *A: You know my purpose I was a career person I enjoyed what I was doing, but I felt that my first priority was my family and my children. And that is why I only really went for promotions a bit later when they were old (Hally).*

6.6.2   Upward mobility

Closely linked to family constraints was upward mobility that was hindered by the need for geographical location. Shervanni's experience clearly depicts this in the extract below:

> **Q: Did you have any sort of personal problems that prevented you form applying for the HOD or management generally in education earlier?**
>
> *A: No, not at all.   I did apply, I constantly applied but I think department...under the old dispensation was also male dominated, and*

also appointed males as far as possible. But I had no personal problems, I was always highly qualified and so forth.

I had a very supportive husband and family because he was also an educator and all that and he could see that females had a hard time but I was encouraged, but it just did not materialize. And also...but the only problem that I did have, that other male educators would not have had, I couldn't apply too far away. For example: when everything was on the HOD[10] you could apply anywhere to other provinces, I couldn't do that because it meant I had to leave behind my husband and children and I couldn't leave my family and go. Men could do it because the women remained at home and we'd follow yes, not only that sometimes there were lots of males I know of, that left their families, wives and children behind and the wives could cope and they went off ... That was the only factor that held me back, (Shervanni).

It is obvious that it was important for women teachers to establish their families first and then make a move on their career and that is why leaving families in order to get promotion was not an option. For some women like Shervanni and Hally family responsibilities became a personal factor that hindered their progress in career.

Shervannis' response also reveals another issue of fear of instability in a new environment as another factor that contributed to her not wanting to take promotion posts outside their areas and Thandi seemed to have had the same concern in addition to fearing the handling of staff members:

Q: **Do you have any other personal reasons why you did not try to become a principal earlier?**

A: *What I was afraid of was the stubbornness of the teachers. They were very stubborn and I thought I wouldn't know what to do with them. That was the one thing that mattered to me. Another thing was going away from where I was, that was also something that I did not want to do. (Thandi).*

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[10] In this case HOD refers to House of Delegates which is a former education department for the Indian race.

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6.6.3 Age

Another factor that was raised by younger women principals mostly of the third and fourth generations as having prevented them from participating in the management posts earlier was age. This was not regarded as necessarily exclusive to women, but it came out from several women as a factor that hampered their promotion as the following excerpt shows:

> *Q:* **Did you have any other personal problems that could have prevented you from applying for the principal post earlier?**
>
> *A:* *Yes. I think my age was a little bit of the problem when it came to management positions. Because I got the post just before reaching the age of thirty and when looking at that people were saying when we were in meeting some of these old male principals they would say, "so we have got kids here". And then that would put me off. Then I think maybe if I had applied earlier I would have encountered some even bigger problems, (Carol).*

There was however, a noticeable difference between women of the earlier and the later generations. Women of the older generations were mostly the ones who took a long time before participating in any management posts while the younger ones mostly applied as soon as posts were available. This concurs with the fact that the transformation with regard to management posts was a very late process in their career as teachers.

6.7 THE ROLE OF POLICY

Participants were asked what programmes were put in place that encouraged them to apply for management posts. All responses from first to fourth generation indicated that there were no programmes put in place to encourage them to participate in management except for those they participated in as HODs and deputy principals. The workshops organized by the Department of Education were in the form of induction and in-service for those who were already occupying the management posts and these happened mostly with those who went through the usual promotion route.

The campaign towards having more women in management posts in the schools started with the shift in policy in the 1990s. This was expressed through a number of initiatives that included programmes meant to equip women with skills for these posts. At the preparation level there has not been much in terms of policy to facilitate the advancement of women teachers who were aspiring for management positions. Policies were mainly on the access level and that issue will be discussed in the next chapter. Also, as has been seen in chapter five, policies meant to facilitate this shift were only put in place after the election of the first democratic government in 1994.

Programmes that were put in place at this level were mainly to assist managers who were already in positions of power and these were all in the form of workshops organized by the district offices of the department of education. There was not a lot of focus on women per se at least until the late 1990s. This provides an understanding for the varied experiences of programmes between women principals of the earlier and later generations. For the first and second generations women there were no programmes at all provided by the department to entice women or even to help those who were already in management positions. According to the participants, most programmes from which they benefited were put in place in the 1990s when there was a campaign towards raising consciousness about gender equality.

Most women who benefited from these workshops were in the management of schools as either HODs and deputy principals and those who happened to be assistants of principals before the promotion posts were formally introduced in the new department. According to the participants, even at the time of the interview there was still not much implemented to help women who are aspiring to management, but there were programmes assisting newly appointed principals and managers at large.

6.8 CONCLUSION

The chapter has presented several factors that contributed directly or indirectly to preparing women teachers for principalship. Several categories of preparation were presented as they emerged from the women principals' interviews. I have also made an attempt to capture the differences in how women principals were prepared or not prepared for principalship. It is obvious that there was a vast amount of difference in terms of their experiences although it was in preparation for the same post.

There were several striking findings with regard to women's preparation for the post of principalship. It is evident that most women had the necessary academic credentials as most of them had a degree which they regarded as an entry qualification into principalship. However, this qualification was obtained after the principalship post was acquired for some women. Thus the acquisition of qualifications did not pose a threat to their preparation. All of them were qualified teachers before they became principals and so as far as academic credentials were concerned they were prepared even though they did not have specific training in management. The latter type of training, however, did not appear to have played a large role in getting women prepared for the principalship.

Experience from the lower level of management positions also appeared to have prepared women a great deal. Although not all of them had gone through the formal promotion route, they mostly would have done some administration or management related duty or duties that essentially helped them gain experience, such as representing their principals as vice principals in meetings and helping with other administrative duties in the schools. This responsibility that most women claimed not to have known why they took them, indirectly prepared them for management. What their former bosses saw in them to have chosen them as assistants is something to be explored in detail in other studies.

However, it also became evident that the lack of ambition on the women's part delayed their participation in management as they mostly did not have the desire to participate. This would have held them back from taking active steps to get themselves prepared

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through experience in some responsibility role. For most of them, these preparatory responsibilities were imposed on them without their necessarily taking the initiative. Even for those whose principals did ask them to assist, it was merely at the administrative level such as with registration and other secretarial jobs. But not much was done on matters around decision-making and conflict management – issues that as principals of schools they would be expected to deal with more. I would argue therefore that the women principals' predecessors continued to perpetuate the stereotypes and continued to make women believe that they were are good more administrative issues but very little with management and leadership.

Women principals also appeared to have had a number of other personal problems that prevented them from getting into management earlier. The biased nature of the sample in selecting women who got the post prevented me from establishing the prevalence of some of these problems and the degree to which they really are barriers to women's preparation for management because these are women who, arguably, have 'shattered the glass ceiling'. But from the findings presented I can draw the conclusion that women had a lot more obstacles in participating in management positions that began to surface at the preparation phase. They have a lot more to deal with at the personal level, the social level represented mostly by the family, and at the organizational level where little effort is made to actively prepare and encourage them to take responsibility.

Becoming a principal was not a very clear outright choice for many of the women principals interviewed. In fact most of them did not see themselves as potential principals and so there was no conscious effort towards this. However, some slowly began to entertain the idea only after they were encouraged by their colleagues or superiors. This clearly shows that women need to be geared towards seeing themselves as potential school heads.

CHAPTER 7

ACCESSING THE PRINCIPALSHIP

7.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents findings on acquisition as the second phase of the management route. The chapter describes acquisition as experienced and conceived by women principals who participated in the study and as perceived by the circuit inspectors and school governing body members as other participants in the study. The chapter presents findings on how women principals in the study accessed their promotions into principalship and what some government officials and school governing bodies perceive of the way women in the public high schools obtain their posts. Through the women principals' first hand experiences and the perceptions of these officials as participants in the study, the findings revealed the procedures followed in the employment process, who gets involved at what level and how all these enhance and/or impede the appointment of women in principalship posts in an attempt to close the gender gap in the management of schools.

The chapter discusses factors that enhanced and inhibited women's appointment into principalship. It illustrates the preconceived definition of suitable candidates, advantaged or disadvantaged women applicants. It further depicts some of the most obvious and subtle biases affecting women in their attempt to gain access into principalship positions. These were revealed by women principals, circuit managers and school governing body chairpersons' responses to various questions which sought to determine what worked to the women principals' advantage in getting the posts and what limited their access into principalship positions in secondary schools.

7.2 WHO SELECTS THE PRINCIPALS?

Several participants play a role in the employment of principals from the point of application to the selection practice. Although the school governing bodies are the main participants, other stakeholders' presence is to ensure transparency and fairness of the procedure.

7.2.1 The role of school governing bodies

The governing body chairpersons were the third group of participants in the study. As indicated in the methodology chapter, I also wanted to get their perceptions and observations on the employment of secondary school principals. In the employment of principals and educators in general, governing bodies play a major role through powers vested in them by the South African Schools Act of 1996 (SASA). In all these appointments including that of school principals, the governing body through the interviewing committee has the final word.

Screening of applications is done at district offices but after that, short-listing, interviewing and selection become the official responsibility of the governing bodies. After the selection process they then submit names of suitable candidates in their order of preference to the department, which then executes the appointment. So the school governing body has a major role in terms of appointing school principals and this was confirmed by all the participants.

7.2.2 Circuit managers' role

The SASA gives the school governing bodies all the powers to employ principals with guidance and assistance from the department of education in terms of following the right procedure. The department is represented in most cases by the circuit managers as observers. Circuit managers defined their official role in the recruitment and selection of

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principals as firstly, that of DoE representatives who provide the training to equip the interviewing committee with the necessary skills, and secondly; as resource persons who oversee the whole selection process from the initial sifting to the final recommendation made by the interviewing committees.

As the department of education representatives, circuit managers' role is to make sure that interviewing committees made up of the governing body members are ready for the process. This they ensure by providing awareness level training with regard to short-listing and interviewing processes, sensitisation around irrelevant and /or insensitive questions that may be asked during the interviews.

As resource persons, circuit managers provide advice to ensure that the interviewing committees and other participants play their role in a just and fair way. The interviewing committee has to follow the right procedure set down in the particular bulletin where the posts are advertised. These two roles of the circuit managers were confirmed as the official roles they were expected to play by both the governing body chairpersons interviewed and the women principals themselves.

Although these two roles were unanimously (by all groups of participants) identified as the circuit managers' official and important role, the latter viewed their role as limited, with the governing bodies being given all the powers to select the school principals by the SASA. Frustrations were expressed when circuit managers defined the role they play in the selection process. There was a feeling that they are not sufficiently utilised in this process and could in most cases provide a better judgment of the candidates to that provided by the governing bodies. Circuit managers based their argument on their observations where most school governing bodies especially in the rural areas are not sufficiently capacitated to carry out a task of this magnitude. This was expressed in the following responses:

... Sometimes the SEM provides advice that is not used and it is frustrating when the SEM makes a legitimate recommendation and it is not taken because the school governing body has already made up their mind (SEM 3).

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... There are times you feel like if you were able to make the choice yourself you would rule out certain choices, but if the governing body sticks to a particular appointment there is nothing you can do about it, (SEM 5).

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... So they have a final word. I as an SEM can give advice but they don't have to take it. I am not allowed to force them, (SEM 1).

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We have to follow procedure which is set down in the particular bulletin. So the role that we play is to make sure that procedure is followed by the governing body. And as resource persons also to advise them like in cases of affirmative action and such. Though we are not able to – there are times I would think when you feel like if you had or you were able to make a choice yourself or to give someone an opportunity you would make changes in terms of who gets appointed. But the governing body sort of speak to the particular candidate they prefer and there is nothing you can do about it. So the main role is being the resource person. Just being there to advise and when they stray from the procedure to redirect them to follow procedure (SEM 7).

Overall, the point reiterated by the circuit managers regarding their role in the above extracts was that in most cases they have a better insight into the candidates who are most suitable for the principal positions, but because they do not have the power, the governing body's word is final even in cases where they do not agree with them. There was a feeling that if they had the power they would change the system to make it more efficient and more accommodating of the skills they could bring in the process in recommending candidates who deserve the principalship posts and who could get the job done.

A further concern from the circuit inspectors was in relation to the implementation of the affirmative action policy in the appointment of principals. They indicated that in most cases the school governing body does not follow the guidelines from particular policies, but use their own criteria on the candidate they deem fit for the post:

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Since their word is final they hold the right not to make a recommendation if they are not satisfied with the candidates. In this case the department officially expects a detailed report from the governing body on why appointment was not made. Some irregularities also occur in cases where the governing body has their own preferences with regard to the appointment of principals. In some instances the governing bodies sometimes do not stick to the merit list in terms of the points acquired by the candidates, but use their own preferences. Sometimes even after the interviews there are times when they don't particularly stick to the marks or the points that were scored, that they choose candidate number 3 rather than number 1 for several reasons that they give (SEM, 3).

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There are times when they would recommend candidate number 3 instead of number one on the preference list. This usually happens for a number of reasons including the familiarity of the governing body to the person appointed. In some cases there is preference of the person who had been acting on the post even though he or she may not necessarily be the best candidate according to the interviews. Depending on how strongly they feel about a particular appointment they sometimes go over board to recommend one name and draw a red line underneath to show they will not accept any other appointment other than the one they recommended, (SEM 8).

It is evident from these responses that there are many irregularities with the appointment of the school principals. It can be argued that women would probably continue being disadvantaged because they would not be familiar with the schools management given the history and traditional practices of having men as principals of secondary schools. This makes the role of circuit managers as observers and as resource persons questionable since their intervention appear to be very minimal in cases like these. It is clear that in some cases governing bodies' decisions are not questioned and this reveals a lot about the discrepancy between the regulations and the actual practice.

The perception of some school governing bodies, particularly those in the rural areas is that secondary school principalship is still suited to males and not females. Here is how one principal confirms it in her response:

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Q: *And what would be your comment on the level of compliance on policies and\or regulations that are guiding the schools in terms of making their decisions with regard to promotions?*

A: *It depends on the area where the school is. Sometimes you find that if the school is in the rural area and they have somebody whom they fancy would be in that position they would like as much as possible to push the women away and take that particular person especially if it's a male. So there is that tendency of wanting to depending of course on the school as I am saying, if its in the rural areas they would like to have a man who is also a local resident (Sindi).*

However, governing body responses did not reveal any of these concerns regarding the under utilisation of the circuit inspectors or lack of capacity on their part. For them, what they do is required by the law (SASA). They saw the circuit managers' role as that of assisting in overseeing the process and there was no indication of whether they needed them to play a rather more prominent role in assisting with the selection. But there was emphasis that they do work together.

Q: *What role would you say is played by the circuit managers with the appointment of school principals?*

A: *Inspectors, like 'umhloli', no they play a big role because you see sometimes if some thing becomes difficult with community the inspector comes. The community people do respect the inspector. Sometimes even with the children making these toyi-toyis when we tell them we are going to call the 'umhloli' they get frightened (SGB 2).*

Another one says:

A: *Yah, the role that the circuit managers play is very great to us. It is great to us because without them we would be nothing. What it means is that they make sure that teachers do their job. Like in this school it sometimes happens that you see a school inspector just passing by the school whereas in the past they would not make such visits to our schools especially in the rural areas. But now we can see the communication even when there are problems in schools you find that we do not have solutions to those problems at the end we rely on them to assist us (SGB 4).*

It was clear that these governing body chairpersons work together with the circuit inspectors, but their emphasis was not with the appointment of principals or even other teachers but the running of the school in general.

When they were asked who appoints the school principals their responses all pointed to the school governing body and no mention of circuit managers was made. This could be taken to confirm the circuit managers' concern about their limited role in the principals' selection process.

> *Q:* **But with appointing the principals is there anything they (circuit managers) do at all?**
>
> *A:* *No, appointing is entirely the responsibility of the SGB. It's the SGB (SGB 2).*

Indeed this was a confirmation of what the circuit inspectors regarded as their role in this employment process. There was a contradiction here in terms of the governing body responses and circuit managers which could be legitimate to a certain extent. Each circuit manager is in charge of the whole circuit which has an average of twenty schools in it. Their posts are fixed and so most of them appeared to have been in the posts for well over five years at the least. All of them had participated in the hiring of a high school principal at least once. On the other hand, school governing bodies only have a three-year duration on the position which is only valid for as long as they have children within a particular school or if they get re-elected. This led to some of the governing bodies not being able to have an input on the appointment of school principals because they had never been involved in such a process. So with regard to the recruitment of principals their input was limited.

7.2.3 The role of union members

In order to ascertain transparency and fairness, teacher union members also participate as observers in this whole employment process. As a labour union they represent and protect

the rights of the candidates. Their involvement starts at the initial level of sifting where they come to make sure that sifting happens in a fair manner. Although they participate in the interviewing process they are just informal observers, who do not score the candidates.

However, their presence affords them the opportunity to monitor prejudicial preferences and overt biases by the selection or interviewing committees in the interview settings. If such discrepancies occur, their role then becomes that of disputing the outcome of the interviews in protection of the candidates against unfair treatment.

Despite this seemingly high level of transparency some irregularities still occur. Some women principals were discriminated against during the interviews in the presence of the union representatives as the following extract shows:

> *Q:*   *Do you think that affirmative action laws and policies helped you and other women to get into management?*
> *A:*   *Yah. I think so because during the interviews we are also protected by the observers. There are observers who are actually observing the process itself. So that is helping us. It's not like in the old days where there was lots of corruption. Although there are still things that are happening, it's not the same as it used to be.*
> *Q:*   *And who are these observers?*
> *A:*   *The stewards from different unions.*
> *Q:*   *And the time you were discriminated against were there any observers?*
> *A:*   *I think the steward that was representing us there didn't know what to do. She wasn't qualified to be an observer. She hadn't attended the workshops (Lindi).*

Another incident of irregularity observed by the circuit inspector:

> *... In one case union representatives were accused of influencing the outcome of the interview to suit their members. This happened in the rural areas where the interviewing committee was made of uneducated governing body members who did not really understand what was going on (SEM 9)..*

Thus, there is a level of transparency that is officially meant to eliminate these practices of overt discrimination, prejudices and biases. But evidently there are gaps in the implementation of these regulations of employment. Although accorded by the law, school governing bodies appear to be lacking the required capacity to implement some of these policies, while other role players' participation is limited and others appear to be abusing their positions. It should be noted however, that the involvement of teacher unions at this level is not implicated by the law. Teacher unions are part of the large stakeholder body meant to ensure fairness and transparency in the employment process.

7.3   THE EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

There was a considerable variation of practices on the part of the participants in this study with regard to the hiring of principals in general and women principals in particular. Participants in this regard were mostly circuit managers and school governing body chairpersons. Although they did not exactly participate in hiring the particular women principals interviewed in this study, their evidence confirmed some individual experiences of women principals.

7.3.1   Recruiting applicants

It is essential to note from the beginning that officially, principalship vacancies like any other posts in the education department are advertised in the bulletin obtainable from the district offices. According to the information provided by the district officials, all interested parties have access to the bulletin, which comes out every time there are posts in the department.

At the time the study was conducted there were no formal recruitment procedures put in place, but some candidates indicated that they were recruited (in the form of encouragement to apply) for the particular post by the circuit manager, former principal or school governing body chairperson. These were candidates who initially were not interested in applying for the posts (even though some of them were already in acting

positions) because they believed they would not get them or were not interested for some other reason[11].

But this influence from the outside seemed to have been welcomed and played a major role in validating women teachers as prospective principalship candidates. Coincidentally, these candidates got the posts on their very first attempt to get into principalship. However, not all women principals were actively recruited in this manner. There was on the other hand a bulk of candidates who set out on their own to look for principalship posts, (those who had always had the ambition) some of whom applied for as many posts as possible and were turned down at least once before they got the one in which they were at the time of the interviews.

These two ends were revealed through women principal candidates' experiences. As indicated in the previous chapter a majority of the women principals interviewed did not seem to have the ambition to apply for the principalship but were rather channelled towards the posts through promotion and were actively persuaded to apply by either of the aforementioned parties. Out of the twenty-four women principals interviewed, fourteen were acting principals when they got recruited while six were not acting principals and four just applied on their own.

Women principals as candidates had their appointment handled by governing bodies and circuit managers. For the circuit managers and school governing bodies, appointment of principals is entirely in the hands of governing bodies who make final decisions with the circuit managers playing a minimal role of facilitating the process to make sure it happens accordingly – to make it open to everybody without letting the governing body exercise their own unacceptable preferences that sometimes disadvantage women candidates.

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[11] These reasons are dealt with sufficiently in the previous chapter.

7.3.2   Sifting and Screening

Having received all application forms and CVs, screening becomes the next process where applicants who do not meet the requirements according to the bulletin are sifted out. This is done at the departmental offices by some departmental clerks, who are trained by circuit inspectors and the district manager before they engage in this process. The applicants' CVs are evaluated against the criteria provided in the bulletin.

To ensure a certain degree of transparency in the process, after the applications are sifted and screened, both lists of the rejected and accepted applicants are checked by the union representatives before being presented to the school governing body. The purpose is for both parties (governing body and union representatives) to check if sifting has been done fairly. From there the short-listing and interviewing becomes the responsibility of the concerned governing body through their interviewing committee. Usually five candidates are short-listed and interviewed in the presence of both the departmental representative, who is usually the circuit manager, and some union representatives who are present as observers.

Circuit managers indicated that screening is the level at which most women applicants get sifted out because they lack proper CV writing skills. One inspector said:

> *Most women still do not know how to write a winning CV and therefore leave out important details that could make them qualify or at least make it for the interviews, (SEM 5).*

<p align="center">*****</p>

> *With regard to their applying for the posts, women tend to be bit shy, and I don't know whether they are shy or what. You find very few women applying. As it is only last month we discussed that we should have a workshop on ladies and their writing of CVs because that is where they actually fail to qualify for short-listing. And then also try and encourage them. They don't quite apply, they shy away from that, (SEM 3).*

Asked what some of these important details are that women leave out in their CVs, this was the response:

> *Women are involved in community services and associations where they manage a whole range of activities including finances and human beings. But when it comes to writing a CV for the professional job, they leave out experiences like those which could work to their advantage (SEM 5).*

Six of the circuit inspectors all agreed that most women hardly get past the screening stage because of their bad skills in CV writing. So the bulk of the women who apply for these posts are sifted out at the initial screening let alone make it for short-listing, and that jeopardises the already limited number of female applicants, '*since they do not even apply in as big the numbers as their male counterparts' (SEM 2).*

7.3.3 Interviewing

Interviewing is the stage that gives women candidates who meet the criteria the opportunity to present themselves to the interviewing committee. The interviewing committee that is mainly made of the governing body carries out the interviewing of the candidates. The chairperson of the committee is usually the chairperson of the governing body. The committee receives training from the district officials before they engage in the process and this is to ensure that the committee asks standard and uniform questions. In addition to the training provided, the circuit inspectors and union representatives come in at the interviewing point as observers to monitor the process by making sure that interviewing committees and everyone involved in this process follow the right procedure and to redirect the participants when they stray away from the procedure. As observers and resource persons, these participants do not score the candidates.

However, in spite of this training of interviewers, and this apparent high degree of transparency, it was picked up that there is still lack of uniformity and some digressions do occur during the process. These are usually in the form of questions that are described

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by some candidates as "unfair" and "irrelevant". For instance' some women principals felt that some questions asked in the interviews were uncalled for and exposed the gender bias that their interviewers had towards their performance as women as shown in the following extract:

> *Q:* **Was there any discrimination you experienced in trying to secure this post?**
>
> *A:* *The interviews, the way the questions were asked like how are you going to manage the school men and educators being a woman, and how are you going to manage these old learners. Those questions I didn't think were relevant because they revealed the gender bias. I didn't think it was right to as ask as a woman how I was going to manage the school (Lungi).*

The perception of the governing bodies with regard to women as principals of secondary schools varies according to different communities and different people within the same communities. As observers and resource persons, circuit managers were asked for their view on how governing bodies perceive women as principals of secondary schools. As the main employer, their views were regarded important in understanding how principals obtain these positions. Responses to these questions varied according to their experiences and the different areas in which respondents are based, but what is presented below appeared to be prevailing across different areas. The findings revealed some of the most overt and covert gender biases in the selection of secondary school principals.

Firstly, circuit managers attested to the fact that interviewing processes are sometimes intimidating to female candidates and this intimidation appeared to be two-fold. On the one hand some interviewing committees are mostly made of males who may be biased towards selecting women candidates. One circuit manager indicated that in the last interview in which he participated there was only one female on the panel. According to the circuit manager, women who qualify to apply for principalship are not many given the history of their education in the country, and practices like this do not do much to help bridge the gender gap in management of the schools. Two of the women principals confirmed this:

... when at the process as a whole, it was a little scary for me when it came to the interview because on that particular interview I was the only female coming for the interview. There were four males and I was the only woman and the panel was also made of all males (Carol).

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.... And I was the only woman there. And you know I felt intimidated when the guys were talking and the like. I remember this one guy who really intimidated me. He was carrying two departmental files, and was telling what he was going to do when he gets the post. And I was like oh God, I don't even have any of the things he is talking about in place. And there were so many men eight of them were short-listed and I was the ninth one. And the panel was all males (Zipho).

On the other hand, some women principal candidates felt threatened by women members of the interviewing committee. Another circuit inspector puts it thus:

Interviewing panels are still not gender represented. I think an all-male-panel can be as intimidating as an-all-female one given the fact that some women prefer to be managed by men. Women can be more vicious to other women than men, which makes female candidates even more threatened by them (SEM 7).

Nelly was one example of a candidate threatened more by a female panellist. But other than that, there was no confirmation from the female principals being intimidated by other women panellists. The composition of the panel clearly has some impact on some candidates themselves. For this study all governing body composition had males in the majority which would translate into more males in the interviewing committees. And all governing bodies of the schools in which these women were principals were headed by men.

7.3.4 Selection

Officially, the interviewing committee selects suitable candidates on the basis of the number of points scored by the candidates. They then recommend the suitable candidate(s) to the department to then execute appointment. Circuit managers expressed concerns in terms of some irregularities concerning the selection process. Sometimes

candidates are not appointed as per their performance in the interview, but according to the interviewing committee's pre-conceived preferences, which often create conflicts that lead to interview results being withheld.

One SEM gave one instance where results of the interview were disputed because the governing body did not appoint anyone on the grounds that nobody qualified, while it was suggested that the person they wanted for the post had not been short listed.

It is evident that some irregularities still occur even though there is an attempt to make the system as transparent as possible. These are both in terms of the procedures and in terms of unacceptable questions still being asked candidates in the interviews.

7.4 WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T?

This section looks at other factors promoting and hindering women's access into the principalship once they are selected as finalists. More specifically, the section looks at subtle and overt factors determining the success and or failure of women principalship candidates.

7.4.1 Qualifications, age and experience

As indicated in the previous chapter, academic qualifications are the necessary and most fundamental credentials for accessing principalship. Women principals were asked for their perceptions of why they believed they got the post. Although most of them replied earnestly that they did not know, their responses to this question revealed a relationship between age, qualifications, experience and locality as factors which enhanced their access into principalship. There was a clear interrelationship amongst these factors and they are discussed together.

Qualifications

A few women principals cited qualifications as one factor that enhanced their access into principalship. These were mostly women who had never acted in the posts of principal before, and those who were young and less experienced but happened to be the most highly qualified from amongst the staff members. Two women principals became principals in 1995 and they believed they got the post just because they had the required qualifications as reflected in the following extracts:

> *No, I didn't decide (to become a principal). At that time you were just promoted because of qualifications, because principals of secondary schools were expected to have degrees. So I had a degree and I was then promoted (Phumi).*

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> *By that time they were looking at the work that you were doing. Hard work and qualifications (Duduzile).*

These were women of the first and third generation respectively, but got the promotion in one year. Phumi was much older and had a lot of experience since she started teaching in 1966, while Duduzile did not even have sufficient experience of seven required years of teaching. But for the two of them, qualifications played an important role in enhancing their access into the principalship.

Xoli and Thando were both from the fourth generation and got their promotion before their thirtieth birthdays. They both believed their appointments were prompted by the fact that they were the most highly qualified members of staff even though they were young and did not have sufficient experience.

As seen earlier most women principals had a university degree when they were appointed as principals and, of these, five did not have the required seven years teaching experience. Qualifications thus seemed to have played a role in enabling these women's access into the principalship since in most cases they were the only ones with degrees from amongst the senior staff members. Whether a qualification on its own without

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sufficient teaching experience is enough for women or principals in general to perform a management function is beyond the scope of this chapter. It would have also been interesting to establish the same issue with regard to the male principals. But given the bias of the sample, this could not be established.

Age and prior experience

In addition to a university degree, some participants believed that age linked with experience facilitated their access into these positions. Thandi portrayed a rather more explicit perception about the effect of age and experience on her acquisition of the principalship post in her response to the question on why she thinks she got the post. This is how she responded to it:

> *Q: Why do you think you got the post?*
>
> *A: I first acted on the post before it was advertised. So perhaps the people were very much acquainted with me. And secondly, I was better experienced than all the contestants. And also qualifications wise, those were still young boys and I think that is why they gave me the post, (Thandi).*

Thandi's response brings out the issues of experience, qualifications and age together as factors that played a role in the advancement of the acquisition of principalship posts for her. She got this necessary experience by acting in the post. This further reinforces the positive impact acting on the principalship post had before official occupation as established in the previous chapter on what prepared women for the principalship post. All women principals interviewed, except one, had acted in the post before and they believe they got the post because of the experience they got from acting which enabled them to become familiar with the position and its requirements. What appeared to vary a great deal was the length of time participants took in the acting positions, which seemed to range from six months to six years. The remaining one woman principal applied from outside the school and got the post right away after occupying an HOD position.

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These experiences confirm what was established in the previous chapter about what prepared women for the principalship.

7.4.2   Locality and familiarity

Acting in the post before official assumption of duty also seemed to have enabled the women to become familiar with the school community as Thandi's excerpt above shows. Further examples also reflect the significance put by the women on the communities' familiarity with them as applicants. Although put differently, the following excerpts continue to verify the belief that experience as managers in the same schools, and familiarity with the communities around the schools, helped women to obtain the posts.

> *Well, I think it's because I had been acting and they know my abilities. So maybe, I'm not sure, that is why they said this is the right person because we know her, she has been acting in the post and there has been improvements because if I'm not mistaken in year 2000 when the principal...the principal was promoted in 1999, so I started acting in 2000, so in 2000 the results for grade 12, they moved, they've been 63% they moved to 72%. So maybe they felt that since she is not letting down the school, so she is the right candidate, let us give her a chance (Zandi).*

<p align="center">* * * * *</p>

> *Well, I think I had been in the school where I had acted in the post for about two and half years by that time and they had seen how I was doing things. I think they had confidence in me and also during the interview I didn't think I was bad, I just thought no I was good (Xoli).*

<p align="center">* * * * *</p>

> *I think because I have been there, ... I was familiar with the environment, their likes and their dislikes and all that (Thandi).*

<p align="center">* * * * * *</p>

> *Well, probably because people, the community had actually voted me to go into it even before I actually wanted to apply. So maybe that is why they were almost looking for somebody who was familiar with the situation. So I was one of them (Sindi).*

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Nelly's experience and familiarity with the school clearly worked for her in her attempt to get the principalship of the school after acting for six years. Her school governing body chairperson who said the following about her confirmed this:

> *We couldn't ask for anyone better than Ms Dladla. No one could be more suitable to run this school. She has been here for a long time and she knows this community very well.*
>
> **Q:** **Would you say that is important then that the candidate is familiar with the area?**
>
> *A:* *That is very important because if you just hire a high class sometimes you know the community people they don't want these high class people. As a principal, you must talk with people, be nice with the people, because that is where you are going to stay (SGB 3).*

This extract from the school governing body chairperson also confirmed that familiarity with the local place is important in getting the post as a school principal.

Many participants mentioned familiarity with the local community to have facilitated their appointment as school principals. This was familiarity with the school and the local community after having worked in the school for a long time. Most women seemed to believe that their familiarity with the local community gave them a better chance to get the principalship positions. This is further confirmed in the following excerpts:

> **Q:** **Why do you think you got that post?**
>
> *A:* *The experience. I think it's the experience because some principals decided to leave their own schools and applied for this one and they did not have experience of running the school. They have just never been in an institution with a hostel. They've never produced good results wherever they were and now they wanted to come to this particular institution - to this already established institution (Zama).*

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> **Q:** **And why do you think you got this post?**
>
> *A:* *I can say the work I had performed when I was a deputy principal and when I was acting, my involvement with the community and because my ability to teach the grade 12s because I usually get 84% and 94% and I think maybe the parents had that confidence in me. I give the community*

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time and listen to their views and I co-operate with them, I don't take decisions on my own I consult with them (Biziwe).

To confirm this evidence from women principals, circuit inspectors and governing bodies were asked what is mostly considered in the appointment of secondary school principals. Experience and locality came out predominantly from the circuit managers' responses as the following extract confirms:

... mainly these days most of the time it is people who have been in the school, who get the post, though there are times when it is somebody from outside. ... But generally I think the governing body feels more comfortable with somebody they are used to, somebody who has been acting in the post. My observation is that they usually go with that particular candidate (SEM 2).

Other circuit managers confirm this:

Experience counts a lot – if the lady has been a principal somewhere then it becomes easy to get the post (SEM 1).

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...Qualification, experience and locality (SEM 9).

These candidates are expected to build this experience over time. But if all candidates are expected to have held a principalship post before, many of the women candidates would not have had the opportunity, given their history. Prior experience in principalship as an official or unofficial requirement puts women at a greater disadvantage.

According to some departmental officials, some of the practices still discourage women from applying in big numbers. Women develop a 'why bother' kind of attitude because of the belief that they are not going to make it anyway. For example, circuit managers observed that most interviewing committees still concentrate on the male attributes of management and are highly influenced by the view that males can do a better job. Most women are also aware that interviewing committees have a tendency of giving preference to someone who was already acting in the post and that their inclusion in the list is just

for window dressing. There was a feeling that governing bodies decide in advance who is going to be given the post and this discourages a lot of women from applying for a job they know they are not going to get. One circuit inspector participated in the interview where many good presentations were made by both men and women who had been short-listed. But the governing body just insisted they wanted a particular person (man) whose presentation was not so good, and who did not score the highest points, but with whom they were familiar. So women who apply and get the job in most cases would be those who had been acting in the post. The following excerpt reflects this:

> *... But many women still feel that they are wasting their time. So when you talk to people sometimes it is common that the person would say I would just be wasting my time – just accompanying whoever is going to be appointed in that post. So I'd rather not. So the situation is just like that...They feel they are just accompanying because there are times when like a post is advertised, then even before the interviews there are talks already that the post belongs to so and so. And I think it happens everywhere. So when in the end that so and so really gets the post then it sort of proves that they were just accompanying ... (SEM 2).*

It was also interesting to note that in most cases the studied women principals would indicate lack of interest in applying for the posts, until they actually acted on them and had a bit of assurance that they would get the post. As already seen above, a few of them did make a confession that they never thought they would get the post, whereas for the majority "*it just never occurred*".

This locality and familiarity was further enhanced by the fact that experience was linked to a particular school and not just experience in management in general. Bearing her debacle with the circuit inspectors in mind, Nelly was asked why she never applied for principalship elsewhere since she was so highly qualified and this was her response:

> *No, because I wanted this one. I wanted to prove myself to this community that I am a good leader, so I did not apply (Nandipha).*

Molly was relating her professional background and this is how she talks about her background:

I have now been here since 1980 and so that is a good number of years. And I have gone through from a post level one to an HOD from there to deputy and then to principal, all in this school. So if they didn't know me well by now they should, (Molly).

The two above responses were to two different questions here and yet the issue of familiarity with the school comes out subtly from both excerpts. For them, it was important for various reasons that they get the principalship within these particular schools with which they were familiar and not just principalship anywhere else.

Circuit managers further confirmed that school governing bodies do indeed prefer a person they are familiar with. And for them locality means a person who originates from the same area. Locality was thus in some cases linked to originating from the same area, but who may not necessarily have the experience in a particular school. Circuit managers were able to confirm this because they had all witnessed more than one selection process of a secondary school principal. These were some of the circuit inspectors' responses with regard to locality:

We have come across cases where people insist on the local person. In one farm school the manager stated categorically that he did not want a female, but a man who is local and can easily converse with those people in their language. But according to the policies that is discriminatory, but they don't want to understand they say it's their farms and they have a choice to whatever, and convincing them is not easy (SEM 3).

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The use of phrases such as "son of the soil" or "local breed" prevail in these instances where they want to decide in advance that they want a local person whom they claim understands the schools better. And we can't do anything because they have the final word (SEM 10).

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*Q: **What do you think is important in understanding how principals get the posts?***
A: Locality is prevalent, to be honest with you (SEM 5).

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... Even if I want them to choose candidate A because of her/his strengths, but if they want candidate C they end up taking Candidate C because she is the daughter of some local man or of the induna – always the person they know. They want that person, whether or not he/she qualifies is not a big deal as long as they want that person (SEM 4).

Evidently, a perception that local people can do better, prevails. In most cases, it is an assumption that is not always true.

To sum up this section, 'in-house' management experience and qualifications emerged to have played a major role in enhancing women principals' appointment into principalship of secondary schools. The more familiar the female candidate was with the governing body and the community, the better her chances of getting appointed. This however raises some problems for women who are less exposed to these positions and leaves them continuously disadvantaged by virtue of not having a lot of experience in management. The question thus remains, how many women have the opportunity to act in principalship posts and what measures are put in place to enable promotion that leads to the acquisition of this necessary experience? Interestingly, all women principals who participated in the study had male deputies. With this pattern, it can be argued that the next cohort of principals will again be males assisted by the present HODs who are currently mostly women. And so the cycle continues. It would appear that men are comfortable with female deputies while women are comfortable with male deputies. This needs to be explored as it is beyond the scope of the current study.

7.4.3 The role of policy – affirmative action

Findings related to the acquisition level indicated that there was awareness of policy in this phase, unlike in the preparation phase. Most participants, including the women principals, circuit managers and school governing bodies acknowledged that they were aware of policy initiatives in as far as getting women the opportunity to participate in management posts is concerned, although there was not much put in place.

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When asked whether there were policies meant to address the issue of gender imbalances in education management at the acquisition level, reference was made to Affirmative Action by the participants from the identified groups. Mention was also made of regulations in the bulletin where jobs are advertised. In each bulletin the procedure to be followed is usually outlined and there is usually a move towards preference of suitable women candidates. For example it is usually indicated in the bulletin that interviewing committees should prioritise the disadvantaged groups and these include women, but as has been and will continue to be seen throughout the discussion there was no evidence of implementation of this preferential policy as women seemed to have been competing at the same level with their male counterparts.

> *A: That is where affirmative action comes in. In the bulletin there is always that clause that they should apply affirmative action to try to employ more females .... It is written there but people don't implement it in most cases (SEM 5).*

There was a contradiction between some women's responses and those of circuit inspectors with regard to affirmative action policy. Some women principals seemed to believe that affirmative action actually opened doors for them to be affirmed as suitable for the principalship posts. This is how some of these women portrayed their belief in the policy and how it facilitated their employment into principalship:

> *I never thought of becoming a principal, I once thought that I should be promoted and get a post anywhere either post level two or three but I never thought that I will be a principal. But I remember attending one workshop where they said that affirmative action is mainly considered; whenever you apply and there are males you are given first preference. Then I thought that maybe if I take a chance I might be taken because I'll be the only female and when I went there for an interview I had that in mind but I had to strive for it (Gumi).*

Circuit managers on the other hand felt that there has not been any implementation of affirmative action policy, and that it was just rhetoric:

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That is something we talk about all the time, but in reality there is nothing happening. In the bulletin there is mention of representation and affirmative action, but assuring that it happens becomes difficult. But in principle it is something that we all know has to happen (SEM 4).

Another circuit manager also felt there has not been a direct policy addressing these issues as they were still trying to get the department set up as a policy.

We are still trying to get the department to set up a policy to address these issues. I think the main problem is that the department does not have a clear policy governing these issues (SEM 9).

Thus, when asked whether the employment policies and practices encourage women to apply for the management posts, circuit managers indicated that at the level of policy, there is nothing discouraging women from applying. In fact policies do encourage women because of the indication of affirmative action and prohibition of discrimination of any kind.

However, mention of a certain level of conscientisation done in the communities about the need for them to change their attitude towards women, and the encouragement of women to apply for more management posts, does not guarantee anything. There was a feeling that this is only done at a very discursive level. There is nothing tangible in the form of policies or regulations to enforce and achieve the desired ends. The following are some of the excerpts from the interviews with the circuit managers to highlight the need for more intervention from the department:

It is difficult for women, I would say. I think change must come from the department. I think the department still has a lot to do more in supporting these women (SEM 2).
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They (women) need support. We need to be there for them as the department because they do have qualities that are good and necessary. All in all I think women are very good managers (SEM 5).

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> *We have observed female principals, very good ones, although sometimes they just fail to maintain discipline of staff and learners – but they need support (SEM 1).*

It was interesting that a few women did not want their appointment to be associated with token positions and denied being employed as a result of affirmative action. They however, acknowledged the existence of the policy and its implementation in some cases and that it does help make a difference with regard to women's appointment in management even though it did not necessarily help them. It was mostly women of the later generations who felt they were affirmed because of the affirmative action policy, whereas for the earlier generations the policy was not yet in place. The earlier generations women were however aware of the policy at the time of the interview and did believe it makes a difference with regard to the employment of women in management.

Asked whether affirmative action played a role in their appointment this was how some of them responded:

> *Well I didn't want to be appointed just because I was woman. I wanted to be appointed because I proved that I was capable. I was a suitable person for the job, so even when I went for the interview I did not have this affirmative action thing in my mind, I just told myself I'm just going to fight for the post. I don't expect people to just appoint me because I'm a woman (Lungi).*

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Q: **Then when you applied for...you said you were aware of affirmative action policies?**

A: *Yes I am. Oh then...no I was not and in fact even now I don't like that affirmative policy. The perception is wrong, you have been given the post because you are a female and not capable, I don't like that gender thing. I want capability.*

Q: **But then do you think that these affirmative action policies sort of open doors for women principals?**

A: *They are really but I don't like the perception of many men. We do have very few directors in education that are female, they are being criticized day in and day out, they say that one didn't qualify she was just put here because she is a female. And I don't like that because in terms of productivity...we work in terms of productivity, not in terms of who we*

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are, a male or female. Well maybe they are protective, I don't know but this attitude...they have to change this attitude (Thandiwe).

It was interesting that Thandiwe was aspiring to become a director in the education sector and believed that she stood a better chance because she is a woman, yet at the same time she hated the connotation carried by affirmative action.

In the GETT by Wolpe et al (1997), Ramphele (1995) is cited emphasising the importance of the competence of candidates applying for affirmative positions:

> Affirmative action, while essential for increasing access to resources such as jobs and educational opportunities, is an inappropriate tool for promotion of people simply because they are black or female. Promoting people beyond their level of competence is a disservice to those individuals, and to society as a whole; the long term costs are incalculable. There are no quick fixes to the legacy of apartheid (Ramphele, 1995 in Wolpe et al, 1997:201).

If undeserving women candidates are appointed into these positions just because they are women, negative attitudes would then arise, leading to the questioning on and doubting of the abilities and capabilities of women candidates in general including those competent ones. It is clear that affirmative action policy has to be implemented with caution because it is believed to have the potential to close the gender and racial gaps in the South African contexts. But what is even more important and challenging, is how affirmative action can be used in a way that does not open wider, the social class gap and continue disadvantaging even more, the previously disadvantaged.

7.4.4 Cultural stereotypes

All participants were asked to share their experiences or observations of discrimination on the basis of the candidates' gender. The responses of the female principals and circuit managers revealed some stereotypes that were still held about women's participation in principalship and therefore impacting negatively to their access into the principalship.

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'Principalship is for strong men'

One of the stereotypes was that although there has been a policy move from discrimination on all grounds, principalship continued to be constructed as a male arena. There was a feeling from participants that most governing bodies and communities around the schools were still inclined to having males as principals of secondary schools and believing that males can do a better job.

> A: *Yes because in each bulletin it is emphasised that there should be gender equity. So there is an attempt to help them. We try to conduct workshops, we try to speak to the governing bodies but as I have said that sometimes you find that people talk about the need for a strong man, although you try to discourage that but as an SEM you can't exactly say employ this one. You try to influence them but you can't say they have to because it is their right (SEM 5).*

Some participants associated these stereotypical perspectives with the rural areas where the local chiefs and councillors still have a word on who gets appointed to the position of the principal. However, because these people are not represented on the selection committee, they usually showed their disapproval by not giving their support to the appointed candidate. Nandipha and Thandiwe had first hand experience of the interference of local authorities in the rural areas as will be seen later.

Here is another confirmation from the circuit manager about the involvement of local authorities:

> A: *I think the department is trying to bring in women to higher positions, but as I have said it depends on the areas and one cannot generalise, because sometimes one can see that there are places where one could see that it is difficult for females to head the schools. Sometimes it is because of the violence in the area around the school. So it does happen sometimes. And also other places where "amakhosi" are still dominating and think that they want to see males in authority. But we are trying (SEM 5).*

Others such as Lindi experienced direct discrimination from the interviewing committee in one of the principalship posts she applied to before she got her current one:

Q: *Why do you think you were not taken?*
A: *I think in most of the schools I was not taken because they were looking for somebody. There is a belief in some people in some governing bodies that a principal should be a male principal. Because in one of the school they even told me that I was good but unfortunately they were looking for a man. So they couldn't take me. So in most of the schools they wanted male principals. And this was the only school amongst those schools that was just neutral and looking for a principal not a man. Why I am saying this is because in those schools, they took men and they didn't take women.*
Q: *And those would have been males you had gone to interviews with?*
A: *Yes.*
Q: *Did they mention why they wanted male principals particularly.*
A: *Yah, because they do believe that it is only males that can manage. In our community there is still a belief that the place of a woman is still in the kitchen. A woman cannot lead a school, especially a high school. It needs a strong male who can discipline the children (Lindi, p. 4).*

Thus, it is evident that discrimination on the basis of gender is prevalent in the rural areas, and it is so blatant that women were told to their faces they could not be taken because the panel was looking for a man.

Circuit managers also confirmed that governing bodies still have a strong belief in the power of a man as a high school principal; the belief that sabotages the employment of female principals. The following excerpt is one example given by one of the circuit managers and it reflects how some governing bodies make their choices of principals:

Since I came in I have been promoting lady principals not because they are ladies but because they were capable. But these were mostly in the primary schools. You know when it comes to the lady principals of the high schools, with the governing body as a selection team, I remember one incident that touched me very much. This one woman was dynamic in the interview, very good with good results from her former school. Once she was out of the interview I told the governing body that this is the good person and I know she can make it. But the governing body said they cannot stand a female principal. They said the place is war torn and asked what she would do. I told them that had nothing to do with the school because we were not employing a person to fight wars but a person to manage the school. But they said no, not a lady principal. In fact they did not want to tell me point blank because I am a lady SEM that what they don't want is a lady principal

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in the school. I tried to talk to them but they just wouldn't listen just because she was a lady. So when it comes to the governing body, they don't mind choosing a lady to become a member of the school governing body, but when it comes to the chairperson, they want a man. They have so many excuses to make, that they need a strong person, and all that and I just don't know what they mean when they say "strong". And I think that is another aspect in the leading position they want a man not a female (SEM 1).

It was an interesting contradiction that other circuit inspectors felt there are indeed areas where women cannot cope. And they sometimes use their influence to recommend men for such areas:

Communities differ according to where schools are based. In the deep rural areas there is still a belief that secondary school principals should be men. Sometimes SEMs do recommend men in areas where they think women won't cope – if the area is wild or violent (SEM 5).

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It is only in very few enlightened communities where women are accepted and supported as principals of the high schools, and in these cases they mostly have to prove themselves first (SEM 4).

Thus, views about different areas affecting the appointment of female principals could hold true to a large extent and these views held by the selectors about women principals seem to be affecting them more at the acquisition level. If most governing bodies and rural communities still believe a principal has to be a "strong man", where does that perception leave women candidates who equally qualify for the posts yet they lack the required "strength"? And how is this strength (whether it means strong in authority or strong in discipline) determined? It is clear that women do lose out in communities where such perceptions still reign since there are no clear criteria for assessing this strength.

'Women lack confidence'

Another stereotype held by circuit managers was that women do not get the posts because they lack confidence. There was a strong feeling amongst the circuit inspectors that most women lack the confidence to apply for management posts because they feel they just

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cannot cope. These are some of the things said by the circuit managers about women educators in promotion posts.

> *Women feel inferior; they undermine themselves and their capabilities (SEM 10).*

> *Even for those women who apply, they don't show enough confidence in the interviews and that works to their disadvantage. Some women can write good CVs, but when they do not back their CVs up with a good presentation that shows they can really do the job, and then they do not qualify (SEM 6).*

One circuit manager indicated that management even outside education is still considered the province of men, and sometimes women are shy and when they go for these interviews and they are not bold, the interview panel can be very intimidating.

> *Some communities are still male oriented and they need women who can really tell and show what they are made of (SEM 2).*

As said by the circuit managers this reveals the lack of confidence on the part of the female applicants themselves and the male attributes of management that the panels look for in the applicants. But I would argue that this view further perpetuates the stereotype that women who get into management should be 'super strong' because the interview panels can be intimidating. Surely if they are that intimidating, they should also intimidate men. Why should women make an extra effort to impress the panel? Because they already hold a preconceived view that women do not have what it takes to head secondary schools.

Circuit inspectors further had a perception that women are shy or not as bold as their male counterparts in the sense that they fear taking chances in terms of saying the wrong things in the wrong way. The issue of language and responses to some of the questions was brought up that women are sometimes too conscious of what they say and how they say it, while men on the other hand "*just talk and say the wrong things with confidence*".

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Confidence was therefore regarded to be an essential attribute that women should possess to improve their chances of getting the principalship posts.

This was also seen to confirm what was established earlier in chapter 6 where women principals themselves admitted that they did not aspire for the principalship because they did not have the confidence that they would get it.

'Women can't take decisions'

The third stereotype identified was of problems being attributed to the particular gender of the principals. One circuit manager quoted an instance of a school, which had recently appointed a male principal because the previous acting female principal did not perform well. The governing body preferred a male because the acting female principal could not take decisions on her own but relied heavily on the governing body. So the governing body associated her indecisiveness with her gender. The following excerpts are some of the assertions made by the circuit inspectors:

> *Women principals cannot take decisions on their own (SEM 9).*
>
> *****
>
> *... It is difficult to say, because it (the problem) is not with the women it is not with the system. I think the society thing that we have that women cannot face difficult situations. That is why even they themselves feel that they cannot apply if the school is in deep rural areas. But that is actually still in the whole society so one cannot say it is because of women who don't want to apply but I think we still have that perception, all of us (SEM 3).*

Other examples were cited where there were disputes between the principal and other educators or there was vandalism of the school property and these would be attributed to the fact that schools are headed by female principals.

However, this association with certain attributes to gender appeared to have worked for women in some instances. Some women actually got the posts because of their gender according to circuit managers' observations. Male principals were associated with bad

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behaviour including sexual harassment, alcohol abuse, mismanagement of funds and absenteeism. In some cases the governing body actually set out to look for a female principal because they were tired of the behaviour of the male principal. Biziwe is one example of a woman principal who replaced a male principal who was involved in "fraud"[12]. She believes that enhanced her appointment as a school principal.

This was also observed as a pattern with most women principals who replaced male principals who were dysfunctional for various reasons[13]. These reasons included involvement in business or politics, which then left them very little time for the school and left all their work for their deputies. Gugu was one principal who believed that she was recommended as acting principal because her former male principal was always absent from school and his deputy, a male, was an alcoholic. Phumi also replaced a male principal who was regarded as insensitive and lacking compassion.

Although these perspectives may not necessarily have a direct negative impact on principals who are already in the management posts, they appear to inform the governing bodies' subsequent selections and this is when they become adamant that they would not want to have a male or female principal for a particular reason.

Another example was cited where the governing body had given the principalship and deputy principalship posts to two women. Unfortunately things did not go well in that particular school under the leadership of these two women. Matric results were poor and there was generally a problem with discipline in the school and the principal was displaced. After that the governing body wanted to give the post to a male HOD because they were convinced that women just could not cope.

Thus, evidently some factors work to the disadvantage of female applicants in getting management posts, because there is obviously failure to separate the person's gender with particular weaknesses. If the governing body's choice of selection would be informed by

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[12] Also elaborated in the next chapter. Refer to her story in Appendix A.
[13] See the next chapter. Phumi and Gugu's stories in Appendix A

the performance of the previous principal this becomes another vicious cycle given the current dominance of men in principalship that if men continue doing well, there would probably never be a need to affirm women candidates.

Contrary to what appeared to be happening in practice with regard to the appointment of women principals, circuit managers seemed very optimistic about the performance of most women in the management of schools. Although the statistics are still very low, they are hopeful that in a few years there will be a remarkable difference of women's presence in management. As far as they are concerned, the gender of an individual has nothing to do with their ability to manage the school. In fact they believe that women somehow make better managers of schools as they are hardly involved in fraud or sexual harassment cases, and this was the view that both male and female circuit managers shared together with the women principals themselves. But circuit managers felt their hands were tied by the policies since they can only play a limited role that does not give them power to make decisions or over-rule decisions made by governing bodies.

However, the one issue that seemed to worry them is that of women not being able to enforce discipline in the school on both the learners and the educators. According to them some women principals seem to be struggling to enforce discipline, but do not necessarily attribute this to their biological make up. They believe that women have not been exposed to management roles in the work place and they therefore need a lot of support and guidance from their employers and colleagues, which they lack in most cases.

7.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The above presentation summarises the findings on the recruitment and selection of women principals and barriers to accessing the posts. One of the issues that came out strongly is the fact that policy is still at a very symbolic level – where there are ideals set out to be achieved, yet at the practice level there is not much happening. The initiative for recruitment and support seems to be there on the part of the department as the employer of principals of schools and educators in general, but most of the things have just begun

and the transformation process is still very slow despite the fact that at the level of policy, the initiative started about a decade ago.

Although training is provided to the interviewing committees, a lot still needs to be done to conscientise the communities about some of the changes that they have to implement, particularly when it comes to their prejudices in employing women as secondary school principals. There are still many irregularities within the system when it comes to selection practices and perceptions.

Although they act as resource persons in the interviewing process, the circuit inspectors felt that with the system as it is they have very little to do or say because the South African Schools Act gives the governing body the power to select their own principals. They do not necessarily have a problem with that, but they also felt if they could play a little more active role they could provide the necessary help in many instances. When it comes to the employment practices, particularly with regard to the powers given to the governing body regarding employment of school principals, circuit inspectors had a strong conviction that *"the whole system needs to be altered"* in order to allow for a more productive input from their part in the process. Their dissatisfaction with their level of engagement reflects the fact that they are tied down by policy, and as a result their level of intervention is limited.

The literature on gender and management suggests that gender has a huge impact on women's access and entry into positions of top management of schools. This is because women are still discriminated against and lack administrative preparation for the positions purely on the basis of their gender. The findings from this chapter have revealed gendered patterns with regard to women's entry into the principalship and the complexity of the barriers to women's participation in education management in general. Cultural factors impact substantially on the implementation of anti-discriminatory mandate of the law.

CHAPTER 8

WOMEN PRINCIPALS IN ACTION

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The two previous chapters dealt with women principals' preparation for principalship and acquisition of these posts respectively. These chapters focused on the training these women received and the experiences that prepared them for principalship. Their experiences of their attempts to get entry into principalship and the procedures of entry were also dealt with, as well as barriers they came across in these processes and their coping mechanisms that enabled them to be where they are in spite of the problems they encountered. This chapter aims to tackle the performance phase with emphasis on how women principals performed the management function after appointment. It deals with their experiences in terms of institutional support and other factors that enhanced and/or hindered the women principals' performance and progress as newly appointed principals.

In this chapter I present findings on women principals' performance experiences through an analysis of factors that impacted positively and negatively on their performance in management positions. These factors include amongst others the support that women principals received or did not receive from the stakeholders, the constraints posed by the clash between family and school responsibilities and other barriers to their performance and how they dealt with them.

8.2 MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

The studied women principals identified mentoring as one of the sources of support they relied on in their performance of the management function. In South Africa formal mentoring programmes were not in place when this study was conducted. But in this study, women principal participants identified informal mentoring to have assisted them

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during their initial years of principalship. For many participants, mentors were their former principals and other principals from neighbouring primary schools. Other people identified as mentors (albeit few) were people who did not necessarily work in the education environment but they provided moral support and helped with solutions on how women principals could tackle some of the challenges and problems they were faced with. Women principals acknowledged the assistance of mentors in their success in management and mostly believed they would not have made it on their own.

Four of the interviewed women principals had their former principals as their mentors. These mentoring relationships for women protégés in this category started when their mentors encouraged them to apply for principalship. The mentors continued to provide support for the women until after their appointment as principals. In three of these cases, the former principals had been promoted to higher posts in the district offices and it therefore appeared easy for them to provide support since the women were still under their jurisdiction. One former principal had left the school to pursue his political interests, but still felt responsible for giving a hand in the school. The women principals described these relationships to have lasted until they found their own feet and *"knew what they were doing"*. After that they did not necessarily need to consult anymore since they had gained some confidence, but their mentors remained available for assistance.

For these women principals whose mentors were their former principals, there was an expression of how they felt inadequate to take some of the decisions even those they used to take in the presence of the ex-principal. One participant confessed that she was just afraid of *"being accountable"* and always felt like she had to report to somebody else to approve what she did or decided.

> *Normally people came to me before to report problems, to report cases. I would solve them and give him report back and ask was it proper? And he would approve. But now there was nobody. I was accountable! (Zama)*

The initial presence of her mentor therefore meant a lot in showing approval of what she did.

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Protégés who had their former principals as their mentors talked at length about what they learnt from them as their role models which is what they emulated as managers. The following extracts show this:

> *... He was very good, even the learners liked the school, we were participating everywhere, debate, everywhere and we were masters because of his skills. So that is why I was just observing and he was always punctual and he was just a good role model to me... Doing the work with that kind of man, learning a lot you know, where I am, most of it is because of my former principal (Zandi).*

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> *He taught me a lot, directly and indirectly. He was a very intelligent person, could make you work you know. Most people didn't like him because he could make you work, but I said to myself, I'm here to work. When he gives me work that I'm trained to do, I don't mind, but if he let me do something that I'm not here for, I will tell him I'm not going to do it. But he never did that. He gave me work that I was here for. So I said there's nothing wrong with that, I'm going to do the work. He just wanted work, and I did the work, so we always got along because of that (Thully).*

In these excerpts women principals describe their working relationships with their former principals as their role models whom they emulated in their own performances as managers. What I found particularly striking was the admiration these women principals had for their former male principals. Their sense of having learnt so much from their former principals could have stemmed partly from their sense of wanting to play the game by the rules in order for them to succeed as women in a male profession (Smulyan, 2000) and to be appreciated by this man as the male authority of the male dominated system.

Another category of mentors was the circuit managers in the women principals' circuits. Five women principals described their circuit inspectors as having played a mentoring role. One of these circuit managers was a woman and the protégé indicated that her mentor helped her both at the professional and personal levels. The other four had male circuit managers who were very useful in terms of giving guidance and providing

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solutions to problems. Here the relationships were enhanced by the closeness of work between the circuit manager and the principal. According to the educational management hierarchy[14], circuit management is the level just above principalship and the latter is regarded as formal preparation for the former. It therefore follows that principals relied on circuit managers' judgement and guidance as their immediate superiors who were also familiar with what the women were doing.

The third category of mentors who played the biggest role in mentoring the women principals were male principals of neighbouring primary schools. Thirteen women principals were mentored by neighbouring primary school principals. The protégés in this category described the relationship with their mentors as having been there for them from when they first got appointed and up to the point when they were interviewed for this study, they still relied heavily on their support. These mentors were seen as playing a bigger role where protégés had problems with staff or learners in terms of strikes. The mentors would always come to the women's rescue and help them with a variety of issues related to the running of schools. Most of the women principals under this category of mentors had replaced male principals who had been displaced because there were some problems in the school or who had retired and could not seek support from their former principals. One principal indicated that she did try to seek support from her former principal who told her, "*he took a package because he was not coping and could not fit now because of these changes and policies so he could not help*". Other participants' predecessors were just not available and therefore could not be utilized.

Other participants did not necessarily have mentors but relied on support they got from friends and partners and all other support structures available. Thus, four women principals were mentored by their former principals, five by their circuit managers and thirteen by the neighbouring primary school principals. Women principals evidently relied on a lot of mentoring support that was essential for them to cope in their newly acquired positions. All these mentoring relationships were informal but participants

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[14] Refer to the diagram provided in Chapter 3 showing the hierarchical protocol in South African educational management.

benefited tremendously from them. Malone (2000) refers to this as "classical mentoring" where a protégé finds a mentor willing to serve as a guide and counsellor more by chance than by merit. These relationships are rendered highly valuable to those who benefited from them and in some cases the particular kind of leadership it fostered. However, Malone (2000) argues that these relationships tended towards "like producing like" which put women at a disadvantage since most of the mentors would be men. Most of the mentors for the participants in the current study were men and the inequities these relationships create need to be scrutinised. This issue is further discussed in chapter nine.

8.3   COLLEGIAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Other than support from mentors, women principals also commented on the support they got or did not get from their colleagues. Support from colleagues in the performance phase is vital for the performance of the newly appointed principals and the desired success (Van Eck and Volman, 1996). Wedekind (2001) states that collegial relations, and the notion of collegiality are central to the ways in which teachers experience their careers and their lives more generally. For purposes of this chapter, I share the understanding of colleagues with Wedekind that colleagues are understood to be people connected to the participants on a work centred relationship. However, for purposes of this chapter my understanding encompasses people within the same field as participants even those from outside the participants' own schools, as Wedekind also establishes that a collegial relationship can also extent beyond the boundaries of a school.

In this context, collegial support therefore involved support from participants' own colleagues in management from within their own schools and those who were principals in other schools. The latter was more networking as the participants appeared to have formed a sort of club. But the networks seemed to have been a very useful form of support for the women principals that they continued to rely on. Some participants who did not have these networks were envious of them because they believed they could be very useful. However, not all participants received support from their colleagues as will

be seen below. There were differences between male and female colleagues in terms of the support they provided and differences between urban and rural areas.

Participants also relied on the support provided by the school governing body and the community outside the school. The relationship of the previous principal with the school community seemed to have set a tone for the relationship with the succeeding principals. On the one hand, women who replaced dysfunctional principals or principals who for one reason or another were not on good terms with the school community won the support of everybody in the school immediately after their appointment. In these cases women principals were regarded as saviours to redeem the schools from their problems created by their predecessors.

Biziwe is one such case who had replaced a male principal who was involved in fraud with the school funds and as she puts it, the governing body was hoping that '*a woman would be better*'.

> *... I must say I didn't get a lot of things from him. He was very autocratic and a bully most of the time. He delegated all the duties to me except finances. ... and now he is in jail because he was involved in fraud. ... I receive one hundred percent support from the governing body and the community, ... even the Inkosi was very supportive. But some teachers did not support me, they said I am the one who reported on him (Biziwe).*

Gugu succeeded a principal who used to drink a lot and absented himself from school for months, pursuing his other interests.

> *... the principal left in May. Until end of year the school was just running by itself. ... so after long talks with the local chief inspector, the inspector asked whether there was anyone qualified who could act as a principal and they all pointed at me. I was really depressed but all the people were excited calling me principal already. ... and I had lots of support (Gugu).*

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Phumi came after the principal who had been transferred to another school after he had dismissed an unmarried female teacher who fell pregnant and delivered the baby in the staff room and the baby died.

> *I did get the support. I don't know whether I was fortunate because the principal who was at the school at the time he left the school when there were lots of problems and learners didn't like him. I came at the time when he was expelled by the pupils. I asked the reasons why they chased the principal away and they said he was selfish because he expelled a lady teacher who got pregnant and had the baby in the staffroom and the baby died. So it was very insensitive. ... because the learners were influenced by teachers. They didn't know anything about pregnancy and unmarried teachers. And I just told myself I had to be very careful.*
> *Q:* **Do you think you got this post because of your gender?**
> *A:* *Yes (Phumi).*

As she put it, Phumi's school community was hoping to get somebody who was a little more sensitive and she thinks her gender worked to her advantage. All of these three women received a lot of support from the school communities with the hope that women would handle issues a bit more tactfully.

The other women who replaced principals who were mostly liked by staff and had left the school due to retirement or promotion, had a hard time being received and supported by the school community. Zama, Fundi and Carol were such cases. Carol and Fundi had replaced retired old male principals. Carol's ex-principal had started the school and had earned a lot of respect and support from the staff and the community at large. As a young woman principal stepping into the shoes of such a person, Carol experienced a lot of resistance from the colleagues and the community:

> *There were lots of challenges especially regarding the community with the fact that I was a woman and he was the one who built this school. So he was an old man who had been here for a while and people were saying this man has got big shoes and how can this young woman enter those big shoes, is she going to cope... so those were basically the challenges (Carol).*

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Fundi's colleagues and community provided no support because they evidently could not accept the reign of a woman:

> ... they started having no trust and no confidence in me as a female principal in such a way that when we had meetings, my deputy is a man, so they would time and again keep referring to him (my deputy). Whenever I made a point they wouldn't take it seriously but when the same point was raised and emphasised by the deputy then it would be taken seriously. And also the parents when we had parents meeting they don't listen to me as the principal, they would like to listen to the deputy (Fundi).

Everyone liked Zama's predecessor to the extent that they all cried when he left. He left to further his studies abroad and the whole school community just could not accept that he was going. Zama had a lot of resistance when she started acting as principal, but fortunately had the support of the governing body and because she had been his deputy, she was the most suitable person to take over.

A number of the participants did not have support from some staff members who had an interest in the post. Thembi experienced the same thing where the community liked her but some staff members did not provide support because one male teacher had his eyes on the post.

Women principals who got into principalship positions from outside the schools also suffered the same treatment of the initial lack of support. In most of these cases somebody from within the school (a man) would have applied and not been successful. Sindi, Thandiwe and Xoli were such cases. These women suffered a lot of resistance and had to work hard to earn their support and acceptance. Shervanni, Nelly and Sibo experienced lack of immediate support even though they were not necessarily from outside. Three of them got the 'in house promotions' but there were men from within the school who had applied and were not offered the posts. Shervanni shares her experience:

> ... It was supposed to have been the best day of my long teaching career when I got the letter of promotion but it turned out to be ugly because certain groups of people had motivated pupils to strike and boycott the classes because a certain

person did not get the post. And I think I just want to put this on record that for many years I have been happy in teaching but promotion brought no joy because it didn't bring job satisfaction. It has been very difficult for me as a woman here – at first I could not even be given a chance to act as a principal because it was just assumed I could not do the job. And they were prepared to take the level 2 teacher who is a male to act than to get a female to act. That was the kind of prejudice. It wasn't very easy to work in those circumstances and this school has been embroiled with problems, (Shervanni).

Two issues come into play here. The prejudice that she experienced because she got a promotion that had been earmarked for somebody else and because she was a woman and therefore it was assumed she could not do the principalship job. Both factors seemed to have played a role in denying her the support she needed from her colleagues after her promotion.

Thandiwe and Nandipha had almost similar experiences where they felt they were undermined and not supported just because they were women and the community and colleagues were just not ready to accept them.

... So from 1996 to 1999, I was never supported except by the chairperson, the secretary and a few members of the governing body. It was a very terrible state of affairs such that I never knew whether I was a principal or a stranger or a teacher or whatever, I couldn't do anything (Thandiwe).

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And the other thing that I must say about the area is that males of the community hate to see the woman being the head. It is in their instinct. They visited me several times saying "You woman leave this school we need a male here", I am serious. They say "This is a big school we need a man, a strong man in this school not a woman, 'umfazi' like this one (Nandipha).

The common issue for these women principals was that they all got the principalship posts in the rural areas. Nandipha and Thandiwe's schools were in the deep and highly traditional rural areas where women are not listened to and where there is no interest to educate girl children. Thandiwe describes her school environment as

... a big rural area where a woman has no say even to her husband about the education of her children even today...even now as I'm talking to you. Female

learners leave school as early as Standard 2, very much against the will of the mother, just because the father has decided that (Thandiwe).

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... The school is located in the rural area, a very primitive area. ... the community does not believe in educating females. If you are a female you are not important. Girls are working and boys go to school. There are very few girls at high school, compared to the primary level. At primary level they are almost equal in numbers. I asked one of the principals if he has the same problem and he said they are almost in equal numbers in the primary. Their fathers believe that girls must go to school so that they are able to write a letter. That is the aim. Once they are able to write a letter what is the need to let a girl to continue with the school because at the end she'll get married and leave his father and what about his money. So as soon as she passes Standard 5 they must go and work (Nandipha).

In both Nandipha and Thandiwe's schools, there were more boys than girls because girls leave school early to work or get married as parents are not willing to educate them further because they are going to leave them anyway. This treatment and attitude towards women seems to be broader and deeply rooted within the rural societies and that is why Nandipha says; *"it is in their instinct"*. The patriarchal belief in the power men have over women is clearly displayed in these instances. Cultural traditions and stereotypes clearly operate against the development of women. Mahlase (1997) identified lack of access to education and parental attitudes to female education as a feature of traditional constraints on girls. This ultimately has an impact on the limited representation of women positions of power since they would be denied opportunity to education at an early age.

Kaabwe (2003) cites Kelly (1994) who argues that in some Africans traditions girls are not seen as persons in their own right. Girls are seen as people whose future beneficiaries are their husbands and therefore educating them is a cost that parents are not prepared to take. That is why if pressed with financial constraints, parents would choose to educate a boy instead of a girl because they are most likely to reap the benefits from him economically and socially in their old age. A number of other factors including economic, health and geographical are also cited as reasons affecting girls' education which therefore affect their subsequent appointment in management positions.

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Although Nandipha and Thandiwe both came from the rural schools what they went through could not be ascribed to all deep rural areas. Sile, Phumi and Lindi were also in deep rural schools but they received tremendous support from the whole school community. When Sile had problems with her former principal who was at the time her circuit manager, the community, including the governing body and her colleagues were all behind her. Her colleagues even offered to share her teaching load amongst themselves so she could just focus on running the school.

Interestingly, Shervanni and Devi were the only Indians from urban schools but they still experienced discrimination on the basis of their gender. Other women principals were supported by the community outside the school and not supported by some of their teaching colleagues and vice versa. This illuminates the plurality and diversity of women's experiences emphasised by post structural feminists. What came out glaringly though, were the discourses in which women principals seemed to be absorbed. In the urban areas the fight seemed to be centred more on the issues of power. Men in these communities appeared to be using their social power to exercise their rule over women, while in the rural areas one could argue that the situation is ruled more by the social beliefs and expectations on what the roles of men and women are.

Another finding with regard to support was that some women principals did not get support from their male staff as one woman principal quoted one of the male staff putting it bluntly *"I cannot be headed by umfazi[15]"*. Three participants, Fundi, Sibo and Sindi indicated that their male staff would clearly defy their authority and yet would respond positively to the authority of the male deputy principals.

> *... I can make one example.... Sometimes when we have a meeting I explain a point and they would just oppose you openly. And I will stress and explain and he will say I am not explaining clearly and when I ask another man to explain the same thing they would say they understand (Fundi).*

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[15] "Umfazi" is a Zulu word for woman.

On the other hand other, some principals drew most of their support from their male staff as compared to female staff as shown below:

The teachers you know, mostly males, they support me a lot. They cooperate a lot, you know male teachers, they even go to an extent of calling them "abafana ba mam" meaning they are my boys. You know they support me all out, all out. From female staff, there is not much but I just ignore it and I pretend as if nothing has ever happened (Zama).

Xoli, Carol and Sibo were also undermined by their female staff. Arndt (2000) on African feminism calls this a woman-on-woman discrimination that contributes to women's own oppression.

Most of what is discussed above is what women experienced as newly appointed principals and a few still experienced lack of support even at the time of the interview. It is evident that while some women principals were automatically supported and accepted by everyone after their appointment, the same cannot be said about all women principals. Some women principals had to work hard to be accepted in the community of their schools. These women 'passed the interviews' and had the required credentials and they consequently shattered the entry barrier.

However, some people were not happy with their appointments and they expressed this by not offering them their support. Because they were qualified and met the criteria they could not be discriminated against at the entry level, but those who did not feel comfortable with the presence of women principals tried to show it by not giving support after their appointment. These women therefore had to work extremely hard to earn the support from all stakeholders and to prove that their appointment was not just for window dressing.

Except for a few, most women principals were a little happier and more settled at the time I interviewed them. The level of support from all sources had increased for most of them and this is the support that most of them had to work hard to earn. Several cases were cited where women were only accepted after achieving a certain pass rate at matriculation level or making some improvements in the physical appearance of the

school. There were many different ways observed that women used to gain support of colleagues and community though most of it did not seem to be conscious attempts to win support. For some women, they gained support and acceptance through the hard work they put in improving the schools' physical resources as Sindi did:

> *... At the time when I took over principalship the school was in tatters, it was nothing but a kraal of cattle, and then I started looking for funds for the school to be renovated. And that is when they started recognizing that a woman really is not just somebody who is just there in long dresses but it's somebody who is actually working. If you are a principal you are neither woman nor man, but what works is the vision that you have (Sindi).*

Gugu did the same thing:

> *I got a lot of support myself and I think it was from the work that I did. I told you about when I was attacked and what happened was the boys who did that were exiled from the place. They went to Durban and the Durban people learnt that they had been troublesome and beat them up and chased them back. So they are there now and they behave and I think it is because of the strength of the community support. And I think they wouldn't do that if I were just an ordinary woman who thinks I am entitled to the position because I am a woman. But if you do your work and perform regardless of your gender I think you will definitely get people to change (Gugu).*

Gugu and Sindi had similar experiences where they worked hard to renovate the schools and enforce more discipline that eventually helped them to get total support from the community and the staff. Nandipha is another example of somebody who worked really hard to shift the way the school operated. She initially had nobody's support including learners since she was perceived as "*too strict*". But at the time of the interview, she had turned the school and the community around.

Thus, there seemed to be various reasons why women principals did not get support after their appointment. Women managers still have to prove themselves to gain support from their school communities. Discussions with the circuit managers also revealed that if the community is not in favour of the appointment of a particular person they do not offer their support, and most women stay on out of their own stubbornness.

Nandipha was confronted by the community to leave the school but continued to stay because as she puts it she *"wanted to prove them wrong"*. For many women there were clearly lots of challenges but they stayed. These are clearly some of the pressures women are faced with at the performance phase that could make them leave the management positions at the same rate they enter as observed by Chisholm (2000) and Van Eck and Volman (1996). Not many people would be willing to stand that kind of treatment.

8.4   DEPARTMENTAL SUPPORT

Other than colleagues and mentors, another source of support identified by the women principals was from the district offices. The management route model identifies support as very important for the performance of newly appointed women principals given their lack of exposure in the field and the hostility of the male dominated organisational cultures to women's styles of leadership. One form of support is through induction training to ensure that women are not just dumped onto the positions where they have to find their own way, but that they formally get introduced and familiarised with the roles, responsibilities and expectations carried by their acquired positions.

In their responses to the whole question of support, women principals spoke of *lack of support* from the district offices as newly appointed principals. A few women mentioned induction training and other workshops run by the DOE on various aspects such as financial management and human relations. Other women principals also attended some training workshops provided by the unions. However, the findings generally revealed limited induction training from the district.

8.4.1   Induction training

Only four women principals attended induction courses, which were specifically meant for newly appointed principals though not necessarily women, while the majority of them attended some workshops meant for all principals and/or managers after their

appointment, which were not specifically directed towards newly appointed ones. The four women who were formally inducted into the positions were only from two of the eight educational regions in the KwaZulu Natal province. From the rest of the other regions there was no indication of induction programmes offered except for general workshops that involved all managers in education, old and new.

Of the four women who attended induction courses, only one indicated that there was a specific focus on women managers at some point during the series of workshops offered for all principals:

> *There were a series of programmes not necessarily geared for women principals, but for all new principals. My former circuit manager the one who got promoted she was very keen on progress and gender equity and she did make it a point that at one point or another the women principals were trained for financial management specifically for women principals because she figured that most of the men were already familiar with managing finances and stuff like that (Sindi).*

Sindi got the promotion into principalship in 1995 and remained the only female principal of a secondary school in her circuit until 2003. The other women principals with whom she was trained were from primary schools. The remaining three women principals who received induction training, were trained in roles and responsibilities of managers in the schools and how to deal with human relations.

Other than the four women principal participants who attended the induction courses, thirteen attended other workshops running as a series for all school managers and not necessarily for those newly appointed. But these workshops appeared to have coincided with the women principals' appointment. These workshops were generally running for school managers particularly on transformation issues such as new policies and other programmes of which gender was not a part. According to the women principals these workshops were mostly on the weekend or for two days and were not sustained or followed up to ensure progress on what they were trained on. This was a variety of women from all the regions.

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The remaining group of women principals did not attend either the induction workshop, or any other workshops that were run for school managers at the time they assumed their principalship posts. The reasons given here was that they were never invited to attend any workshops because invitations were not sent through circulars, but some principals were either phoned or told by others. So this led to some of them attending workshops much later in their career as principals.

> *Q:*   *In terms of training what support did you get from the department?*
> *A:*   *Not much, it was...you know now people who are appointed now here they are given workshops and things like that but with us at that time we never went for any workshops and something like that. We just had to work...we continued working (Xoli).*

Xoli got appointed in 1998 after acting for two years and she was not the only one:

> *...no we didn't receive any courses. I haven't gone for any courses for management. I think you just learn on the job (Shervanni).*

Shervanni had been acting principal for over a year before she got the promotion in 2000. Hally also got her post in 1998 and also did not undergo any training whatsoever. She reckoned the reason behind this was because she and her governing body were all new and did not have anybody to help or inform them. From a girls' only school perspective, she was replacing a female principal. For her, exclusive training for women is not more important than men's. She therefore did not think that she needed any training on the basis of her gender status. But training from the department for women or newly appointed principals was not out of choice. The point remains; she was never invited for any training like the rest of the women who got principalship before the 2000s. Thus, not all women were invited for training and even for those who did they did not find it very helpful because it was not sustained. However, women principals acknowledged that principals who were appointed recently did receive induction training. But for the participants, only four out of the twenty-four women principals interviewed, went specifically for an induction course, while thirteen attended some workshops that coincided with their appointment and seven only started attending workshops much later.

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The lack of specific focus on formal induction of women into principalship was confirmed by the circuit inspectors who felt that the district was not doing enough to help women adapt to *"these hostile environments that are dominated by men" (SEM 1)*. It is evident, that depending on their regions and the time of appointment, women principals went through different experiences in terms of training. At the time of the interview women principals pointed to their involvement in other workshops which were meant specifically for women. But even there, not all of them knew about the programmes and some would have missed one or two workshops because they did not get the invitation. But these evidently came much later into the women principals' career and although some targeted at women in and into management, there was still very little happening at the performance phase for women principals.

According to the women principals, gender specific workshops only came later in the early 2000s. At the time of the interview, some women empowerment workshops were running in the province. Women principals confirmed that there was an increasing emphasis on 'empowerment of women initiatives' through workshops that were run by the DoE. There were several initiatives such the Transformation and Gender Equity and Women in Management that carried out most of these workshops. However, for some participants it appeared as just lip service because not much was happening on the ground. Here is one principal sharing her experience of what happened in her region:

> *A:*   *In our region there is this thing to start Women in Management but just here it wasn't a workshop it was a launch for the Women in Management organization and then that was it!*
> *Q:*   ***What, are you a member of that?***
> *A:*   *Yaah, I'm a member of that but nothing happened afterwards. It was actually a launch, we enjoyed ourselves, it was nice and then that was it, nothing happened after that. Up to now there hasn't been anything (Xoli).*

It was evident from the women's accounts that there were inconsistencies both in terms of those areas that attempted to implement such support structures for women, and in terms of areas where there was no initiative at all. Women principals were not aware of any policy or regulation aimed at women in this regard and it appeared different regions

did their own thing. From some district offices there were manuals written specifically for training women who were appointed into management positions, but as has been shown above, most women missed these types of training at the time they were appointed. Parikh and Farrell (1991) in their assertion for the need to train women managers, state that women managers need specific training because many of their issues are gender specific. They further assert that induction and training programmes enhance women's efficiency and effectiveness as well as facilitate their management of their multiple roles at home and the workplace.

8.4.2   School visits

Although there seems to have been limited support for women principals through training, some participants mentioned that they received visits from the departmental officials after their appointment to check on how they were doing. However, this was not a regular pattern for the majority of women principals. In fact only three women mentioned support through visits from the circuit managers. Significantly, these women who received visits were those who were encouraged to apply for the posts by the same circuit inspectors who had become their personal mentors. So the visit from the circuit managers was more of a sustained mentoring role that cannot be generalised as a form of support for newly appointed women principals.

From the circuit managers' view, acknowledgement was made that newly appointed women principals need a lot more support from the district than they were getting at the time. Circuit managers also confirmed that they do pay school visits, but mostly check on the running of the school in general, not necessarily to provide support to newly appointed women principals. They mentioned various ways in which women are generally supported or empowered. In one region the department started training women on how to write a CV that helped women access the management jobs not only in the schools, but at district level as well. As has been seen in the previous chapter, some women get eliminated at the initial screening process because they cannot write good

CVs that would get them the job. The circuit managers admitted that the bigger responsibility for the districts is how to make sure that women who get access into the positions continue to stay. To this effect, there was no support structure formally put in place.

Evidence from the circuit inspectors also reflected the difference amongst districts with regard to the level of support offered to the women in management. Some circuit inspectors confirmed that regular visits to the schools are provided to the newly appointed principals while others admitted the guilt of not supporting women as much as they need to be supported. All circuit managers confirmed that developmental programmes or workshops that enable women's interaction with staff and the governing bodies are provided. But there was nothing helping women in terms of dealing with the communities and this, ironically, was where most women principals, particularly those in the rural areas, encountered problems with the local chiefs and councillors.

Other measures put in place for support of women principals included having an open door policy for everyone to consult at any time when they have problems and having an open cellular phone line to enable them access to the office all the time. It must be emphasised here that these were not the standard support mechanisms applicable to every district, but are offered by different officials in their own areas of command at different times. In fact only three of the ten circuit inspectors attested to having open door policy and open phone lines.

Although some circuit inspectors did attest to giving some support to women who are newly appointed, others confessed that the DoE is not doing enough and that is one of the reasons why some women have a hard time in the management of schools which consequently leads to some not wanting to stay. They indicated that in most cases women are *"thrown into the deep end and left to either swim or sink"* because even the workshops that are provided, are not sustained and there are no measures put in place to follow up and provide continuous support.

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Women principals further complained about lack of support from the DOE even with regard to the general running of the schools. Most of them expressed their frustration with the district officials not responding in time to the needs of their schools. There seemed to be general consensus from women principals on this aspect that was also confirmed by the governing body members. From governing body members there was further confirmation on the issue of workshops and school visits provided by the district to principals in general, but due to the nature of their work[16] they could not verify the subject of the workshops that the principals attend.

In summary of this section, interviewed women principals lacked both professional and institutional support. Women had the biggest complaints with regard to general support from the department, which were also backed by some circuit managers themselves. Circuit managers themselves did not agree on the level of support the department offers the women principals and this verifies the lack of uniformity observed earlier and a lack of policies guiding the issues of support. Most of the programmes offered as induction at the beginning are not monitored or followed up on to make sure that women are coping. In addition, there are many other organisational practices such as the lack of support from colleagues and the community that make the newly appointed women managers' work difficult and there was therefore a feeling that the department still has a lot of work to do with regard to the issue of support since no policies were in place to address this issue.

8.5   BALANCING HOME AND WORK

The relationship between family and career has been seen as a difficult one for women who work and women who have families. The nature of women's families determined the degree to which women get involved in active development of their career. Smit (1978) suggests that balancing private and public life for women with families can be complicated and stressful. The problem is even bigger for women who are married

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[16] According to the SASA (1996) the work of the governing body is mostly related to the governance of schools which does not entitle them to knowing all the movements of the school principals.

because they are still expected to perform their family/wifely chores regardless of whether they have a domestic helper or not. The support that women principals get from their families is therefore vital on how they perform the management function.

Women principals were therefore asked how they struck a balance between the school and the home to try and determine the degree to which their family life negatively affected or enhanced their performance as school managers through the support they got or did not get. Their responses revealed some differences between women of different generations, age and marital status.

The significance of the women's marital status came in where they had to balance their duties between the home and the school. For single women most of their time was spent doing school duties and this did not seem to bother most of them, while married women on the other hand complained bitterly about their neglect of the family due to their commitment to the school. Single women (even those with children) seemed to believe that their circumstances worked to their advantage as compared to married women because they did not have husbands. Some women had their husbands putting more pressure on them and their support or lack of it appeared vital to the women's performance in management positions. As indicated earlier the issue will be explored further when I deal with support in the later chapters.

As has been seen from the table in Chapter 4 most of the respondents were elderly and had grown up children who were not a problem in terms of their execution of duties in the school. This applied to both married and unmarried participants. For married women who were still in their productive ages, coping with both family (including raising children and attending to their school needs) and the school was a big problem. Ages of the participants' children also made a difference in terms of the level of commitment to the family. Adult children appear to be able to cope on their own without too much support from the mother, which gives the mother sufficient time to deal with school responsibilities. For elderly participants whose children were adult and would have,

mostly, moved out of the home, the time they had was spent largely on school related responsibilities.

To all women principals who participated in the study, family life was as important as their careers. But there were some tensions in satisfying these two important aspects of their lives. Children and husbands clearly play a role in determining the degree of difficulty the women experience to strike a balance between family life and school life.

Differences were mainly determined by the participants' age and marital status as explained above. Most women of the older generations (first and second) had children who had moved out of the home. Unmarried women of the first and second generations were mostly on their own, while married ones lived with only their husbands. This status seemed to have allowed unmarried participants more time to attend to school matters without feeling the pressure of not leaving sufficient time for the family. The absence of children in these participants' families appeared to have increased the likelihood that women would work professionally, since without children they tended to give the professions their undivided attention without suffering the guilt of not doing well as mothers, as was the case with women of the third and fourth generations who had both husbands and children.

Four women principals were unmarried and not living with children or husbands. This was how two of them spent their time and how they managed to strike a balance between family and career:

> *Yah since they (children) are all big and gone, I do whatever I feel like doing. If I feel like going to school to catch up with some errands, I do that even if it's on Saturday (Sindi).*

<p align="center">*****</p>

> A: *It's quite difficult to say you know because in my situation where I am on my own school takes over everything. And you tend to lose any other kind of life and so your balance is kind of thrown out. And one of the difficult things to learn is to keep some kind of outside life to form a balance so*

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that your whole life isn't only taken over by the school. You got to have some outside balance and interests to keep some balance.

Q: And do you keep the balance? Are you successful?

A: *I am not very good at it. I am working quite hard at it because it has affected me quite heavily. I spent most of the time on the school than anything else (Molly).*

Clearly for these two women principals there were no constraints imposed by the family responsibilities as such since they were both on their own. But Molly voiced her concern for the loss of her social life as a result of her responsibilities at the school, while Sindi described herself as a '*free bird*'. There were no issues of lack of support raised and even though Molly realised she needs to have a little bit of her private time, her situation at home has sort of worked to her advantage as far as fulfilling her school obligations as a new manager were concerned.

There were no striking differences between women in the urban versus those in the rural areas in terms of striking a balance between the home and the school lives. The differences were mainly with the women's generations. Women of the older generations were either on their own or living with their husbands alone who seemed more understanding and supportive. Devi, Hally and Zandi were all living with their husbands and they share their experiences as follows:

But there are times that I had to leave my family at night, during the day, meeting after meeting; things that we do for the school, the school children I've never done them for my own children. I mean had I not had the support of my husband and he was not in the profession, he would never have understood why I had to make all these sacrifices because he had to make them too in terms of that, but mine was I think a greater sacrifice in terms of I had additional duties to perform, (Devi).

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My children were a bit older and they supported me and I must say gradually - well of course my daughters all left home now. But my husband had to take over and offer a more supportive role. For example tonight I am not going to be home before eight o'clock nine o'clock, so he still has to sort out the home. We have lots of animals and he has to give them supper and his own supper. So it has impacted on us. I don't have a lot of free time at home. I don't have a lot of social life at

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home. That is what really had to go. Because you can't go out to dinner if you've got reports to be done for the next day or you have an urgent meeting to prepare for the next day. This whole social part of my life is really gone. It's in the bottom drawer, (Hally).

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Well, I can say that I am fortunate enough because at home I no longer have more responsibility because all my children are old. So it's only my husband to look after and there is a person whom I have employed, for just cleaning and everything of that sort. So really I don't think I have a problem (Zandi).

I found it particularly interesting that Devi and Hally (Indian and White respectively) mention support from their husbands while for Zandi her husband is her responsibility for whom she had to get external help (from the maid). This raises concerns of whether there is something inherently problematic with Black African Zulu men providing support to their career wives. None of the White and Indian participants raised lack of support from spouses as an issue. In fact, all three of the married ones commended their husbands' support. Evidently, husbands still posed an extra responsibility that had to be taken care of for Black African participants and domestic helpers appeared to be providing more support for the participants. This highlights the limited support from men as husbands as against support from other women. The issue of participants relying more on support provided by other women is discussed later in the chapter. While Zandi still had a husband to take care of, Thully was single and she appreciated her status because she saw it as lessening family pressure hence giving her more time to focus on building her career.

Well, it's not very easy because you sometimes focus on the one side and neglect the other side. The family suffers more, but I think they understand. I spend most of my time here. I sometimes leave the school at six. And then fortunately I am not married. Perhaps if I were married I would not be doing things that I am doing now. Its one of the things that has made me achieve what I have achieved already because when I go home I know mum will always understand. But with men, the husbands don't understand. So I think being single has contributed much to what I have achieved as a manager. So generally I get lots of support from my family that helps me with my commitment to the school (Thully).

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Women of the younger generations had different experiences as they were the ones mostly living with children of school going age and husbands (for those who were married). The ages of children played a role in determining the issue of women's career building opportunity – the younger they were the more attention they needed and the more career development suffers. Mahlase (1997) indicates that there is a higher degree of difficulty when the children are of pre-school or primary school going age. Women who seemed to have a bigger problem and expressed more concern about the lack of time left for family were those with smaller children of school going age as in the cases of Biziwe and Zama both of whom lived with their husbands:

It is very difficult because you find that when I come back from work I am tired and do not have time for my children, so I find that the people who are suffering are my family, ... My husband is also a teacher but now he is also a principal. And hei , hei it's very difficult to be a career woman and at the same time a wife and a mother. I experience a lot of problem as a principal – it is different from just being a teacher.
You know there is a lot of work at school. There are duties and responsibilities that you have to perform and even after school hours – then when you get home kids want to come near you and you have a lot of work to do. At the same time even your husband can't see that you have extra work that you have to do. He wants this and that. So it becomes really difficult. And now that I am I have a lot of responsibilities both at home and school. Children come with homework and you just don't have time… (Biziwe).

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Q: ***Now, in terms of your responsibilities at home, you are a mother of four children, you still stay with three, and then you are a wife and you are also a principal at the school. How do you sort of strike a balance between the two, do you …***

A: *(interrupting) I fail. I just fail. (cell phone ringing) As it is now it's my husband who is calling me and I'm ignoring him. I just fail and he will complain, and complain and complain, but I have a feeling that he now understands because he's no longer saying a thing. But I've got a good maid at home, who's very very good and responsible. So, she cooks, she takes care of the kids when I come…you know I normally come back from work at about 11 o'clock in the evening. I do study time at school, the study period ends at 10 o'clock in the evening. It's a boarding school. I drive from school to my place, by the time I come home it would be 11 o'clock. Sometimes I could see he is angry by the time when I come; the*

gate will be locked. He knows I do not have a key to open up the gate, and then I could tell today he is angry (Zama).

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Frankly speaking I am failing to serve my role as a mother and a wife. I really can't. Because I stay at school supervising study from 4.30 to 6.00 pm and my husband used to complain. Because I come home late, tired and I cook fast food because I don't have time even to supervise my own children's work because I have to do school work at home. I can't balance. It feels too much (Fundi).

These excerpts also reveal how these women put so much time into the running of the school and how much their families suffer in the process. Thully and Zama were fortunate to have had extra support at home through the mother and the maid respectively. But other women principals were not so lucky as their husbands still expected them to perform household chores that could be done by the helper:

Q: **You mentioned that your husband is also a principal, what support do you get from him as a person who understands what you are going through?**

A: *Hey, he doesn't understand in such a way that whenever we come back home he sits here on the sofa, then I have to dish for him and take the food to him because he doesn't want his food to be prepared by the kids let alone the maid. So I have to attend to him and after that he puts the dishes over there and takes his newspaper and reads. Hey he doesn't understand. But regarding the work and the procedures to be followed as well as the management stuff he does support me at times. But with household things nothing (Biziwe).*

The lack of understanding on the part of the husbands seemed to be prevailing, and experienced mostly by women principals of younger generations. These women evidently experience more obstacles in this stage where the school puts so much demand on them and they at the same time are still expected to perform the traditionally called "female duties" even though, practically, they are not traditional women.

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Thandiwe and Xoli got divorced after they assumed principalship and they described their ex-husbands to have been jealous of them keeping company with some men at school and they just could not take it. Here is how they shared their experiences:

> *... I didn't have a car at the time and I would use some other teacher's cars and my husband was kind of jealous why you always go with so and so and all that. I used to keep...at the time we didn't have a storeroom in my school and the burglary rate is very high in the area so our duplicating machine was kept in my house. So maybe we need something during the day and I had to go back to the house make some copies and then I would ask one of the gentlemen in my school to take me there and make photocopies. You know all that he just wasn't happy and whenever we had some disagreements he'll say so you think because you are a principal...you know it was quite tough (Xoli).*

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> *... You wouldn't come to my house even if you were a friend. I wouldn't participate in extramural activities at school or after school meetings, he never understood... I was expected to go straight home.... Some days he would lock me out. I would sleep outside, him querying why I was five minutes late. I would have to account to him why was I five minutes earlier than yesterday, then he would lock me out. Eventually we divorced. ...There was none, there was no support (Thandiwe).*

Other sources of support from within the family were mothers, mothers-in-law and sisters as in Sibo, Gugu and Xoli's cases. Sibo was not married and like the rest of the other principals spends most of her time at the school. Her mother was always there to take care of her children and encouraged her to focus on her career. Duduzile was living with her mother in law who offered the same kind of support Sibo got. This is how Duduzile talks of her mother-in-law:

> *Fortunately I was blessed with a mother-in-law that I cannot describe because as it is I am living with her. So I didn't have any problem with the children because she was always there taking care of the children. And whenever I was doing my work she was there to look after the family (Duduzile).*

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Xoli had her school going child living with her sister and that enabled her to give all the necessary time to the school matters.

Domestic helpers also provided another strong base of support for the women principals. They did most of the household chores in the absence of women principals. Biziwe, Zama, Zipho and Thando relied heavily on the support of domestic helpers (who were women) who assisted with the cooking and cleaning and taking care of the children. Some of the participants worked in schools that were far away from home and left the children with the domestic helper in their absence whether the husband was there or not. Interestingly, all four of them were married and no mention of husbands supporting them was made, but instead they had to take care of their husbands. Chisholm (2001) states that in South Africa men hardly take a full domestic responsibility while women more often seem to be grappling with the issue of career and family at the same time.

To sum up this section, it is evident that it was difficult for women to keep a balanced commitment between their families and their careers. Support from all the sources was crucial for women's performance as newly appointed principals and even much later in their career. From the eleven married women principals, seven had children of school going age and all of them relied on domestic helpers or grandparents to keep the fires burning at home while they were busy with school responsibilities.

While their responses revealed the conflicting roles that women play because of the difficulty of playing dual roles of professional and mother, it was also revealed that most of them had to sacrifice their family time in order to attend to the school duties and responsibilities. Participants also relied heavily on other women's support whether they were employed or they were family. This is juxtaposed with the noticeable lack of support from men as husbands or sons or otherwise.

Participants, who complained of lack of support from the family, mainly complained of the lack of support from husbands. In this case the husbands still expected them to play the mother and wife roles in the traditional way and women found this stressful given the

responsibilities carried by the principalship positions. In some of these cases the role of domestic helpers at home which eased the load of work for some women principals was not even accepted by these husbands. Yet, women who had lots of support from the home got it from their domestic helpers and their husbands. Thus, husbands were seen to be playing a crucial role to help women cope with the demands of their work as principals and without this support it was seen as difficult for women to cope. This is why fewer obstacles in this regard were experienced by unmarried women with no children living with them.

There were variations in terms of men willing to help with some of the chores at home. Some women expressed contempt that their husbands were not willing to help yet they expected wives to cook and dish for them. Others, however, indicated that their husbands complained but helped with cooking at the same time. The married women principals in the study expressed the same concern of the expectations placed on them to perform household chores even though they had a helper.

It is undoubtedly evident that points raised above do contribute to women's participation in management posts in general and particularly at secondary school level where there are more demands in the job. The presence of partners and children in career women's lives has a large impact on the development of these women's careers. It would be interesting to explore this issue from a male perspective and note the differences. This calls for further research on this aspect.

8.6   PERPETUATING THE GLASS CEILING: WOMEN'S SUITABILITY FOR MANAGEMENT

Gender has been identified as a very significant component of women teachers' career planning and promotion aspects (Mahlase, 1997). How women themselves perceive this is of critical importance since it has implications for how they perform in management. Mathipa and Tsoka (2000) observed that women who enter management positions successfully experience further barriers due to being regarded as token position holders

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where they are viewed as representatives of all other women and not as individuals. In most cases, this view of women managers denies them the support or acceptance they need to perform as individual managers because of the pressure of expectations. This section focuses on women principals' view of women and their suitability for management positions in education. The purpose in this section was to examine the women principals' own attitude towards female principalship as compared to the reflection on their own management styles.

Women in this study seemed to be ascribing the appointment to management more to the individual than to their gender, but still stressed the attributes that are traditionally associated with males such as emotional stability and assertiveness. Asked whether they would recommend a man or woman for headship of their schools when they leave, women principals focused more on the qualities than gender while at the same time they expressed dislike of autocracy displayed by most of their male forerunners. A few of them explicitly showed their preference for women running the schools over men, but interestingly none of the women principals preferred to have a man running the school, even though some of the attributes included were those traditionally classified as masculine. This was found to be in contradiction with previous research findings where the studies showed women preferred male headship (Mahlase, 1997).

It was interesting that all women principals had male deputies even though they all professed advocacy for more women in management. All women in the study, except one who was heading a girls' school, had male deputy principals. A response given by one of the women principals to why she had a male deputy revealed a reliance of some kind on male approval even in cases where women themselves are at the top. This was the response:

> ... I don't know, I wasn't confident and wasn't sure of what should be happening. And then I just felt if I could have a male next to me it would be much better, managing the school will be much better (Xoli).

However, some of the women expressed lack of confidence in other women handling certain aspects of school management, such as discipline. However, asked whether women teachers should be encouraged to apply for management posts, all their answers were in the affirmative. A few exceptions indicated some weaknesses within women that disable them from successfully running large co-educational secondary schools. Their responses exposed some of their personal reservations/stereotypes about other women as managers. Here follows Thembi's (a Black African woman heading a small rural co-ed junior secondary school) response followed by an extract from Hally (a white principal heading a large urban girls' school):

> **Q:** **Do you personally feel that more women should be encouraged to apply for management positions in the schools?**
>
> *A:* *I personally agree that yes that can be done in primary schools but not in high schools.*
>
> **Q:** **Why, not?**
>
> *A:* *It's because you know sometimes females are not the same, some can't control most of the learners, especially boys. Once they are matured so they think that they must do whatever they like. So that is what happens in high schools. Females fail to control these boys, more especially boys, (Thembi).*

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> *... in the black culture I don't think that women are really highly esteemed, are they? You know I think in the community, because I know there is one instance where one of the members a black man in our community he is on our governing body, he brought to me that position of one best teachers that I know. She was in a promotion post and she was running the school as acting principal of a big co-ed school and she had done wonders for the school. But when the principal post was advertised she applied she didn't get it, they put a man there. And she had been running the show. She got everything organized and going very well. And the community didn't accept her, they wanted a man. And that is why I feel a little bit edgy about this, (Hally).*
>
> **Q:** **There are cases like that. But would you personally run a co-ed?**
>
> *A:* *Yes. I think it's a cultural thing too. For some cultures I think it could do.*

Thembi's view clearly subscribes to the stereotype that women cannot discipline boys and the contradiction is that she believes she can do it. Hally believes that the Black African women cannot run large co-educational schools because of their low self-esteem,

but subscribes this to the community. Thus, in the latter's view it is the community that undermines women's ability to run large secondary schools, while in the former the principal herself does not believe in some women's capability. Both views seemed to confirm the stereotype that women are more suitable for management of primary schools associated more with caring and parenting, as observed by Neidhart and Carlin (2003), and softness and ineffectiveness to manage large educational institutions as stated by Gold (1996). This view has implications for whether Thembi and Hally do contribute to promoting other women since their view clearly contributes to the perpetuation of stereotypes related to women's ability to manage secondary schools.

However, the rest of the women principals indicated their encouragement of other women to participate in management, and felt that advocating change for women in management is a good thing but the challenge still lies in dealing with those who cannot deliver. The campaign for more women in management is not to compromise the standards in the management of schools, but it is more about transformation. They mostly believed that women have what it takes and this view was also shared by circuit managers. Both circuit managers and women principals agreed that women do need to be empowered and encouraged because in most cases they themselves are reluctant to apply since they believe they would not get the posts. However, when these women were asked how they encourage their women subordinates to apply for these management posts the predominant response was "*I talk to them*".

The establishment of the support women had was important in that it determined the women's like or dislike for the position. The more support women principals got from all the stakeholders the more they seemed to be comfortable with principalship. Women principal participants were also asked whether they enjoyed principalship and whether, given a second chance, they would apply again. For those who experienced problems after their appointment they seemed to have lost the love for principalship although it did not necessarily affect their love for teaching as a profession.

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I have no problem with becoming a teacher. I was an accounting teacher and unfortunately I was transferred to a school where there was no accounting. ... if I had a chance I would be sitting in my office talking to machines and papers, not people. I don't want to work with people, I am not good at human relations. If I could be given machines and papers, then I can do my job perfectly. Being a principal is hell.

... There is nothing to enjoy in principalship. ... I need to get out (Xoli).

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No. Yes it's been good to know that I have achieved, God supporting me ... But all the transformation things, problems, new laws of education, ... if ever there was a way I would definitely leave education for something else. Perhaps I would still enjoy if I were just an ordinary teacher ... (Gugu).

Those who indicated interest in the position were those who received support from the stakeholders.

However, there were a few who did not get support but still felt they would still aspire to principalship given a second chance.

Exactly. No problem. I am not easily affected. I don't take problems as problems but I take them as challenges. And I like what I am doing despite the problems I have been through (Nandipha).

Overall, the findings show that the same qualities are expected from all principals regardless of their gender. Women evidently have to earn respect and support that leads to authority. In the rural communities, it is obvious that for a woman principal to perform well, she has to prove herself to the community around the school. One circuit manager confirmed this:

Don't forget that most of our schools are in the rural area, they have that thing that they should have a very respectful person who is going to take into consideration that there is a chief in this area. So h/she must learn to respect the chief, the community and the governing body. They are impressed by such things. But if you take them on the level of equality you become a threat to them (SEM 1).

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Clearly, women still face a lot of challenges to advancement that may not necessarily be faced by men. As Meyerson and Fletcher (1999) put it, the barriers to advancement are not just above women, but they are all around them within the structures of the organisations and their cultures. The problem in this phase is with women who are already in the position. They may have shattered the glass ceiling in terms of gaining access into the positions, but the barriers to performance still persist and are insidious.

8.7   CONCLUSION

The findings in this study paint a complex picture of issues affecting women at the performance phase. The participation of women in management is highly gendered as well as their preparation and acquisition of posts. It has been identified in the literature that management in education has been occupied and dominated by men, which led to the absence of female role models. As consistent with research done earlier, women principals' experiences in this study confirmed the absence of female role models and how that directly and indirectly contributes to the continuation of the masculine culture of leadership that has been dominating the education field for a long time. This was seen through male-female mentoring relationships and women's reliance on male support both as mentors and as deputies. These men, as mentors and role models played a role in promoting these women into principalship, and directly and indirectly had some influence on the latter's views of management and leadership.

It is evident that women experienced problems at the performance phase. Van Eck and Volman (1996) state that problems encountered by women in the performance phase may lead to their quick departure from such positions, as Chisholm (2000) also found out in her study of women in the Gauteng provincial department of education in South Africa. It would have been interesting to establish the male perspective and experiences but that was beyond the scope of this research. It is however, an issue that certainly needs to be pursued in further research.

It is clear that support structures and induction processes happen differently in different regions and within regions in different districts. There was no uniformity throughout the province of programmes used to initiate principals as it was seen that some women underwent induction training while others did not. Circuit managers also appeared to be offering different support systems for newly appointed principals and for principals in general. However, even for those support structures created by a few circuit managers, nothing was intended to help women specifically.

Although most women principals claimed they never really aspired to principalship, one needs to approach with caution the conclusion to draw out of this given the then circumstances of their experiences. I found that participants, who had unpleasant experiences as principals, were not prepared to stay as principals although they also did not want to go back to either lower levels of management or even back to post level one, even though they all had their hearts in teaching as a profession. They were only prepared to stay as principals until they either got promotion or found something else that they could do outside the teaching profession (only two women in the latter case). That was because they did not have good experiences which could have resulted in them not taking charge of their management lives as soon as they got the posts.

Marriage and child-rearing continue to have a negative impact on women's progress in their management career as was also identified by Mahlase (1997). The association of management with masculinity is another identified factor that hampers women's participation in education management. This was prominent in the rural areas where traditional leadership and values on the place of women in society is still observed and respected. Women principals who had made it to the top still suffered prejudices from the school and local communities. These practices of discrimination were from both men and women.

The argument in this last phase of the management route is that women are as good as men are in principalship, but since management has historically been a male dominated

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domain, constructed in masculine terms (Blackmore 1993; Chisholm 2000), women still encounter more obstacles than men in this phase. How women carry out the management positions and what challenges and obstacles they face is therefore of crucial importance in understanding reasons for their continued under-representation in these positions. Performance is impacted upon by many different factors both formally and informally as it happens in the other phases. It is informed and shaped by the cultures of the organisations, the traditional authorities' views of what is important and what is not, and the perceptions of the practitioners themselves of their own understanding of their role.

CHAPTER 9

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT: INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The study posed a few questions at the beginning to which I have attempted to give answers throughout the study. In this chapter I present the final comment on the central questions formulated in the first chapter. I provide a wrap-up of the findings on what policy says about closing the gender gap in education management, how it is interpreted and what the experiences of women principals on the ground have been. I have used the management route model to frame this analysis. Overall, the findings suggested that gender was a powerful dynamic that shaped women's experiences at the preparation, entry and performance phases through personal, organisational and social factors. This chapter is a discussion of findings from the role of policy to women's experiences on the management route.

The under-representation of women in the management of schools has for a long time been influenced by different factors that have changed over the years. While some studies identified these factors to be either personal or organizational, this study, through the management route model, has revealed that reasons for the under-representation of women in education management are much more complex and cannot be classified as either personal or organizational. The complexity of the obstacles women encounter in their attempt to obtain the principalship is seen through their experiences in getting prepared for these positions, in accessing the positions and in performing in these positions once access has been granted. This chapter shows the link between the three phases and draws from each the main factors affecting women at the personal, organizational and social levels to develop a framework within which women's participation in education management is understood.

9.2 GENDER EQUITY POLICIES

The purpose of this study was to examine how policy addresses the gender gap in education management and to examine the experiences of women who got the management positions on the ground. At the time the study was set out there was no formal policy specifically directed towards changing the gender distribution of educators in school management. There were many general policies however, meant for all public service including the education sector to address the gender disparity. To answer the question on what policy says about bridging the gender gap in education management, an analysis of selected policies was made and the main broad themes that came from the findings are summarized below.

Firstly, formal equality is guaranteed at the legal level for all people who were previously disadvantaged and this includes black people, women and people with disabilities. However, there were no direct gender policies addressing gender issues in education management in particular. Gender issues were addressed together with other issues of diversity such as race and disability. Secondly, recognition and acknowledgement of inequalities inherited from the past system of racial segregation was more overt on the acquisition phase through affirmative action policies. But even then, there was hardly any mention of the actual intervention strategies to be employed at this level. This is highly problematic since most resistance on gender transformation is located at the important acquisition phase. Anticipation was addressed through policies on education and training but only to a limited extent. There was also no policy provision for the performance phase. This is another weakness identified on the part of the law since lack of legal emphasis probably implies that no attention is being paid to the phase. The imbalance at the policy level exposed here is that policy does not address all levels and this could have a negative bearing on the outcome of the whole policy process[17]. Thirdly, gender policies are found to be more symbolic than regulatory or procedural, thereby making

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[17] Policy process is hereby understood to include implementation and its outcome as presented by Ball (1990) and Taylor et al (1997).

implementation voluntary and limiting accountability and leaving no penalties for non-compliance.

Blackmore (1999) states that gender equity educational policies in most Western states have tended to be framed by liberal feminism. She is not in favour of this approach herself because she says liberal feminism attempts to change individual women and girls to be more like men and boys on the assumption that a critical mass would produce cultural change. I agree that big numbers of women in education management may not necessarily change social practices. But I also argue that campaigning for masses of women in education management could be the starting point in combating the gender crisis. The use of liberal feminism was useful in explaining the provision of legal reforms put in place. Women and men need to be made aware that management is not a male terrain, as some of them have been socialized into believing. Encouraging women to participate in management in large numbers and to protest about the low representation of women in education management are ways of breaking the stereotype. They continue breaking the silence on treating the status quo as normal.

Equal opportunities and/or treatment legislation has been passed since 1994 in South Africa when the new democratic government took over. Ten years down the line there is still very little progress made by women in the management of schools. From the findings two issues come into play: one, although all participants claim awareness of these initiatives, policies meant to bridge the gender gap in general do not appear to be implemented as women appear to be competing at the same level as men. Two, women teachers appear to be surrounded by conditions that disempowered their progress in their attempt to participate in management positions. These conditions are beyond policies as they are practices of discrimination embedded within the communities women live in. But the argument I make in this study is that the South African education system has inherited much inequality from the apartheid history. And there is certainly a need to prohibit the continuing discrimination by means of law and state policies.

It is obvious that liberal feminist informed approaches to equal rights and equal opportunities in education have not been effective in eradicating gender inequality in the management of schools, thus far. While it can be argued that most of these approaches have not been effectively implemented, it is also argued that liberal approaches are limited to explain the actual social experiences of women teachers alluded to above. Blackmore (1989) and Ely and Meyerson (2000) argue that these approaches are premised upon sex role socialization theory and that is why they seek to facilitate individual women's taking of leadership roles in schools so as to create a more equitable gender representation. The successes of such policies, including the affirmative action policy, is not underestimated in any way, but the argument is that even though to some extent they appear to provide role models for girls in education and other women leaders, the issue of women's under-representation appears to be more complex than a mere addition of numbers through policy interventions. The explanation for what seemed to have been and continues to be blocking women' progress in management goes beyond a mere provision of the legal reforms for equal opportunities since these continue to be in place. Thus, in addition to using a theory that recognizes the importance of legal reforms, the study also needed a theory that looks beyond provision of legal and democratic reforms and more into social practices that prevent legal reforms from reaching the desired goals.

Given the nature of the history of imbalances South Africa inherited from the past, gender equity policies were needed as a starting point for transformation. But most policies remain rhetorical about the desired changes. Thus, as was the case in Australia, (Blackmore, 1999) the pattern of gender reform policies is marked by symbolic policy statements, voluntary implementation (as there appear to be no quotas), and voluntary delegation of responsibilities with limited resources and insufficient monitoring mechanisms. The interpretation and reception of gender equity policies is influenced by the shifting social, political and economic agendas (Blackmore, 1999). The current study has yielded similar findings with regard to the South African situation. On the basis of these findings I conclude that policy directed at changing gender relations in education

management is still symbolic. The commitment to improve the status of women in the management of schools is at a very discursive level. Implementation appears to be voluntary and no quotas are in place that must be complied with. No penalties can therefore be imposed for not increasing the numbers.

9.3   WOMEN PRINCIPALS' EXPERIENCES

The second broad question addressed by the study was what the experiences of women principals who got the principal positions were. The findings yielded many factors that affected, either positively or negatively, women participants' career routes. Women grappled with issues at the personal level in addition to the organisational and social barriers they experienced. Although these women made it to the top, they still faced discrimination even in the management post itself.

The women principals in the study had different experiences within their different environments. For some women it was difficult to obtain the posts but once there, they had all the support and were therefore determined to stay. For others, however, posts were accessed quite easily but there was a lot of resistance from the different stakeholders including the community and local chieftaincy once the women were in the principalship positions. For others it was both. What this shows is the differences in women's experiences that make each situation unique and to which therefore there are no universal answers. Thus, the expressions of gender inequity and gender oppression appeared different for women principals.

These diverse experiences of participants could only be explained by a theory that recognizes differences between and within women subjects of the same race group. Post-structural feminism recognizes these differences between women of the same race in terms of age, religion, social class, and others. Thus, according to this understanding, there is no universal truth that generalizes women's experiences. Knowledge produced from women's experiences is historically and culturally specific and is a product of

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particular discourses. These discourses create knowledge and power and the power of the discourse depends on the extent to which the knowledge it produces is accepted as true (Abbott and Wallace, 1997). Although this understanding underpins these differences between and among women of the same and different groups, a commonality that unifies the interests of women of different races, religion, age and social class as one group is established. For example women in the current study generally appeared to be lacking family and institutional support in their aspirations to management, access of the posts and performance in management positions. The degree of this lack of support varied according to their contextual differences and their particular discourses. But the argument is that this category is one of the unifying factors of women's interests that appear to be a powerful discourse created in women's different cultural and social contexts. Due to its power, it deserves to be addressed at the policy level as the initial step to bringing parity between women and men in education management. Post-structural feminism shares with radical feminism the view that a positive value of womanhood needs to be displayed, and that although women's differences are acknowledged, there are similarities between them to some extent and this is where the role of policy comes in.

To clarify the point made above, I acknowledge further, that women principals in the study are characterized by different orientations and different beliefs and their voices and experiences are therefore as different as they themselves are. Fuss (cited in Gardiner et al, 2000) supports thus: "female experience is never as unified, as knowable, as universal and as stable as we presume it to be" (Fuss, 1984 cited in Gardiner et al, 2000:32). In this study while I acknowledge the differences amongst women, I also argue that in order to engage at a policy level which unifies women into a category of previously disadvantaged, not all their experiences can be individualized. The starting point is therefore to look at commonalities between these women and here I am informed by a view of feminism that posits that by virtue of being, women do share common socially and culturally constructed characteristics which do not necessarily derive from their biological make up. I suggest therefore that these commonalities should form a starting point for legal programmes and policies that address the needs of women.

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The focus on cultures and social practices enabled me to highlight these differences in a way that exposes the insidious discriminatory practices that affect women. The majority of participants including circuit managers still see women fighting on too many fronts which include lack of acceptance from traditional authorities. KwaZulu Natal particularly has a history of violence in the townships and rural areas and this is a big issue for the traditional leaders and local governors who appear to have some authority in the way local schools are or should be run. While the ability to deal with political conflicts does not appear a legitimate or fair factor on which to assess the suitability of school principals, it is nonetheless a concern for some of the leaders that obviously cannot be ignored if the participation of women in rural school management is to be taken seriously.

Feminism has been criticized for its inattentiveness to race and ethnicity (Beasley, 1999). Liberal feminism in particular has been to a large extent linked to white middle class women of the West and as such does not adequately explain black women's experiences. The experiences of the studied South African women reflect a variety of differences that resulted largely from their different racial, social, political, economic and historical backgrounds, the latter having been mostly determined by their racial background. African feminism comes closest to explaining these South African women's experiences even though still not in totality as seen in chapter three. There are therefore differences even amongst women of the same racial group. The study therefore takes cognisance of these differences and argues that women's social position determined their perspectives in view of their experiences in the preparation, acquisition and performance in education management positions.

Black African women principals suffered both racial and gender oppression which resulted in their problems / barriers to progress in education management and their experiences in general differing from those of their White and Indian sisters. The struggle of the African women principals has been a dual one: struggle for gender equity as traditionally oppressed women, and struggle for racial equity as historically oppressed

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black Africans. As in the situation in the former slave-trading colonies, the struggle against racism took centre stage for a long time in South Africa and the gender struggle was secondary. South African women's history and social status therefore formed an integral part of their experiences with regard to the way they were prepared, the circumstances prevailing around how they acquired the principalship and the discourses in which they performed the management function.

Equally important has been the issue of social class that also played a crucial role in determining the experiences of women principals. Women who came from advantaged social backgrounds were able to acquire sufficient education that enabled them earlier access into education management positions. The relationship between race, class and gender is highlighted through the experiences of these women. The educational lives of these women were highly characterised by class and race as well as their experiences in the other phases of the management route. Arnot (2001) asserts that education continues to reproduce class differentials and women's experiences continue to be influenced by their social class background. However, the common denominator amongst women of different social class and race in the study has been the constant struggle against gender discrimination throughout the three phases and the three different levels at which they experienced these obstacles. The identity of women principals was characterised by these experiences created within their different social locations. Women in the rural areas had unique experiences that differed tremendously from those of women in the urban areas while women of the older generations also had different experiences to those of the younger generations.

Women who aspire to and even those who have accessed the management positions face and experience obstacles at three levels: personal, organizational and social. This is what makes women's problems in education management so complex. These problems are not tangible and formal, but are intangible, informal, and subtle (Gupton and Slick, 1996; Ely and Meyerson, 2000) and exist at different levels of the women managers' career routes. The management route model identified the three phases as has been seen throughout the

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discussion. Within each of these phases, the model suggests that women grapple with issues at the personal, organisational and social levels. The following section looks more closely at these problems as experienced or residing within the personal, the organisational and social spheres. But before a detailed discussion on these factors, I capture the link between these three phases and the relationship between the three spheres in a diagrammatic form to illustrate the intricacy of the problems they experienced:

Fig 10:The relationship between factors affecting women at the three phases of the management route.
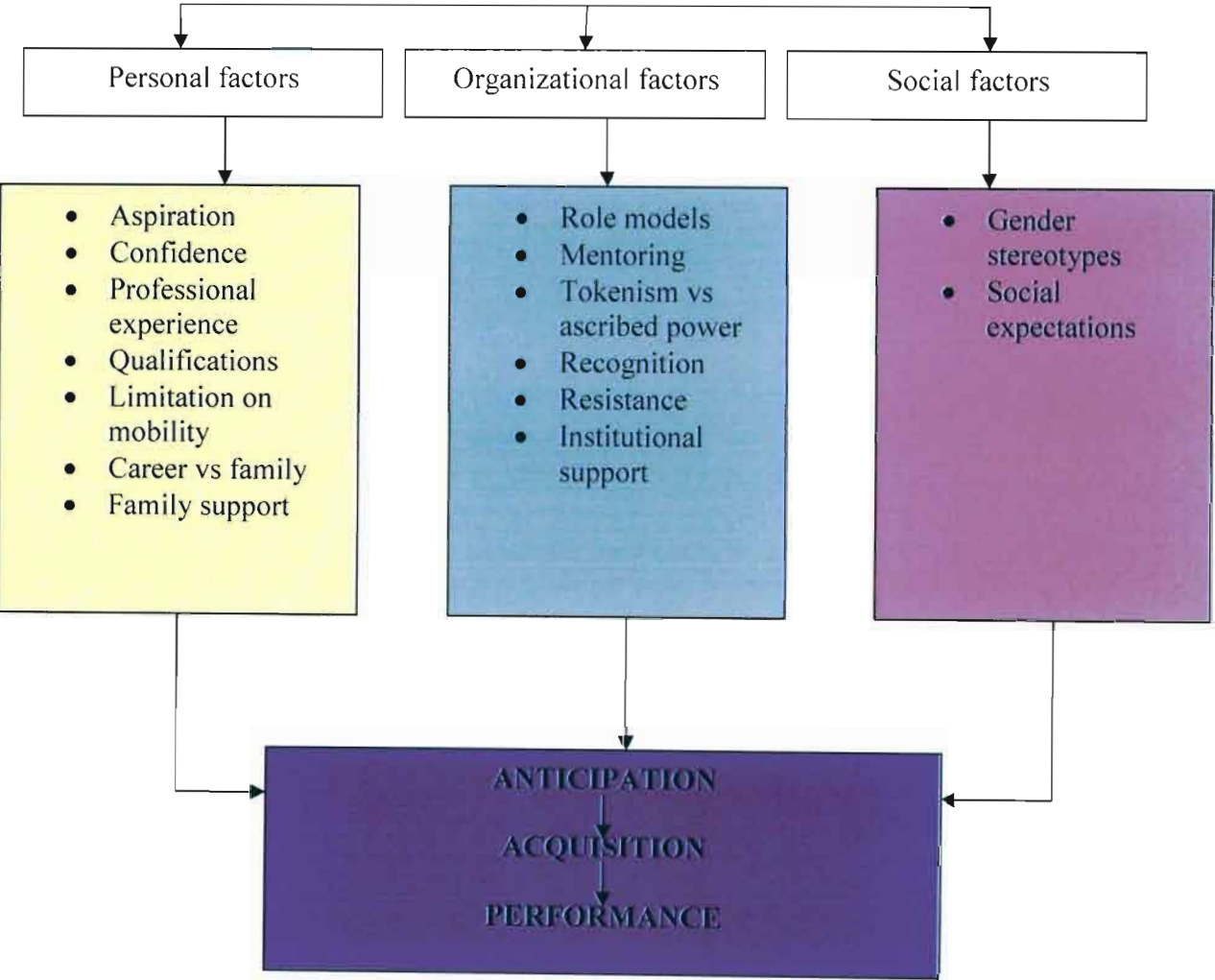
This framework represents the relationship between the different phases women go through in their management route and the different levels at which they encounter problems. These levels and how they map onto the three phases of the management route, provide a useful framework for understanding the complexity of women's experiences in and into education management. Thus, women's advancement in education management is influenced by the three interrelated factors at the three different phases within the framework. Hence, the constraints on women's participation in education management cannot be restricted to either one phase and cannot be linked to either personal, or organisational or social factors. But all these factors affect women at the three different phases. This is the framework in which barriers to women's participation in education management are understood. This study could be one of the ways to understanding real issues that women face which could lead to better and more effective interventions in closing the gender gap.

9.3.1 Personal factors

At the personal level, what Tallerico (2000) calls the individual agency, women seem to be grappling with internal issues such as professional experiences, aspirations, ambitions, family responsibilities and geographical mobility to name a few. The discussion thus far has shown that preparation, access and performance in principalship was influenced by internal and external factors. That is, women's experiences were informed by the larger context of historical and cultural norms and social expectations of the roles played by men and women. It was important for women participants in the current study to acquire the necessary qualifications and experience before they could start applying for the management posts and this is what they grappled with at the personal level for preparation.

The data in this study suggest that *aspiration* for positions of power was both a negative and positive factor in women's seeking and accessing leadership positions. It was positive in the sense that women who had aspirations for management actually worked hard to pursue their careers in management and became managers early in their teaching

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professions. On the other hand those who did not aspire delayed their progress because they did not make an effort to search for posts until opportunities presented themselves. Gupton and Slick (1996) warn women against perpetuating their own glass ceiling by not believing in themselves and their potential to do well in leadership positions. This is the individual agency (Tallerico, 2000) that suggests an intrinsic factor affecting women's progress and leading to the ultimate under-representation in education management.

Secondly, it is evident from the findings that women who had the necessary credentials grappled at the personal level with the *lack of confidence* – the fear that they would not make it in management just because they were women. This was a result of a lack of *professional experience* in management or lack of exposure. Once the women were in the actual job, the fear diminished because they had proved to themselves that they could do the management job. It is therefore clear that adequate preparation does not only mean acquisition of the required *qualifications* although this is essential for initial preparation, but that professional experience itself is important to iron out women' fears of inadequacy in a field they had never been exposed to before. Leading to this kind of preparation at the personal level, is what Schmuck et al (1981) refer to as "perceived opportunities". In other words for one to gain professional experience an occupation must first be visible and available. Most of them acted in the principalship positions before they were appointed, while others were indirectly groomed to become principals through what is called *apprenticeship* in Chapter 6.

Professional experience was also linked to the *qualifications* that the candidates had acquired before they started seeking these positions. Most of them valued highly the academic qualifications that they had acquired and believed strongly that their qualifications facilitated their access. These qualifications, as the initial preparation stage, would have also bolstered the women's confidence in applying for promotion posts since without those they clearly felt inadequate.

It took most of the women a long time to get prepared for the management posts both in terms of qualifications and experience. The reason for the former was a result of the majority of Black African women's economically poor background that forced them to seek employment early after finishing school. While it is granted that most of the women did not initially aspire to these positions, for those who did, finances became a problem to their acquisition of academic qualifications. Gupton and Slick (1996) established the importance of preparation for a career through getting proper credentials. What is noticeable with the women in this study is that most of them struggled from the very point of starting preparation for these positions. As a result they got preparation on the job because they had not been exposed to any management position before.

There was an interesting racial dimension in this regard which highlights the inequalities inherited from the past system. There was an unmistakable contrast of experiences between Black African women and their sisters of other colours. While White and Indian women participants' preparation was only due to lack of exposure, for Black African women it became first and foremost lack of acquisition of the necessary qualifications that was caused by their lack of financial resources from their family backgrounds. This is the point where policy interventions take into cognisance the unequal playing field even between and amongst women themselves. This should not be interpreted to underplay the role played by other diversity issues such as class, but race defined inequality in a more profound manner at governance and policy level of the past regime. Thus, gender and race clearly have an impact on career trajectories (Tallerico, 2000) even though it is to a varying degree.

Further indications from the data to the detriment of women's participation in education management, are the social problems they grapple with at the level of the family. Three issues come into play. One kind of family problem is *limitation on mobility*. In spite of career patterns that pressed for it, women did not feel that they could move geographically to take jobs in a different location and consequently their access to career positions was limited. Few women stated this as a limitation in their career progress and

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as a reason for their not having applied for management posts before because sometimes the post would be outside their own area where they would be expected to relocate. This was viewed as a problem exclusive to women since as some of them put it, men do not have a problem with relocating. This concurs with what is stated by Ely and Meyerson (2000) that the practice of using geographical mobility as a prerequisite to upward mobility is gendered because although applied equally to men and women, it is more limiting for women who are more likely to be in dual career situations than men. This practice seems gender neutral on the surface, but a closer look at its gendered nature "reveals an implicit gender bias that reflects and maintains women's relative disadvantage" (Ely and Meyerson, 2000:116).

A second difficulty for the professional women centred on the lack of *support from the family*. Support received from husbands as well as the role children play in terms of their independence and helpfulness appeared to be essential. In this study, married women participants with older children did not encounter as many problems as those with younger children. The former expressed a lot of gratitude for the fact that when they started working as principals their children had already gone to tertiary institutions or moved out of the home. In these cases for married women the only family member that needed to be 'taken care of' would have been the husband who provided support in some cases. Lack of support from family also came in the form of husbands preventing their wives from participating in some activities and others being jealous of seeing their wives in their male colleagues' company. Greyvenstein (2000) also identified husband's jealousy as a factor inhibiting women's progress. Unfortunately for the two women who experienced husbands' jealousy their marriages had to end. But the question remains: how many other women would be willing to risk their marriages for the sake of career?

A third problem lies with *combining career and family*. Women who manage to do this suffer the guilt of not performing as well as mothers and wives. These factors were established by Biklen and Brannigan (1980) and they still emerged as vital with the women principals in the current study. Women who are managers and have children

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straddle the dual worlds of parenting and working. And as observed in earlier studies, "while the world of teaching more easily accommodates the dual world of many women, the demands of discrimination still often presume one has a 'wife' at home (Dunlap and Schmuck, 1995:44). That is why for women in the study striking a balance between home and work was close to impossible. This made their families suffer while they spent most of their time trying to build their careers. Combining career and family seemed problematic for women especially those of younger generations who are still expected to prove themselves as good mothers and good wives. South African women are under pressure to perform well in career while the traditional and social expectations of motherhood and being a wife still do not support them. It is obvious that in order to perform well, women principals do need a lot of support from the family, so that they do not suffer the guilt of being good principals at the expense of their families.

Another interesting racial variance emerged where Hally, a White woman principal, had managed to take time off to start her family, the luxury that could not be afforded by a majority of the Black African participants. For the latter, keeping jobs at all costs seemed paramount due to socio-economic reasons while the dimension brought by Hally's case suggest that for more economically advantaged women, combining career and family may not be such a problem since one would have the opportunity to take time away from work to raise family and come back at a later stage to build a career.

Striking a balance between career and family was not easy for the women principals particularly for those who were married with children. Most of them complained about having families suffering because they did not have enough time to spend on family matters. Chisholm (2001) states that it is very rare in South Africa to have a male partner taking responsibility for child care or other domestic responsibilities, and this clearly puts a lot of pressure on women because it gives them an extra responsibility that men do not have. Mahlase (1997) also observed that married women teachers' attempts to try and live in both the public sphere of work and the private sphere of home and family is very

complicated and stressful and that these problems become acute when women are in the principalship positions.

Indeed for most married women principals of the younger generations in the current study, this was a problem as they still had to oversee their home responsibilities including child-rearing even with the assistance of the domestic helpers. For some of these women their problems were exacerbated by husbands' not appreciating food prepared by the domestic helpers. Most women relied heavily on the support from domestic helpers and other family members such as mothers and for some mothers-in-law. It was noticeable that no mention of support from fathers was made. Mothers' support was also particularly helpful for single women who had children. Some of them were able to take their children to schools where they were taken better care of while their mothers dedicated most of their time to school responsibilities. For others, however, children still expected to be helped with homework and other things and these women would be so tired when they got home that they would not do justice to spending time with their children. Thus, participants' dependency on other women's support whether they were mothers or domestic helpers contrasted sharply with the observed lack of support from men. It is a social issue that liberal feminism is completely blind to in its campaign for equal treatment of women.

While women in Chisholm's (2000) study compromised their ability to play leadership roles in their place of work by attending to their domestic responsibilities, the situation was different for the women managers in this study. They compromised family time and other domestic responsibilities and gave more time to school responsibilities. Thus, in conclusion, while family commitments affected perceptions of commitment to work in the Western cultures and some South African women such as those studied by Chisholm, the current study shows Black South African women's situation is the opposite – women neglected family for the sake of career. The majority of South African women do not have the luxury of putting their careers on hold until their children grow up and are old enough to take care of themselves.

This practice of the women principals in this study of sacrificing their family time for their management and administration work in the schools can be interpreted as an attempt on their part to avoid being perceived as less committed to their work, which would ultimately portray them as unsuitable for big demanding positions, thereby perpetuating the stereotype that women are less task-oriented than men. Ely and Meyerson (2000) view this as a dichotomy between public and private spheres which reinforces the image of the 'ideal manager' as one who is willing to put family obligations second to work obligations. This practice has a negative impact on women and sabotages them as they are most likely to be the ones bearing more family responsibilities.

9.3.2 Organisational factors

Organisational factors included all the practices within the organisations from recruitment and selection to role models and support through mentoring processes within the schools. For this study, most of these factors were prominent at the acquisition and performance phases and very limited on the anticipation phase since no focus appeared to have been put to prepare women at least at the level of the organisation. From the participants' views, schools or even districts did not appear to be doing much to prepare women to take on or aspire to leadership positions. But at the time the study was carried out, there were a few workshops running in the province for women in and going into management. Thus, while for women in the study organisations did not appear to have done anything to prepare them, the situation gradually seems to be improving.

Women principals went through a series of different organisational experiences in their search for principalship. However, there are a number of commonalities in terms of what appeared to have affected women's access and performance into these principalship positions. Some women attested to not having known clearly the selection criteria for the management positions they had applied for. In some cases they would be told at the end of the interview that they were good but unfortunately "we are looking for a man". Van

Eck et al (1996) posit that management is generally perceived as a male arena and as management positions are predominantly held by men, "the masculine image of a manager is the norm" (1996:407). Women are hardly or not at all expected to possess these qualities of the normative manager. Van Eck et al further argue that this is a mechanism that is important is assessing the candidates' suitability for a management post since the less clearly defined the selection criteria, the greater the role of this mechanism (Van Eck et al, 1996).

As part of preparation for aspirants of management positions, women aspirants as a previously disadvantaged group ought to be exposed to the management roles through workshops and attendance of other relevant functions. According to the findings women principals were not exposed to these except when they worked as 'vice principals', an informal role that they were asked to participate in by their former principals. The educational horizontal structure has few people at the top and large numbers of men and women teachers at the bottom with a theoretically equal status. However, Mintzberg (1979) established that in reality these men and women practitioners have unequal powers and esteem established by the different roles they are given within their schools, some are more prestigious than others. Women are often allocated less challenging tasks which are not often needed for one to qualify for management positions. The interesting part is that most of the women principals who went through this attested to not having done anything beyond assisting their principals with administration work in the office. Nonetheless, this proved to have indirectly prepared them for the principalship and while others were prepared by design these women were prepared by default since most of them were not even aspiring to management.

Lack of *role models* within the organisations is another factor that hampered the earlier participation of women in education management. Because there were few existing women principals at the time women principals were appointed, none (except one) of the women principals in this present study had a female role model or mentor. There were no formally established mentorship programmes for women in the study, but they all had

their own informal mentoring relationships. What came out of these findings is that these informal mentors seemed to have played an extensive supporting role with regard to helping the protégés as newly appointed women principals and continued the support thereafter. It was also interesting that almost all mentors were men. Greyvenstein (2000) states that cross-sex mentoring often results from lack of women role models which is often identified as a big barrier to women aspiring to management positions. This was confirmed by women principals' assertion that they did not aspire to principalship because they thought it was meant for men, as seen in Chapter 6:

... and during that time it was only males that were regarded as principals so I just told myself that I will never be appointed as a principal because I was female.

Mathipa and Tsoka (2000) also regard the presence of female role models crucial to the inspiration of both women in management and those aspiring to it. The absence of such role models puts women into the situation where they have only the existing men to look up to and relying on them for their support.

Findings in this regard concur with findings from previous researchers such as Raggins et al (in Loughlin 1999); Pence (1999) and Gardiner et al (2000) who found that almost all women in executive positions had mentors at some point at the beginning of their careers and that mentoring relationships were important to participants in learning complex educational management roles. Although women principals in this study did not choose their mentors, the reliance on men for support is worth pursuing in further research. This clearly has implications for the perpetuation of the masculine organisational culture of leadership which Blackmore (1993), Ely and Meyerson (2000) and Greyvenstein (2000) argue exists because women have few or no role models to emulate and are left with men whose style of leadership is regarded as the norm. As these male figures remain significant in the women principals' view, their approval of what the latter do is also significant to the women themselves and it could be argued that it provides the rationale for the choice women principals make for their deputies as seen in the previous chapter.

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Thus, without a conscious effort supported by policy to bring more women to assist a few existing female principals little will be achieved in terms of closing the gender gap. This could be a vicious circle where, after the current cohort of women principals, the next one becomes mostly men as before.

Mentoring relationships seemed to be perpetuating the status quo as Gardiner et al (2000) also observed. Gold (1996) asserts that women need encouragement to participate in leadership in the schools, and that they particularly need encouragement from professionals they respect in order to see themselves as future managers. I argue that if male managers are all women see as role models, then we cannot expect to see positive transformation results soon in closing the gender gap. Mentoring is therefore not seen as a 'transforming practice' in challenging the predominance of men and culture in management and useful as it appears to have been for women principals, it should be embraced critically (Gardiner et al 2000). The danger of the continuation of the masculine attributes of leadership lurks if women's differences are suppressed in the interest of maintaining the status quo. If mentoring has to be useful for women who have thus far constituted a minority in the management of schools, mentoring relationships have to be examined and formally controlled.

It was interesting to find that the majority of these mentors for the female principals were men. While it could be argued that because men played role models for these women, it was equally interesting that most of these women principals had men for their deputies. Gardiner et al (2000) suggest that if top management is held primarily by men and a few women who have been enculturated into male-administrative norms women may continue to be at a disadvantage in identifying and internalizing any mentoring that is given. "Women need to work together if women are to be successful" (2000:6) in top management.

The issue of '*tokenism*' versus '*ascribed power*' is also critical as an organizational factor particularly in the performance phase. With the intervention of the affirmative action

policy women in principalship positions are seen to be in 'token positions' where they are seen to be representing all other women while men are viewed as suitable for the management positions and therefore having the 'ascribed power' (Van Eck et al, 1996). Van Eck et al describe ascribed power as "the widely-held conviction that men are more suitable for management positions" (pp 408). For women principals in the present study, this is a wrong perception that led to a number of them not wanting to be associated with affirmative action. This view of tokenism versus ascribed power becomes a continuous barrier for women who are already in the positions of power because being tokens means that their participation is conditioned in a particular way (Ortiz, 1982). Ortiz cites Kanter (1977) who established that tokens get more attention and often receive more criticism. "When female administrators err, it is widely publicized" (Ortiz, 1982:73), and taken as a sign of how women in general perform. In the present study district officials admitted that women principals work under extreme pressure to prove themselves and agreed that often when one woman principal makes a legitimate mistake, it is perceived as a weakness for all women.

Most women suffered a *lack of recognition* of their authority once they were appointed principals. They struggled to have their authority accepted by their colleagues and the community. They experienced a lot of *resistance* initially and had to prove their capability before they could get accepted. The domination of men in education management appeared to be prevalent in the case of these women principals as was found by earlier research. Women's entry into these positions appeared to have been facilitated by men in more ways than one. First of all, most of their mentors and role models whom they aspired to emulate were men (as discussed above). Although a few women did indicate a bit of dislike in the approaches to leadership that the men practiced such as autocracy and lack of collaborative decision-making, they still admired them and wished as principals, to have the same kind of authority.

Secondly, men formed the majority on the interview and selection panels. This male domination is not only calculated in terms of numbers but also in terms of views they

hold on recruitment and selection of principalship candidates. Women principals attested to having been subjected to answering questions on how they were planning to discipline the big boys and male teachers in the schools. Questions such as these clearly have a negative connotation that it is only men who can successfully discipline the big boys and control male teachers in the secondary schools. As most women were from the rural areas, where traditional leadership is taken seriously, most of these traditional views had an impact on who is suitable to run the local schools. These power relations within the communities do not only end with issues pertaining to the villages but to the schools as well. In most cases school governing body chairpersons were men who were respected in the community because of the role they play in the leadership of the community. This is where policy appeared to clash with the local beliefs and practices and where there was resistance of the selected school leadership where it did not meet the ideals and expectations of the most influential and respected in the communities.

There appear to be startling irregularities concerning the implementation of policies particularly in the rural areas where most of the governing body members responsible for carrying out these employment procedures were not enlightened. This further has a negative impact on women since the ideal principal is often constructed in male terms. If procedures are not followed women will continue to be disadvantaged. Although the affirmative action policy exists and all participants claimed awareness of it, it is mainly symbolic and lacks the procedural aspect of how the implementation should be carried out. There is no formal recruitment procedure put in place to entice more women to apply for these posts. Most women still appear to be competing at the same level as men even with affirmative action in place.

9.3.3   Social factors

Factors affecting women are not only structural or personal as has been seen earlier. Social barriers in the form of broader cultural expectations in terms of the sex role stereotypes, political, traditional and historical influences are even more problematic

because they are so deeply rooted the society and are therefore not easy to eradicate. Blackmore (1989) posits that at a specific historical moment, traditional patterns of behaviour prescribe certain roles to which men and women conform to differing degrees. That is why for example women's centrality to child rearing and family is not greatly challenged in practice and forms part of women's identity, values and needs.

A number of questions became glaring when it comes to women principals acceptability in the school community. Breaking the glass ceiling did not appear to automatically make way for women to be accepted in the school community by either their colleagues or communities around the schools. Most of them had to earn the respect and acceptance through activities they involved themselves in to improve the schools. The question remains; why do women have to work so hard to earn respect and acceptance? Why must women prove themselves and to whom must they prove themselves and their capability? It was established by earlier research (Gupton and Slick, 1995 and Helgesen, 1990) that women in management lack the support of their colleagues and the community. The question remains, why? Women administrators have additional difficulty learning their management role because of the conflicting attitudes about the stereotypes of what it means to be female and what it means to be a manager.

The prevailing *gender stereotypes* in the Zulu culture of the different roles performed by men and women in society are seen as obstacles for the representation of women in education management. Most women principals in this study alluded to their not being expected to 'school up' to a certain level by their fathers because they would get married and leave anyway. So investing in them as girl children was seen as a waste of money. Thandi's case was a classic example where her father would ask her all the time how old she was and upon answering "*I am fifteen*" the father would be saying "*Three more years to go. I married your mother when she was eighteen*". Thandi's father ended up not wanting to pay for her education after matric and she got assistance from her uncle. This example leaves a lot to be desired if this is the situation faced by many other girl-children

in the rural areas. As Nandipha also mentioned that even at the time of the study some parents (fathers particularly) still did not want to pay for their daughters' education.

Drake and Owen (1999) argue that girls must have access to schooling as should women to teaching and other careers in exactly the same way as their brothers. But the experiences of some of the women principals in the rural areas in the present study show that that is not the case. Girls are still viewed as people who will be taken care of by somebody else, and that is why their schooling comes secondary to that of boys, yet this should be the development of the pool from which future education managers are drawn. Dispelling this male dominated culture of leadership is based on the assumption that schools can be made into instruments that transform the systems in which education is functioning, the very systems that currently seem to be working against the development of women. Although transformation is in this sense believed to be lying in the hands of the policy-makers, who have the power to provide opportunities for girls to be schooled, to provide equal quality and quantity, equal access and content of education between boys and girls and to provide conditions that allow for women's advancement (Kelly and Elliot, 1982), this study argues that policy can only guarantee equality at the official level. At the practice level it is the attitudes and mind-sets of all those involved that need alteration to enable positive change to take place.

It is not easy to draw a clear-cut distinction between personal, organisational and social factors as the latter informs the former two as reflected in the framework captured in figure ten. Men and women are socialised into different gender roles as boys and girls and they grow up knowing the traditional divisions of labour in the society. This impacts on the choices that they later make as adult men and women and by that time these beliefs are so deeply rooted that it is not easy to eradicate them. Thus, the struggle of women to be accepted as managers in particularly the rural communities and some urban communities is still a long and complicated one that needs immediate intervention since they cannot fight it alone. What further complicates this problem is the intricacy of factors that hamper women's advancement in education management. This is supported

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by Van Eck et al (1996) who argue that personal and organisational constraints are influenced by social factors, such as how the traditional division of work and the management qualities of men and women are perceived. Findings in this current study have highlighted this complication of factors affecting the participation of women in education management. The following sections draw conclusions on these factors, summarises the lessons learnt and suggests some recommendations.

9.4 WOMEN'S CAREER PATH: A CONCLUSION

Women's participation in education management is evidently influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. This is in line with Tallerico (2000) where she cites Edson's (1988) study which showed that the individual's administrative career aspirations are not formed in a vacuum, independent of their own historic and present day opportunity structures and cultural traditions about who occupies the educational leadership roles. But that they are shaped by all the cultural expectations around them in terms of who is expected to do what in society. The participants in the current study did not appear to have even considered education management as a field they could follow because they had been socialized into believing that these top positions are only for men. When opportunities began to be present and women started getting a little conscientised and began to see the potential in themselves, they again grappled with the societal beliefs and expectations that were so much embedded within their cultural practices about the role of women in society. Cubillo and Brown (2003) also made this observation about the deep enculturation of gender stereotypes that are so difficult to eradicate. However, the women principals studied in this present study can be viewed as victorious since they managed to overcome the original fears they had about their lack of suitability for management positions.

The society in which these women grew up, schooled and worked seems to have clearly defined the gender roles so that it was not expected of them to aspire to management of secondary schools. However, the one prominent and positive factor about the women

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studied in this research is that they were highly resilient and as Gupton and Slick (1996) found with the successful women principals they studied, the women principals had 'persevered'. There were many obstacles in the way of participants in the current study but statements such as "*I knew I was destined for better things so I did not let their negative comments put me off*" and "*They would not listen to me when I talked but when it was my deputy a male spoke, they listened and cooperated*", did not put them off.

The analytical framework developed in this study shows that problems experienced by women in the performance phase may lead to women not lasting in the management positions and may also work as deterrents for women aspirants. Lack of institutional support appeared to have been a major problem for many women principals in all the phases and was even more detrimental to their lack of success in the performance phase. Obstacles experienced in the anticipation and acquisition phases may also discourage a potential pool of women participants in the lower promotion posts.

Some of the participants had applied for many posts before they got the one they were occupying at the time of the interview. And as much as lack of confidence was voiced out by the women as one factor that prevented them from applying for these positions much earlier in their career, it is also evident that with time a lot of them managed to build the necessary confidence even if it was after being pushed by colleagues that they could do it. Tallerico (2000) urges women to seek these positions and apply for them and not wait to be recruited or encouraged. Blackmore (1999) and Cubillo and Brown (2003) argue the so-called lack of confidence in women is a mere fear of the unknown since management has traditionally been coined as male territory to which women had no access. I argue that this is why most women felt comfortable with management after they had done some management and realized that there was no monster in this area after all, leading to familiarity as one of the main determinants of the women's access to the management job.

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So far I have tried to analyse factors that affect women's upward mobility in education management. It is important to understand that these factors are interrelated and that lack of women's representation in education management cannot be attributed to one or another. However, at the core of the problem lies the inner drive that the individual aspirants have towards attaining and retaining these top positions. Post-structural feminism posits the understanding that human beings are not blank objects on which things just happen. But that as humans women are also capable of making or breaking their own situation. Moving outside the personal a bit, women are in the same breath seen as objects whose autonomy within the society has been traditionally limited by the power that only men seem to have access to, thus disabling women from making choices about their own situations but rather reacting within the parameters of the presented discourses in which they have not taken part in creating (Grogan, 1996). These discourses appear to be within the organizations and within the society informing the broader social relations between men and women. African feminism explains these discourses through its provision of the impact colonialism, race, and patriarchy had in determining women's experiences.

In this study I do not ask for a mere inclusion of women into the evidently existing patriarchal discourses as they are. That is not what feminist theory as used in this study advocates. Arguing for the inclusion of women in the current discourses would be encouraging sameness between women and men, the strand of liberal feminism that I do not agree with. Informed by theories of feminism I argue that social structures and practices that hamper the greater representation of women be dealt with, and that women should be free to participate in discourses where they have freedom of choice not informed by gender subordination. Blackmore (1989) states that, "feminists demand not just equality, but that they become the subjects and objects of an alternative, autonomous discourse which chooses its own measures and criteria" (1989:120).

While all South African women's experiences cannot be explained and understood outside the historical context, Black African women deserve a dual recognition of

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poverty and racial oppression that continue to hamper their upward mobility. The most suitable view of feminist theory for understanding South African women's experiences is a post-apartheid feminist theory that takes into consideration the fact that black African South African women's experiences are informed by their context of poverty that continues to limit their access to resources, and cultural contexts that continue to define women's and men's roles in society. The gender dilemmas in education management should be responded to in a manner that fully recognises the historical unevenness inherited by the education system. Unless women's situation is understood within its gendered nature, there will always be disparities between men and women. To conclude, I quote Reiger who argues that "an historically informed understanding of the gender dynamics affecting organisations can assist us to critically analyse the present with a view to reshaping the future" (Reiger, 1993: 25).

CHAPTER 10

RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises the lessons learnt from policy and women principals' experiences and suggests a way forward for policy, practice and future research.

10.2   WHAT ARE THE LESSONS LEARNT?

The lessons are drawn from the experiences of the women principals interviewed in this study. Besides understanding the reasons for the lack of female participation in education management, one of the aims of the study was to look at positive factors that enhanced the studied women principals' success. Success is in this sense measured by the mere fact that in spite of all the unpleasant experiences these women had, they broke the glass ceiling. What research and policy need to take further from these lessons to be summarised below, is how women can be assisted to not only break the glass ceiling, but to shatter all the glass barriers around them.

10.2.1 Lesson one: Preparation is essential

The management route model has identified preparation for top management as a one of the stages at which women encounter more problems than men. Gupton and Slick (1996) also established preparation as an obvious ticket for ascending to top management positions even though this does not guarantee access into the position. From the findings of this current study preparation for women meant having the necessary qualifications and having the necessary management experience. It was important for participants to continue studying even though they were faced with many difficulties which were mostly socio-economic. Getting a university degree was evidently very important for them and this is proved by the fact that almost all of them had a university degree at the time of the

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interview. For most of them not having a degree as a principal meant they were under-qualified. They made a lot of sacrifices with their families to get these qualifications since they could not afford to take time away to study. That meant studying through correspondence to obtain the degree and get a specific management qualification for some of them.

Although most participants were initially not aiming for principalship when they studied and applied for promotions, professional experience acquired on the lower management levels was very valuable to them on hindsight. Most of them believed they got the principalship because they had the experience which they gained by default or by design as has been seen. It is therefore essential for aspiring managers to gain the necessary credentials and experience through other promotion posts in preparation for principalship.

Aspirants for principalship also need to identify their own ambitions so that they seek sponsorship for promotion into top management positions. This is a feminist study that would suggest women aspirants choose their sponsors critically so that they do not end perpetuating the male dominated view of management. I acknowledge that women aspirants to principalship operate within a number of competing discourses that have a direct bearing on the choices they would make on who to sponsor them. For women in the study the 'luxury' to choose their own sponsor was not enjoyed simply because they were not aspiring. Their preparation for the principalship in this regard was therefore highly gendered. They themselves looked up to former or existing male principals to assist and promote them into these positions, which resulted in most of them emulating what their former male bosses did. Women need to develop their own identity as managers and find their own management styles without being made to believe that what gives them credibility as managers is what was done by their male predecessors. It was interesting though that women in the study were able to identify some management styles of their forerunners that they did not identify with such as 'being autocratic' and being a 'bully'. And it was noticeable that most of them made a lot of reference to collaboration and consultation with the stakeholders as what works for them.

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10.2.2 Lesson two: identify what you want and strive for it

The desire to occupy principalship posts in the schools had obviously been very subtle with many women principals who were studied. They mostly claimed not to have anticipated any promotions into principalship yet that did not prevent them from grabbing the opportunity when it presented itself. It was actually interesting that most of them were looking for promotion into circuit management, the level right above school principalship in the education management hierarchy. Some of them had actually been trying for some time to apply for these inspectorship posts and had not been successful thus far, while others had been waiting to gain a bit more experience and to collect sufficient credentials. Out of the twenty-eight women principals studied, only two expressed their eagerness to have always wanted to become principals of the schools, and to have joined the teaching profession because some day they would have liked to be school principals. Women therefore need to identify and know what their ambitions are and strive for them.

The individual agency that Tallerico (2000) refers to plays a big part here. Women have to clearly make an effort to apply for these positions and should not wait to be encouraged to do so. Unless there is a drive from within, very little effort is going to be made by others in accessing these top management positions in the education field. Lessons can be drawn from a few women who applied without any external encouragement or persuasion.

10.2.3 Lesson three: garner support

Lack of support for participants was perplexing. However, women who had institutional and personal support throughout the three phases generally had good experiences and are determined to stay in the profession. These support structures are therefore essential for both aspirants and women who are already in management. Recognition of the importance of the mentorship roles could lead to the formation of more formalised mentorship programmes. What is equally important is sponsorship into these positions.

Although much of what is discussed here would appear to be external support that women in management may not directly have an influence on, women should also be more proactive in seeking these forms of support and not just be passive and wait for support to come their way. There are many different ways in which this can be done. Most of the international literature refers to the so called "boys' clubs" or "old boys' networks", structures that are not very common in the South African education context. However, women should also form their own support structures at an informal level that can be officially recognised through formal programmes and should be active in seeking their own mentors. Tallerico (2000) established from the participants in her study that "developing and maintaining connections within the networks is as much important as acquiring the skills to do the job" (2000:129). Participants who enjoyed their principalship are those who had support from the communities around them. Most of these participants had to work hard to earn this support.

10.3 WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS?

As indicated at the beginning, previous research on lack of women's participation in education management has focused either on the intrinsic or extrinsic barriers through socialization or organisational theories. This study has tried to balance the attention between both extrinsic and intrinsic factors by focusing on the individual, the organization and the social factors affecting women in and into education management. Through the use of a management route model that looked at the three phases women go through in their attempts to get these positions, and the use of feminism theory as an underlying theoretical framework, the study has revealed the complexity of the obstacles facing women and the intricacy of the relationship between these obstacles. This last section of the study discusses implications of the findings of this study. These implications are based on the findings and are useful in combating the gender differences in as far as preparation, acquisition and performance of education management posts are concerned.

The current study has shown that problems facing women in and into management are complex and that no single reason can explain the poor participation of women in education management. Because of the complexity of women's situation, no single strategy or initiative can adequately address women's problems or make the situation better. Strategies put forward to remedy the situation therefore have to tackle the problem from different angles which include change and more focus on policy initiatives, consciousness raising with regard to the problems and issues facing women, improving women's skills and management competency through sponsored programmes, change of structures and cultures surrounding women and their work and home lives, change of practices and procedures, change in attitude of men and women who have a stake in education and creation of a more women-enabling working environment.

10.3.1 Implications for policy

Gold (1996) asserts that women need to be encouraged to apply for school headship and that management development courses should be utilised. She states that sometimes women apply for promotion after the suggestion has been made by a more senior educationist whose professional opinion they value. Similarly, most women in the current study admitted to never having thought about applying for a principalship post before either their former principals or circuit managers suggested it. The reasons given for this were simply, "*I never thought I could make it*" or "*it never occurred to me*". This clearly shows the importance of sponsorship and mentoring as two factors that have influenced women's decision to apply for principalship. A recommendation is therefore made, that women who seem unsure about their suitability for management do need encouragement from respected professionals in order to see themselves as future managers. This encouragement also needs to be made official through formal policies and formal structures supported by policy in order to prepare women for the management positions. One of the best ways to encourage these women as Gold (1996) suggests, is through management development programmes as awareness- raising mechanisms.

I suggest in this study that preparation programmes should be an integral part of aspirants' education and training in order for them to have access into management positions and sustain their participation in the management of schools. It is imperative therefore that awareness raising is done for both men and women who work in these positions and those who participate in one way or another in the hiring of school principals. As Lynch (1990 cited in Gupton and Slick 1996) observed "the problems of women are not the formal, tangible barriers, such as education or certification, but the intangible, informal ones that require as aspirant to be accepted as one of us by those already at the apex of the organizations" (Gupton and Slick,1996:1).

Policies and regulations at the national level should provide opportunities for women to acquire the necessary training in preparation for management. Kenway (1993) suggests that there is a possibility that women may still not be able to claim appropriate employment even after gaining the necessary credentials due to the gendered power relations in the workplace. The obstacles faced by women participants in the study show that even for women who are fully credentialed problems still exist. Preparation for management positions does not only involve acquiring the necessary credentials as Gupton and Slick (1996) observed in their study. In this study too, experiences of participants such as Nelly, who had such high qualifications but could not get the post because she was a "young woman" or Lindi who was told "you are good, but sorry we are looking for a man" do confirm that qualifications are not sufficient to guarantee access into these positions. Obviously, awareness raising programmes are needed by all the stakeholders participating in the recruitment of principals, traditional leaders with their authorities in the rural areas as well as all men and women in the educations system.

There is a dire need for policy to address more specifically the issue of women's inequitable representation in executive positions in general and in the education profession in particular. This should not only be because women constitute a majority of the teaching force and therefore there should be equity, but because women do have a lot to contribute and enabling and giving them the opportunity is essential. There has to be

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an ultimate shift from women just having access to the organizations and professions to them holding equal responsibilities to those of men. The existing policies are oblivious to the dynamics within which South African women educators operate and therefore leave out the bulk of the rural and urban women whose social conditions are still largely determined by the patriarchal system. Traditional leadership, particularly in the rural areas appeared to have some influence in who runs the schools. Stromquist (2001) suggests the need for more 'constructive' gender policies that include traditional leadership to promote new behaviours, knowledge and attitudes regarding women and men in society.

There are no monitoring mechanisms and with the power school governing bodies have in the employment of school principals as an attempt to decentralize power, there appears to be further centralization of power in the hands of a few school based officials who in most cases refuse to get input from the outside. Different explanations have been given for why sexual inequalities have continued to cast their shadow on schooling and education in general. Different analyses have also generated different solutions and strategies for change. Liberal feminists argue that ignorance is the main cause of sexual inequality and therefore knowledge dissemination is the principal solution. In this view, because sexual inequality within education is caused by a variety of factors such as prejudice, traditional values, the lack of proper role models and structural barriers, the solution is twofold: awareness-raising through in-service training and school policy-making, and the removal of barriers through the use of law (Weiner, 1996:70-71). Measor and Sikes (1992) posit that education has always been important for liberals who have argued that education replaces ignorance and prejudice by knowledge and enlightenment. There are many stakeholders in education and as evident from the current study, the level of awareness of policy change initiatives is generally high. However, it is also evident that there is a dire need to move from general awareness into a more concrete procedural level where awareness translates into practice for all those who claim a stake in the education sector. There has to be a move away from rhetoric and more into monitored implementation.

An existing tension between women and men and their roles in the private and public sphere on gender and organisations has long been established by other researchers such as Reiger (1993). This tension is not only between women and men but it also exists between women themselves in the public sphere in terms of work demands, expectations, availability for meetings and so on. As evident in the study, women who are younger and are still raising families face more problems that force them to abandon their families for the sake of work while for those older, the demands of the job suit them because their home responsibilities are minimal and less problematic. In order to avoid and counter the notion of management as masculine, which does not recognise the legitimacy of claims of the private sphere, policy should make provision for child care facilities in order to allow women of child bearing age to have equivalent opportunities to practice in more demanding jobs such as management.

10.3.2 Implications for practice

The discourses within which women in education operate are still masculinist and consequently inform their experiences which appeared to be highly gendered. Blackmore (1999) suggests that discourses about women in leadership are informed by wider discourses about politics of gender relations and that policy as a communicative discourse is also about prioritization and allocation of values. So long as women operate in these environments where they are viewed as men's subordinates – the perception that seems to be dominant in the highly traditional areas - very little change will be achieved. I would like to re-emphasise the point made in the GETT (1997) report that cultural barriers in the rural areas must be accentuated in order to develop gender equity strategies.

It also became evident that formal support programmes such as induction and mentoring are needed for newly appointed women principals to assist them in learning the ropes of the management game. Support after appointment into the position was experienced differently by women principals. Some had mentors and former bosses who initiated

them into the job while others expressed the frustration of being 'thrown in the deep end'. Those who received support hailed the usefulness of mentoring relationships during their first months and years of principalship. It is therefore important that these programmes are formally established and included in the preparation and support programmes. These formal mentoring programmes should include as many women as possible so that women aspirants begin to see other women as role models. Gardiner et al (2000) suggest that women aspirants should recognize the value of and be open to mentoring as a form of support. I reiterate that as many women and men should be included in these mentoring programmes so that management of schools does not become as gendered as it appears to be currently, but a field in which all teachers regardless of gender feel free to participate. However, this has to start with the recognition of our own gendered experiences and practices in education management in general and with regard to mentoring in particular.

10.3.3 Implications for future research

The dominant epistemological form in organizations is highly gendered and structured in the dominant male perspectives. There is a dire need to make available data that reflects women's particular experiences. Statistics that distinguish between men and women make women's needs more visible. This is the type of information that raises consciousness and is essential to effective policy-making. Liberal feminism argues for dissemination of information as an awareness raising mechanism. Women themselves need this kind of information for them to be able to make informed choices about their participation in policy-making processes.

The methodological bias in the study focused on women principals as the main sources of data, restricted findings to women's experiences and views only. While I am not apologetic about this choice, the study has not yielded data on the experiences and perceptions of men which could be vital in enhancing the understanding of the degree of discrimination that women experience on gender related grounds. It would be interesting to find out how men experience the route to the education top and what their perceptions

are in order to strengthen the argument for women's equal treatment that would lead to equal gender representation. More studies on experiences of all South African women – African, Indians, Coloureds and White - should yield richer data on which more grounded South African feminist theories could develop. I therefore make a challenge for more local studies that look at the experiences of South African women in general in order to develop more contextually grounded theories that explain the understanding to our unique experiences.

For policy to have an impact at the national level, it has to be based on researched evidence that is representative of the nation's women population. There is a need for further replication of studies such as this one that examines the actual discrimination experiences of women in order to inform policy. Equally important, would be the replication of this study with a sample of women who are still in the promotion posts to establish the continuing discrimination practices in order to inform policy. This study was based on women principals who have already "chiselled through the glass ceiling" and there is a need to establish further what is still going on with the aspirants for education management. Previous research did establish that reasons for women's under-representation change over time and it would be interesting to explore issues women grapple with from time to time in order for policy makers to make informed policy decisions.

Women principals' rationale for the choice of mentors was not explored in this study but it is something worth pursuing in further research. Whether there was something particularly worthwhile in these men's management styles that women in the study wanted to emulate, or whether it was just because they happened to be the closest available who were willing to provide the support, or whether women felt safer with the sponsorship of male figures is something beyond the scope of this study, but it is worth pursuing. While I make a recommendation for the need of mentoring relationships, I also recommend that mentoring relationships be researched further in order to provide information on what it takes to establish a good and beneficial mentoring relationships.

Further research into how mentoring programmes actually benefit women as a previously disadvantage group need to be done in order to establish women's mentoring needs. In their study on mentoring women into school leadership, Gardiner et al (2000) established that women have different mentoring needs based on their race and exposure. Women in this study had men for mentors and the culture of leadership that these women 'inherited' from these mentors can be argued to be one to perpetuate the style that is not theirs. If formally established, these programmes should have a way of accentuating women's uniqueness as individuals while they at the same time benefit from their mentors.

More research needs to be done on what makes mentorship relationships useful and whether or not they should be included into formal preparation programmes. It is clear that policies on recruitment and preparation of women managers are needed. Pence (1999) argues that formal mentorships can provide a link between theory and practice for aspirants and novices, while they can also serve as good organizational pre-socialisation for aspirants and socialization for the newly appointed managers. She further argues that:

> Incorporating a formal mentorship component into a university preparation programme or district induction programme can enhance a beginning experience for aspirants and neophytes. Formal programmes also provide a framework to actively seek, support and promote underrepresented groups into administration (Pence, 1999: 142).

We also need further research into why women prefer male assistants. Could it be that women feel more comfortable with male affirmation or could it be they feel men can play a role that they are not able to play as women even though they have the authority? Research has not established the degree to which protégés are able to sift information and knowledge they need from their mentors in order not to perpetuate the stereotypes that good leadership is more instructional than collaborative. Most women principals in the study who had male mentors admitted to having wanted to emulate their mentors who were their former principals mostly because they liked their style of leadership. However, what I can infer from these participants' responses on why they had male deputies was

that there was not a strong desire to put other women in positions of power. Women principals wanted people who could work and they happened to be men.

More research is needed to understand rural women's real situation in management. It became evident in the study that women principals in the rural areas face more obstacles even at the level where they think they have broken the glass ceiling. Women principals in the rural areas did not only appear to be fighting barriers preventing them to get into management, but even after accessing the posts they were still faced with a number of issues that could have become detrimental to their participation in school management had they not persevered. While women in the urban areas appeared to be grappling mainly with issues within the school with regard to their colleagues, women principals in the rural areas appeared to be fighting battles within the community surrounding the schools. In order to develop programmes that can educate the whole rural society, we need more research to interrogate issues of why women have to fight so many battles.

Tallerico (2000) observed that women mostly join the top management positions in their middle age, which in most cases is slightly later than their male counterparts. This could not be established here as the study did not include male participants as principals. But to a large extent it was confirmed for women principals in this study that principalship occurred to them at a much later stage of their teaching career, especially for women of the older generations. While the situation seems to be slowly improving – that younger women aspire to leadership much earlier in their career - I suggest that studies establishing whether the situation of men in the South African context is different are needed in order to have more informed policy initiatives.

Finally, this study has kick-started the process of learning more from the experiences of successful women managers in the South African context. The women in this study have succeeded in accessing and retaining the management positions against so many odds. Instead of focusing on the negative, that is, why women do not participate in large numbers in education management, we need more qualitative in-depth case studies that

celebrate the professional accomplishment of South African women in education management, so that we can learn more about what works in the South African context. This would enable policy makers to learn from successful women's experiences and use those experiences to inform policies to allow for a bottom-up approach to policy making. It would also be useful to help develop programmes for training education management aspirants. These programmes have to be aimed at encouraging capable women to seek principalship and not to end in management by default. For quite a number of the studied women principals, "it never occurred" to them to apply for the principalship because principals of secondary schools were always men even though on hindsight they stood a good chance. The assumption here is that studies that are based on particular successful contexts would be more informative in terms of what works in an environment where women are already at the top.

10.4   CONCLUSION

In this study, I have tried to provide ways of understanding women's experiences in and into management through the lived experiences of those who have travelled the path to principalship. This was achieved through women principals' own accounts in order to add to the already available knowledge on why so few South African women manage to make it to the top in education management. Gender discrimination is evidently still very much embedded in our society and uprooting it needs to begin at the cultural level. At this cultural level there appears to be the interplay of the three broadly categorized factors affecting women's experiences. These factors are personal, organizational and social.

The study has added to the already existing knowledge on factors that contribute to the low participation of women in school secondary school principalships in South Africa, and particularly in KwaZulu Natal. The intention was to look at women principals' experiences in order to understand the complexity of these factors using a body of feminist theories that inform each other. These theoretical constructs enabled me to expose the power relations within the schools as organizations and other social structures

such as the family and how they affect women at the personal level, organisational and social level.

I wish to conclude this study on a very optimistic note that transformation in South African education management has begun. And it is up to those claiming a stake in this field to make sure there is progress to their satisfaction. A few women principals who participated in this study are a sign that women in South Africa are slowly chiselling through the glass ceiling. In the world politics, 2005 has been significant in symbolising the reaching of a milestone of two women heads of state (Germany and Lyberia) since Margaret Thatcher. I would like to borrow and concur with Blackmore (1989) that there is nothing wrong with women, but what is problematic and needs to be given attention is the whole perception of 'management' and the 'ideal manager' that is still constructed in terms suitable for men. However, we need to take cognizance of the fact that not only the glass ceiling is problematic for women to attain management posts, but that all the glass barriers around them must be broken. This can be achieved through a collective effort of both men and women in education, the communities in and around the schools and the officials at all levels of education management. By so doing, not only women would benefit from these efforts but education management would be seen as a phenomenon not associated with any gender.

Women should be able to see men as partners and men should participate in closing the gap between the different perspectives of management that are held by both men and women. Creating women specific approaches would counter the purpose of closing the gender gap since they are underpinned by an assumption that women are a category of people which deserves special treatment in order for them to enjoy their equality with men. They should therefore be treated with caution. On the other hand, gendered approaches focus on the relationship between men and women, their structure along gender lines and the overall impact these relations have on society and the work place. Thus, men should be viewed as potential supporters of women as Pearson (1992), Kabeer (1994) and Visvanathan (1997) suggest.

Although at the level of policy women are not necessarily discouraged to participate in management and appear to have the same access as men, a number of practices within the management of schools continue to discriminate against women and put them at a disadvantage. Thus, women still do not have equal playing field given the history of women in education in South Africa and unless that is sufficiently addressed, the achievement of parity between men and women in education management will always be a matter of concern. Men have been exposed to the field and masculinity has therefore been inherited and lives within the organisational structures and cultures. It is therefore imperative that efforts are made to obliterate all the hidden barriers to equity in order to achieve a more equitable system that permeates the entire existence of schools as organisations for the benefit of not only women, but for all concerned.

In sum, I wish to cite Tallerico (2000:148) who suggests five reasons why the effort to bring about equity in education management is warranted. She suggests firstly, that education deserves the benefit of diverse perspectives and experiences that different kinds of educators can bring to school management. She says that is the "smart thing to do". Secondly, the diversity of talent and potential among the various teaching ranks is seriously underutilised. Utilising the potential of all the educators, particularly the previously disadvantaged, is the "practical thing to do". Thirdly, guaranteeing equal employment as suggested by many policies is the "legal thing to do". Fourthly, for children to see leadership in both genders and all colours is the "socially responsible thing to do". Lastly, morally objecting to ignore inequities in the attainments of women is the "right thing to do". I fully subscribe to this. Principalship is a very important leadership position within the South African schooling system, which should be provided with fair and open access to all potential sources of quality candidates.

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APPENDIX A

WOMEN PRINCIPALS' PROFILES

Thandi struggled with her upbringing and left school with a junior certificate to train for her first certificate in teaching after which she immediately went to teach. She started teaching in 1966. She pursued her other qualification later when she had made a bit of money for herself. As a teacher she worked in many different schools assisting principals with their work because "*they often told me I had a good handwriting*", and she ended up doing most of the work. She admits that these experiences prepared her for the principalship she was later promoted into after more than thirty years of her teaching experience.

As a new school principal, Thandi got a good reception and support and she attributes that to the fact that she was well known in the area. With no children and no husband, she dedicated most of her time to the school work. At the time of the interview, Thandi was about to retire after a teaching service of thirty-seven years. She believes diligence, dedication, a calling to teaching and love for children is a recipe for good principalship. She found principalship so fulfilling because it gave her the opportunity to contribute in helping the nation. Given a second chance, she would definitely do it again.

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Phumi was married and lived with her husband at the time of the interview. She had only one child whom she was not living with at that moment. She started schooling in 1953 and went as far as Form 3 (current Grade 8). She then went to a teacher training college and obtained her Primary Teacher's Certificate (PTC) two years later. She started teaching in 1966 and later finished her matriculation through private study. She then got a transfer from her first school and there she registered for a degree in one of the historically black universities. After her degree she went and taught at a high school. A year later, she enrolled for a B. Ed (Hons) full-time and in 1987 got transferred to another school as a principal to replace a male principal who had problems with the learners and teachers. She had been in that school until the time of the interview.

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Hally was the third principal in this category and the only one who was white. Hally is a married woman with two children both of whom have moved out of home leaving her with her husband alone to live with. Her education experiences differed from the rest of her group because she managed to go to university immediately after completing her matriculation, which is what did not happen with the other two. She only did her first BSC degree and a subsequent UED but did not pursue her studies further after that except for some informal courses offered by the department of education for all teachers. Her initial intention was not to come to teaching but got sidelined and once there she found a comfort zone.

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Hally started teaching in 1966 and only became a principal in 1998, thirty-two years later. However, before she got promoted into principalship, Hally got promoted to other management posts such as HOD and deputy principalship within the same school where she was working as a principal at the time of the interview. She came to the school (an all girls high school) in 1974 and two years later she was promoted to a senior assistant post. That was before the current structure of management in the schools was put in place. She later became an HOD and deputy principal and acting principal after which she was appointed as a principal in 1998.

Hally had tremendous support in this school and believed she would not have had it better anywhere else. She got into the post just at the time for transformation and had a new governing body with whom they had to struggle together and provide support for one another. She supports women empowerment, but is not sure whether women can really manage running a co-educational school. She loved teaching and what she is doing. Given a second chance to start all over, she would do it again.

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Vuyelwa was born and bred in Cape Town, but started schooling in the rural Eastern Cape (her father's home) because blacks did not have schools in the urban Cape Town. She went as far as Std 6 and then went to a boarding church school run by missionaries and completed her matriculation. She was one of the few black women principals interviewed who went to the university after matriculation.

Vuyelwa initially wanted to do journalism at a historically white university, but was not allowed because of the policies of the past. So after matriculating from a church boarding school, she went to an historically black university and did her teaching diploma. After her Secondary Teaching Diploma (STD) she went to teach in one of the local township secondary schools in 1973 and that is where she discovered her passion for teaching. She later decided to enrol for a part-time degree course at the same university.

After her degree, she taught at a number of schools in the Cape and got a promotion to a deputy principal post. Before she went further with her career development in that school, in 1982 she just got "foot loose" and decided to move to KZN to start a new life. Unfortunately for her when she came to Natal she had to start all over again as a post level one teacher. Soon after that in 1984 she got promoted into a head of department for English post and 3 years later got a deputy principalship post in the same ex-HOD school. Vuyelwa stayed as a deputy principal for about six years and then in 1993 she moved to start a new school as acting principal. She was officially appointed principal in 1994 and that is where she still was at the time of the interview.

Although she had no specific training in management, Vuyelwa says she had always had inkling for managing and that is one thing that pushed her to apply for the first promotion post available in her school in KZN. For her, the urge to apply for promotion posts came from within and she felt particularly uncomfortable with the women who did not want to

apply for these posts. She believes anybody can do the job and that the gender of a person does not have anything to do with it.

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Zandi was a direct opposite of Vuyelwa because she was afraid of applying for promotion posts. She grew up in the rural Southern KZN where she attended both her primary and secondary school. She went as far as Standard 8 and went immediately for teacher training. There were no high schools around Zandi's area and so she was not even thinking about finishing matric. So she got employment as a privately paid teacher after her Std 8 and she managed to finish her matric through correspondence in the meantime. She laughs heartily when she remembers she was only paid R20 a month in those days.

Zandi went for teacher training in one of the colleges and completed her Primary Teacher's Certificate (PTC) in 1974. She got lucky and was employed at the same college as a teacher of the high school section of the college. After two years she was expelled from the college because she got pregnant before she got married and she had to go back home. She got married later in 1979 and continued to have more children for whom she never had to resign but continued teaching and took a few days leave for maternity purposes. However, after she left the college she was fortunate enough to get another teaching post at a local school in 1976. This was the same school where Zandi was a principal at the time of the interview.

Zandi did not stop with her matric and PTC, but she upgraded mainly through correspondence with Vista, RAU and Pretoria University. Through correspondence she managed to get her STC, SED, FDE. At the time of the interview she was doing her B.Ed in Management and Leadership with RAU.

Zandi considers her career to have started in 1976 because it was not interrupted after that. She joined the school after it was just erected and she became one of the first teachers of the school. For two years in the 1980s she was given an acting principal post which was later officially given to a man. She only got her first promotion in the 1990s and was officially appointed as principal in 2001 after being in the profession for 25 years.

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Sibo is a single parent to a fifteen - year old daughter. She has been a principal in one of the KZN Midlands schools since 1995. Sibo comes from a poor family of seven in one of the local townships. Her father died when she was a little girl and her single mother could not afford to give her most of the things she wanted. So after matric, Sibo was compelled young as she was, to work in order to help her mother with her other siblings.

She got a privately paying teaching job at one of the local rural schools through the help of some of her teachers in 1979. However, Sibo soon realised that she did not like teaching mainly because she was young and most of the students she was teaching were much older than her. She recalls that some of them came from her own area where she

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used to address them and sister and brother and now suddenly she had to teach them and that was a big problem for her. But with the help of her colleagues she finally gathered confidence and began to develop a bit of love for teaching. She stayed in that school as a teacher for a year and after that she went to a teacher training college where she did her GSTC. She came back to teach Maths, Biology and Physical Science in one of the local secondary schools.

She later got a bursary to do an extra course to supplement her initial teacher training course after which she then qualified as a Technical Drawing teacher. She also registered for a part-time degree with one of the local universities RAU, but unfortunately could not finish because of the piling financial problems at home. She then applied for a post to one of the new secondary schools where she had to teach primary school learners as well as secondary (Grade 8) school ones. The post for a principal of this new secondary school was later advertised and Sibo's colleagues and friends actually 'forced' her to apply because they believed she could make it. She was officially appointed as principal in 1995 and has been in the same school since then.

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"My father was not interested in our education as girls but kept asking, "how old are you now?" "I am fifteen", the girl would respond. "You know", continued the father, "I married your mother when she was eighteen. So three more years to go".

Thandiwe comes from a family of five – three girls and two boys in the Northern KwaZulu Natal. She believes that her father was only interested in when the girls would get married so he could get his "izinkomo" (cows from lobola). Thandiwe went through her primary and secondary education up to standard 8 like most of the black women in her generation. She had a vacation job at some shop, while she was waiting to go to a nursing college. Fortunately her former school principals helped her find school where she finished her matric instead of going straight into nursing. After matric she applied to a nursing college but because that delayed she found employment at some government office in her area. She did not like it there and she left for a privately paying teaching post in a mine school in 1977.

At this school Thandiwe was the only teacher teaching all grades first year and second year as well as standard one and two and teaching all subjects. She stayed in this school for 2 years and in 1979 the mine was closed down. She was then transferred a bigger primary school where the context was different. In 1981 she went for teacher training and got her STD in 1983. She started teaching at a high school in 1984 and got motivated to study further because she was teaching in the Zululand region next to the University of Zululand where people were busy studying. So in 1987 she enrolled for her BA degree and got the qualification in 1990. After that she taught for a short while at a teacher training college where she left because of a deputy principal post at a secondary school. In 1994 she got B. Ed still with the same University of Zululand. In 1995 she got transferred into a deputy principal post where she was never accepted because of her

political affiliations and she stayed only for 5 months. In 1996 she got a principalship post at another school where she acted until 1998 when she was formally appointed as principal and that is where she was at the time of the interview.

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Duduzile is a wife and mother of four and stays with her family that includes part of her extended family. She grew up in the rural Kwazulu Natal went to a catholic boarding school in the KZN Midlands. She initially wanted to become a pharmacist and so she enrolled for the programme at the former University of Natal. Unfortunately she was only able to study for her first year and could not continue due to financial problems at home. She dropped out of university and went to teach in one of the secondary school in the area in 1979.

She was later able to enrol for a BPAED degree at the University of Zululand but only did the first year and second year full-time and the rest programme was completed through part-time studying also due to financial constraints. In 1984 she was transferred to another high school until 1987 when she was asked to act as a principal of the school. Duduzile attributes her promotion to a mere luck and hard work because she was asked to act in the post of the principal due to the fact that her former principal was transferred. Because she did not have sufficient experience in teaching, she acted for many years before she was formally appointed as principals. She regarded all these acting years as her grooming process in preparation for the principalship.

However, unlike most women of her generation, Duduzile did not go through the usual promotion route of management, but went straight into principalship. But did not stay for long in this school as a principal but was during the following year transferred to head another secondary school where she stayed as a principal from 1990 to 1994. Then in February 1994 she got another transfer to her home area and became a principal there. This is where she was at the time of the interview.

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Thembi is a principal in of the secondary schools in a deep rural region. She got this post in 2000 after acting for about three years. Thembi was born and bred in the KZN Midlands. After her primary education she went to a boarding school in the area, after which she completed her initial teacher's certificate (PTC) in 1975. She only went as far as Std 8 like most of the women of her generation. She started teaching in 1976 after completing a teachers' certificate at one of the local teacher training colleges. She completed her matric through correspondence after hearing the announcement made over the radio for those who wanted to upgrade their teaching qualifications. After completing her matric she got a further diploma in teaching from another college. She went further and did FDE with the local university.

She taught at a primary school for two years and then got transferred to a secondary school to teach Mathematics. Thembi believes she had always had leadership skills from

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when she was a student. As a student at a teacher training college she was a head prefect and a member of the SRC leadership. As a teacher at school she used to do everything for the principal and even the principal used to commend her and believed that she could make a good principal because of her leadership skills.

Thembi taught at this secondary school for a while but later got a transfer to one school nearer her home because her parents were not well. Here she stayed under a male principal who was very "fond of his beer" and Thembi ended up doing all the school administration work which she believed indirectly prepared her for her own role as a principal. So when the post of HOD came, his principal advised her to apply because he was aware of her management skills. In 1997 Thembi applied for this post and a deputy principalship in another school. She got short-listed for the two posts but chose the HOD post so she could be close to her parents.

In September 1997, Thembi's principal resigned and as the nearest in command in the school she was supposed to act in the post until the post was advertised. However, the SEM asked one male level one educator to act in the principal's post because he said that school could not be run by a woman. Even under the leadership of the new acting principal, Thembi continued to do all the work that was supposed to be done by the principal. When the post was advertised, most people from the school community urged Thembi to apply but she was not keen because she anticipated a fight for this position. She eventually applied because the pressure was just too much from the school community including her colleagues.

Thembi did not get this post. The post was given to a man who came from outside the school. After a long period of unhappiness and ugliness in the school, Thembi was later transferred to newly opening school which was not even registered. She had to start from scratch registering that school with the help of the parents and securing a site where the school could be built. In 2000 Thembi was formally appointed as principal of this school and that is where she was at the time of the interview.

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Pat is a married woman who lives with her husband and three children, who are pretty grown up the youngest being in Grade 10. Pat is a principal in one of the rural junior secondary schools surrounded by lots of sugar cane fields. It is a very small school with very limited facilities. Pat started working here as a principal in 2000. Before then Pat had been teaching in one of the rural schools in KZN Midlands where she started in 1977. She had grown so much in this school and had moved because she felt it was time for her to make a further move in her career.

Pat was born in the rural area in the KwaZulu Natal Midlands and went to school in her area. She attended a boarding secondary school and after Standard 8, like most women in her generation, went for teacher training at a college. She trained there for two years and got her HPTC. After that she got her first teaching post at a secondary school in 1977.

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While she was teaching she decided to finish her matric with a private finishing school and then decided to enrol for another certificate with Vista. She decided to go on further and did her STC, SED and HED and at the time of the interview she was trying to finish off her B. Ed with the University of Natal.

Pat taught at her initial school until 1996 when she got a promotion post to be an HOD. In 1999 she was promoted as deputy principal in the very same school and thereafter she started making applications to many other schools for the post of principal. Pat says she had been at that school for a long time and her promotion posts had made her realise that she could run a school. Pat admits that she never really had the confidence she thought she needed to be a principal. But she was also aware that at her former school she was able to hold meetings with a large number of staff because the school was very big. She decided to apply for principalship posts outside because she was not confident enough to run a big school. So she made an application to her current school, which was much smaller than the one she working in before. She was formally appointed as principal in 2002.

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Devi comes from a family where all are educated. Her father and siblings were all teachers and she believes their influence wrapped up onto her and that is why she also became a teacher. She says for her, as an Indian woman, teaching was seen as a good, safe kind of profession because they were not too many opportunities when she finished matric in 1968. Devi grew up in Durban and did all her primary and secondary schooling there. After matriculating she went to a college of education and completed her diploma in senior secondary teaching – teaching English, Mathematics and History. Thereafter she enrolled for a BA degree with the UDW majoring in History and English and also did an Honours degree in History. She started teaching in 1973 teaching English at matric level.

Devi stayed in teaching and only got her first promotion in 1994, 21 years after she joined the profession. She believes she got this promotion because she was female. Five years later in 1999, she got promoted into deputy principalship and that is where she was at the time of the interview.

Devi's route to management was not smooth at all. For her, the promotion came about because of her gender. She stayed in teaching far too long and believes she ought to have been promoted a long time ago given her skills. She made quite a number of applications for promotion posts much earlier for which she was short-listed but was always turned down for males in most cases much younger both in terms of age and experience. She believes men always stood a better chance of getting these posts because of their exposure, something women lacked and continue to lack because the intervention is too minimal.

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Shervanni was also born and schooled in Durban and went to the same Girls high school as Devi where they matriculated. She also went to the former University of Durban Westville for both her degree and UED. She taught for a few years teaching English and History and later enrolled for a diploma course in School Counselling. She followed that with a B. Ed after which she went into Guidance and Counselling in a school situation where she spent about 26 years. She was head of that department for those 26 years.

In 2001, Shervani decided to apply for a promotion post as a deputy principal of another school and she got the post. Unfortunately for her, this was the time when problems started at the school and she was caught up in those problems. The post of principals and deputy were advertised at the same time and she applied for the deputy one which she got. No one was appointed for the principalship post and the governing body asked the then HOD – someone a level down from when she was and happened to be a man, to act in the principal's post. This did not make Shervanni very happy because she felt it was just a prejudice against her as a woman. As the second in charge after the principal she felt she should have acted in the principalship post. The department of education had to intervene and she was asked to act in the post while the disputes about the post were still going on. However, Shervanni did not enjoy acting in this position because there was too much ugliness and fighting. The male HOD who was asked to act by the governing body felt Sharvanni had been given his post and he did not offer her support an actually got out of his way to make her life as an acting principal miserable. She was still acting as principal when I interviewed her.

Although Shervanni had been finally promoted, she was not happy because she saw promotion bringing so many problems in her life. She had tried on a number of occasions to apply for promotion posts but had not been very successful. She had always been very disappointed with the outcome because she felt she was qualified and did not understand why she and other women of course were not considered. However, when it finally came, promotion did not bring joy in her life because it was filled with lots of ugliness. It was a contested post because some panellists and other stakeholders had earmarked it for a certain individual and when that individual did not get it became very sour for Shervanni and she never really enjoyed it. This is what she says "for many years I have been happy in teaching but promotion brought no joy because it didn't bring job satisfaction". This has destroyed Shervani's love for teaching to the extent she thought she would be resigning at the end of the year.

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"Hey, I hear they have got a woman headmaster there" (laughing). "So yah, its very interesting to be a 'woman headmaster'".

Molly is heading a large urban technical high school in the KZN Midlands. Molly was never married and says she is still living in the same house in which she was born. She did both her primary and secondary schooling locally and also went to a local university for her first degree after matriculating in 1967. After her degree she went to teach Maths,

Geography, Technical Drawing in one of the high schools just outside town. This was in 1973. She stayed there for about 7 years and then she was transferred back home to the large school she was teaching at the time of the interview. Molly says she was not really happy to move because she had been so happy at her original school. But those were the times when teachers were just transferred without their being asked to apply.

Molly started in the new school in 1980 as a post level one teacher. When she came she continued teaching Maths and is very proud of some of her ex-students and how well they are doing now. Then she later got involved in Afrikaans teaching and was later promoted into heading the Afrikaans-Maths department. She enjoyed it there because she continued teaching the young ones. In 1993 she was promoted into deputy principalship and started having more work which was left by the principal for her. That gave her very little time to teach and she no more got involved with the lower grades. Molly acknowledges the grooming from the principal's part as one of the factors that prepared her for her current management role.

However, she also admits that she had never set out to become a principal and that it had never even entered her head. The reason for this was that women in those days could only become a principal of an all girls' high school and she never really expected to be principal because she was teaching at a co-ed where she thought she did not stand any chance, yet at the same time she was happy and did not want to move. She was however, quite happy to become a deputy but did not anticipate the principalship. Later, her former principals left and she automatically had to act in this post but she naively thought that is as far as it goes. When the post was advertised her SEM and other principals and colleagues pushed her to apply and she really had a hard time taking that decision. But after many sleepless nights and lots of discussions with lots of people she applied and went through all the processes of filling in forms and being interviewed. She says the wait was a bit stressful because by then she had geared herself up for the post. The results were finally announced and she was formally appointed as the first woman principal of this large technical high school in 2002.

Now that she is a principal, and had been for more than a year during the time of the interview, Molly is quite happy and says she wouldn't want to stand back later and regret not having tried when somebody who didn't understand the dynamics of the school came. And so she felt she owed it to the learners, colleagues and most importantly to herself, because she needed to know whether she was capable and the only way was just to try. She recalls with such amusement how people had a hard time getting used to her as a woman principal and says, "*I still get letters addressed To the Headmaster, Dear Madam, and I am still called a woman headmaster*".

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Fundi was born in 1966 in one of the townships outside Durban. She did most of her education in the area moving from one school to another due to political reasons. After completing matric, she then went to a College of Education for a Primary Teachers

Diploma and started teaching in 1983. But Fundi felt having a diploma was not enough so she privately enrolled for a BA and B. Ed degrees with UNISA. Upon obtaining these qualifications she got a promotion at work and later registered for FDE in Management with the University of Pretoria in 2000. At the time of the interview she was doing her Masters degree in Gender Studies.

Fundi started teaching in 1983 at a primary school and stayed in her first school for five years. She was then transferred to a secondary school where she taught for two years after which she was asked to act as a vice principal. This was in 1994 before a vice principal post was recognised as a departmental post and she was therefore not remunerated for it. She acted in this post for four years. Then in 1998 she got an official promotion into the HOD post when those posts were advertised for the first time.

As a vice principal, Fundi did all the management duties just as a principal would and she continued doing the same thing as an HOD until her principal retired in 1999. "My principal used to delegate everything to me while he slept in his office. He was very old". When the principal finally retired from the school, she acted as a principal for one year and then got the post officially the following year in 2001.

Fundi says it never crossed her mind to apply for principalship posts before, until she realized that she was doing all the duties of the principal and thought she knows how to run the school. She believes this kind of exposure is what prepared her for the post. However, Fundi's acting experience was not a smooth one. She had lots of problems from educators who were resisting her authority and parents who did not want to accept her. When she delegated duties some educators, both male and female flatly refused to do it, they said she was dumping her own work on them.

Educators were so resistant that they called a meeting where they invited the inspectors to tell them they did not want her as their principal. It was at that point when Fundi told herself that she was going to manage them whether they liked it or not and she decided at that time that she was going to apply for the post when it is advertised. She says until that meeting, she had not felt that strongly about applying for the principalship post, in fact, she had not thought about it at all because she thought the post was for men and she was not fit for it although she had the experience.

In her area, there were no female principals for high schools and so for her it was a norm for women not to become principals of high schools. At the same time she could not apply for principalship in the primary school because she was teaching in a high school. But her colleagues' resistance, which she viewed as a blessing in disguise, gave her so much inspiration because she wanted to prove a point. And fortunately for her she was the most highly qualified teacher with more exposure in management and she had to act in the post, and gained the experience that improved her chances of being officially appointed in the post.

She continued to have lots of problems from the new governing body, educators and the community even after her official appointed. They did not have any trust and confidence in her as a female principal in such a way that when they had meetings they would only listen to her deputy (a man) and would only talk addressing the deputy. She and her deputy finally decided that the deputy should not attend those meetings and they were forced to address her. But they still did not accept her. In one meeting some male parents actually stood up and said they did not want their school to be run by 'umfazi, and as long as the woman was running the nothing would come right. Eventually it was only a few of those who supported her who came to the meetings and she had to live with that. Her former principal was not able to help because he said he took the package because he was not coping. Fundi's source of support was only her deputy, her husband and her female friend both of whom were also principals in other schools.

Fundi was a mother of three and a wife to a school principal. She says she is failing completely to serve her role as a mother and a wife. She is always at school coming home late and only manages to prepare fast food for her family. She does not even have time to supervise her own children's homework. Her husband used to help cook but now he complains yet he does not want the domestic helper to do the cooking.

She believed that women should be given a chance and be accepted by communities as school principals. In her view women can do better because all men do is give instructions which women obey because they are given by men. At the time of the interview, Fundi was tired of principalship and its problems and waiting for something better to do possibly get in business. Her experience has made her lose confidence in herself does not believe she is good with human relations and preferred working with machines and papers. She liked teaching though but "being a principal is hell".

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Lindi started and finished her education in the Northern KZN where she was born. She could not go to college immediately after matric because her father passed away and there was no one to pay for her fees. She had to look for a job and was lucky to get a teaching post as an unqualified teacher in one of the local primary schools. She described her experience as very difficult in those days because qualified teachers used to look down upon them.

She taught in that school for five years and managed to accumulate some money to pay for her fees. Then in 1988 she went to college to study for her STD. She graduated in 1991 and got a post at a primary school in the KZN Midlands in 1992. As a teacher she managed to do her FDE and B. Ed part time with the former University of Natal because she had always been determined to get higher qualifications so that she could be something better in life.

Lindi applied to many other management posts and believes in most of them she was not taken because of her gender. In all the other schools where she was short-listed for interviews and did not get the post, a man was hired. She recalls in one of the schools she

was told point blank that she did well in the interview but unfortunately they were looking for a man. As a unionist, she was very much aware of what was happening. She laid a dispute against this but she was highly pregnant at the time and did not have the energy to follow it up.

At her first school after she got the teaching qualification she was asked to act as vice principal which gave her the necessary experience for managing a school. She later got the promotion as an HOD in 1998 in another primary school in the same area. After this she just kept on applying for promotional posts because she knew she did not want to end as an HOD. So in 2000 she saw a principal post of a secondary school and she applied and got it. She believed her experience as the HOD and vice principal prepared her as well as her experience as a union member because they attend a lot of developmental and educational workshops. The FDE course she studied is what really prepared her to be a manager because that is where she was taught how to run a school. She also consulted with some other principals when she started but the course provided the foundation.

When she first came to the school she was replacing a male principal and there had been a lot of chaos in the school. The learners had riots the previous year and they were just roaming about the streets and not attending classes. Most parents were just reluctant wondering if she would cope with children like those as the first woman principal who was so young. And they were convinced that they needed another man. But then she had to work very hard to prove them wrong.

Within three months she had been at the school she managed to bring some order. Even the parents and everybody passing by would comment and asked what had changed. Consequently, Lindi got tremendous support from all stakeholders. Everybody attended her first meeting and they all pledged their support and they have been there for her in every aspect. She believes her openness is what made them support her because she always consulted with them before she took any major decision.

Lindi believed that as a high school principal one needs to have a very strong will-power, should be brave and self-disciplined. She did not think that motherhood has any special role in the school, but what matters is the character of the individual. But she believed there is more challenge for women because they have some obvious weaknesses such as gossiping and lack of confidence.

Although Lindi applied for principalship because she liked it, she was not happy anymore because she was frustrated by the policies and programmes to implement and the fact that she still had to teach in addition to the work she had as a principal. She was faced with administrative and managerial work, endless meetings to attend yet she was still expected to go to the classroom. 'It is a headache'. She was very frustrated. She believes principals have to be taken away from the classroom so they could run the schools more efficiently. Her dream is to become an inspector. At the time of the interview she was still trying to put other necessary credentials together so she could apply.

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Sile was a principal of a very big school in the KZN rural area. Sile was a single woman with two children at the time of the interview. She started schooling in 1972 and finished her matric in 1983. She went to a catholic boarding school for her high school education with the help of one of her former teachers. She is still thankful to her former teacher because she believes her success was as a result of having gone to that particular school.

After finishing her matric she went to the University of Zululand in 1984 and managed to get her BPAED in 1988 after lots of struggle with the riots and financial hurdles. She started teaching as a post level one teacher from 1989 and in 1991 her principal asked her to his vice principal since there were no HOD or Deputy Principal posts. She became acting principal when her principal left for circuit management in 1996. At that time, Sile says her school committee was not willing to take her as a young, single female principal, but her principal assured them that he was sure she could do the job. So she acted as principal from 1996 until 1998 when the post was advertised.

She applied for the post and was shot-listed but the results were withheld because there was a dispute. The SEM's wife who had been the deputy principal, had also applied for this post and there was a disagreement between the SEM and the governing body on who to appoint for the position. The governing body was happy with Sile but the SEM was not. The post was eventually withdrawn and re-advertised later in 1999 and Sile was officially appointed principal of the school early 2000. The SEM's wife withdrew and got a principal post in another school.

Sile believes she had been prepared for a while for the principal's post and she relates this from as far back as when she was appointed as an assistant in her third year of teaching. After her appointment she had a lot of support from her SGB, educators and the community but her fights with the SEM were still continuing even at the time we had the interview.

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"You woman, leave this school! We need a strong male here, not an umfazi like you!"

These are some of the expressions that were directed to **Nandipha** when she first came to the school she is now heading. Nandipha describes the school as located in a very rural, primitive area where people do not understand much about the changes suggested by the government. *"When I am asking to have a meeting with parents, they tell me they have given me the learners to talk to, and so I should leave them alone because they are not learners"*. These are some of the frustrations Nandipha had to deal with in the school.

Nandipha was not married and did not have children of her own. But she was living with three of her brother's children at the time of the interview. She is third in a family of four and had a very difficult schooling where she sometimes had to go to school without shoes. She also had a very difficult upbringing in the rural KwaZulu Natal Midlands by

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her mother who was working in a farm as a cleaner, after she was divorced. Nandipha narrates sadly how her father (before he divorced her mother) used to hate her and beat her up together with her mother and called her illegitimate. She was also beaten up so badly by her own mother but could not go anywhere because her father also hated her. Nandipha says she never understood why, but she believes that experience helped her develop the toughness that helped her cope with the situation she had in her school as acting principal for many years.

After doing Standard 4, Nandipha was asked to go and work in the farm by her mother, but because she wanted to go to school so badly she asked her uncle to intervene and talk to her mother on her behalf. Her mother only agreed because the uncle promised to pay for her fees. However, her uncle could not sustain her with everything up to matric, and she had to ask a whole range of other people including her teachers and the principal of her school to help. She narrates with such amusement the story of when she was in Grade 10 and was a prefect at school and did not have school shoes and had to go to the convent to ask for a pair of shoes and was given a brown pair with a thick white sole that made everyone think she was a clown when truly, that was the only pair of shoes she *"had in the world"*.

Because she was brilliant at school Nandipha got a matriculation exemption but she could not go to college because her mother could not afford to pay for her and her uncle had done enough. So she started teaching in 1981 at a junior primary school where her contract was terminated at the end of the year. In 1982 she got a job at another school and at the end of that year she negotiated for a special course so she could go to a teacher's training college for a one year course instead of two because of her two years experience. Nandipha says she did not qualify for a special course because she only had two years teaching experience and three years were needed. But she went to the inspector and explained that she was from a poor family and could not afford to go to school for two more years and eventually the inspector agreed.

So at the end of 1983 she obtained her PTC and started teaching as a qualified teacher at a high school the following year. She stayed at that school until 1987 when she decided to further her studies and registered for a diploma with another college and got her STD in 1990. Still at the same school, Nandipha enrolled for a BA degree with the University of Zululand and graduated in 1993. But unfortunately before she finished her mother died and that was another difficult time for her. She later applied to the University of Natal for a B. Ed in Guidance and Counselling as a full time student. She unfortunately again, got sick and was not able to finish the course. She applied for a Head of Department post and got it and started in 1994. She finished the B. Ed in 1995 and enrolled for a further diploma in Management and Administration and graduated in 1998. She did another ABET diploma with UNISA in 1999 and in 2000 enrolled for her Masters with the University of Natal as a part-timer and graduated in 2002.

With all these qualifications Nandipha felt she was quite prepared to take up any post in management and that is why in 1995 when the principal left her school she applied for

the post of deputy principalship. That was when her other troubles started when she was told by the panel that under no circumstances could a woman be given the deputy principalship post at a high school. "*They told me I was mad in the interview*", that is what she says. She went back to her principal who also told her she must have been joking to believe she could get that post. The post was re-advertised in March 1995 and she applied again and this second time around she got it. In the two incidences, Nandipha happened to be the only shortlisted candidate because she was the only one with a degree. So she stayed as deputy principal of this high school until 1996 when the principal left because of some riots in the school. She started acting from then and when I interviewed her in February 2003, she was due to attend an interview for the principalship post in March.

Nandipha acted in this post from 1996 and her former principal was still a principal, yet physically he was not at the school. After she started acting as a principal, it was when the local chiefs and other people came to her and told her they did not need a woman in the school. But she continued to stay. When I asked her why she never applied to other schools, Nandipha says she stayed because she wanted to show everybody that she could make it as a principal and should not be undermined just because she was a woman. She says there lots of other posts in other schools but she was not interested. She wanted to be principal in that particular one. Nandipha viewed her life as a series of problems, but believes those made her strong, and she had no regrets. I spoke to Nandipha informally after the interviews and she was very thrilled to tell me she had been awarded the principalship post in the same school after seven years of acting.

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Zama grew up in the South Coast of Durban in the home where she had to take care of her five younger siblings for the most part of her life because her parents both died when she was a little girl. Both her parents had been teachers by qualifications although her father never taught. Zama did her primary schooling in her home area and went to secondary school in 1975. She passed her matric in 1979 but before she got her certificate she was pregnant with her first baby. She narrates how her teachers were disappointed with her because she a very smart student. She remembers when her principal called her to his office and asked her what her plans were for the next year. Unaware that her principal already knew she was pregnant, she confidently said she would be going to college and her principal, pointing at her tummy, asked, "I*s this the college*". She was so embarrassed.

In 1980 Zama was not able to do anything because she was taking care of her baby and she also did not have money to go further on her studies. She and her siblings and her new baby then moved to one the Durban townships with her aunt who already had ten children of her own and added to the already heavy load her aunt had. She was also able to leave her own child at home in 1981 and went to college and did her JSTC.

Two years later Zama was teaching at a Secondary school in South Coast of Durban, and together with her aunt, Zama managed to take care of the seventeen children in the

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household and took all her siblings and cousins to school. She was also later able to enrol for a further diploma (University Diploma in Secondary Education – UDSE) with the University of Zululand. She later did her BA degree through UNISA and at the time of the interview she was registered for a B. Ed with the UNIZUL.

Zama got married in 1993 and had three more children in her marriage. She admits that work and study – especially part-time while at the same time one is a mother and a wife is not very easy. Sometimes it was not easy for her husband to understand such that when she wrote exams she used to go away from home.

Zama was teaching Afrikaans and History when she first started teaching at her school in 1983. She remained post-level one educator until 1989 when she was offered a temporary HOD post which was later withdrawn because she did not have a degree. She was able to get her degree later and only got a promotion to a deputy principal post in 1999. In 2000 her principal left the school to go overseas and she started acting as principal. In 2001 she was officially appointed principal of the school and she was still there at the time of the interview.

Zama explains how she cried when she was asked to act as principal because she never wanted the post. Her principal was leaving and since she was second in command, she had to assume the responsibility. For her being deputy to her principal was comfortable and did not feel ready for the principalship. "I wasn't prepared to allow him to go. I cried, children were crying but he had to go." However, Zama soon realised that she had to do all she had been doing even when her principal was there, because she had been carrying out most of the tasks, except this time she had to be accountable, and that is what terrified her. She acknowledges the fact that her principal groomed and prepared her for the principalship although for her it was indirect.

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Gumi was born in the Northern KwaZulu Natal and started her schooling there from 1970 to 1979. She then proceeded to do her high school and completed her Grade 12 in 1982. She first started working as a private teacher in 1983 at one of the secondary schools she attended. After a year, she went to college and completed her STD for three years and went back to the same school she taught privately. This time she was employed as a permanent post level one educator, but she only stayed until 1990. She moved to the new school and stayed until 1999.

While she was there she acted briefly as HOD and because they did not have a deputy she ended up doing almost everything that was supposed to be done by deputy principals. Although it was for a short period, Gumi believes that experience prepared her for principalship. She was also running a resource center in that school and that helped her a lot too. So when in 1999, she saw a principalship post for the school where she first started teaching advertised in the bulletin, she applied and believed she could make it as a principal. She says she just felt she could do it and moreover, her confidence was

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bolstered by the qualifications she had just acquired. Gumi also acknowledges the contribution made by her former principal in preparing her for the principalship role.

Like most other women principals of her generation, Gumi admits she never really aspired to become a principal. She had anticipated being promoted to either post level two or three until she saw this principalship post advertised. She attributes her desire to apply for the post to one workshop she attended where they were made aware of affirmative action – that women are given preference and were encouraged to apply for these posts whenever they see them advertised. Then she thought of taking a chance and although she applied for many other posts, she made this principalsip one her first priority.

The promotion route for Gumi was very unusual for women of the third generation. She did not go through other stages of promotion but got straight into principalship from post level one teaching after acting for a short while. Before she got her promotion Gumi was able to complete her BA and B. Ed with the UNIZUL. When I interviewed her, she had just completed a course on management that she did with Wits University.

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Lungi was born and bred in the KZN South Coast. She started school there until she finished her matric and went to a teacher training college. At college she did a two-year teaching certificate - Junior Secondary Teachers Certificate. After that she taught in one of the local primary schools for five years and managed to save some money and went to the University of Zululand. She says going to university had always been her aim but she could not go immediately after high school because of her poor family background. Her father passed away when her mother was still pregnant with her, and her mother was not educated hence she did not have a decent job.

At the University of Zululand she studied for a BA degree and after that enrolled for a BA Honors with UNISA for two years. She then went back to teach at a secondary school this time. Three years later she enrolled for an FDE with RAU, where she specialized in Educational Guidance and Counselling, which she finished in 1996 and has not studied since then.

When she started teaching it was 1979 and she says in her area then, principals of schools were mostly males and so she never really thought she could become one. She started as a post level one until 1991 when she was appointed HOD for languages. She stayed in the post for one year and resigned because she was not being remunerated for the post. She went to another school where she was given a promotion into HOD within a year and rewarded for it.

A year after she got the promotion (1995), Lungi's principal died and because she was the only other person in management she automatically had to take over and run the school. She acted for two years as a principal and after that the post was advertised. She

then applied and got promotion. At the time of the interview she had been holding the principal post since 1997.

Lungi believes the experience she had both as an HOD and during the two years she acted as a principal really prepared her for this role. She made some changes for the school and the school governing body together with the community were happy with her. She believes that was the reason why she was appointed. She never underwent any training on management except a two-week training workshop when she was an HOD, which was sort of an orientation to the post. But she acknowledges that it helped to prepare her because she learnt a lot that she used for the management of the whole school. So as acting principal she already knew most of the things from her HOD post.

The other reason Lungi gives for not aspiring to become a principal was that she was she was trained as a high school teacher and was teaching in a high school and she could not be a principal of a primary school, where women were accepted as principals. And during that time it was only males that were regarded as principals for high schools so she just thought she would never be appointed as a principal because of her gender. She doesn't think she would have been promoted if her principal had not died. In the two years during which she acted, she discovered the ability she had in running the school and that was when she got inspired. And she applied. "When the post was advertised I just told myself that I'm going to apply".

She believes in the power and capability of women but somehow still thinks women do lack the confidence. She had seen lots of progress where there are women in charge and she had noticed that they mostly needed to be encouraged. Some members of the community were still a bit sceptical about her role as the new principal but she had to show them that she could make it by making some changes in the school.

She acknowledges the part her former principal played in grooming her to become a manager. The principal was due to go on retirement soon before his demise and he had started grooming her because he had wanted her to take over after him. She considers herself lucky to have shared and benefited from his intellect and expertise in the area.
Lungi is not married and believes her status helps her to focus more on serving the school. However, she does have a child and other members of the household whom she misses spending time with because her school work takes up most of her time. She sees herself as a woman principal playing an extra role because she plays the motherly role to parents, learners and even with the teachers. They sometimes look up to her not only as a principal but at somebody who can even help them with their personal problems. She refers them to social workers if they come with things she cannot handle but on the whole, "*I find myself being a principal and at the same time being a mother and a counsellor*".

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Biziwe grew up in the rural areas of Northern KwaZulu Natal and started schooling in the area. She passed matric in 1981 and after that she was employed as a typist for about a year in one of the local government departments. She had her first baby at this point and waited for two years to look after the baby. Then in 1985 she went to a teacher training college where she got her diploma in secondary teaching. She enrolled for the BA degree with UNISA in 1990 and graduated in 1994 and did not go to school again after that.

Biziwe got her first appointment as an educator at a primary school in 1988. At the end of 1991 she was transferred to the secondary school where she had matriculated and stayed there uuntil 1994, teaching Biology. In 1995 she moved to another school where she stayed for just one year before she got transferred again in 1996 to the school where she was at the time of the interview. When she came to this school, she was at post level one, but in a year's time she got a promotion as deputy principal. In 2000 her former principal was suspended from the school because of mismanagement of funds and she acted in his post for one and a half years. When the principal finally got dismissed, the post was advertised and she applied for it and was officially appointed principal in 2002.

Biziwe is a mother of four and a wife to a principal of a primary school. Her other three children were born in 1989, 1992 and 1997 respectively. Although her husband is also a teacher and a principal, Biziwe explains how difficult it is to be a wife to a man who wants full attention, and a mother to children who need full attention while being a school principal at the same time. The work that she brings home most of the time makes her children and husband very unhappy because she does not give them the attention they need. This is what she says about her husband:

> *When he comes back from work my husband sits here on the sofa and expects me to dish for him and take the food to him because he doesn't want his food to be prepared by the kids let alone the maid. So I have to attend to him and after that he puts the dishes over there and takes his newspaper and reads. Hey, he doesn't understand. But regarding the work and the procedures to be followed as well as the management stuff he does support me at times. He helps me with some solutions when I have problems, but with household things, nothing. He does not even help me with the children's homework yet he is a principal of a primary school so when I get home the kids just run to me and it is too much.*

Until she applied for the principalship post, Biziwe had always felt inferior and unfit to work in a management position and never really had any aspirations to that effect. She was encouraged by other female principals and other friends of hers to actually apply for the post. However she did try to make some applications to some advertised posts previously, but was not successful. She attributes that to the lack of familiarity with the schools to which she applied and her gender. In one school she was told that the panel was looking for a male principal because they believed it was only the male principals who could make the school better than what it was and she was therefore turned down. As for this current principalship post, in which she replaced a male principal who is now in jail because of mismanagement of school funds, she believes she got it because of her

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ability to produce good results at matric and her acting experience that gave her the opportunity to involve the parents and community in school matters as compared to her former principal who was autocratic and bully and was involved in fraud.

However, her former principals indirectly groomed her by making her stay prepared for criticism because as management they were criticized most of the time. Now she is always ready for criticism and knows how to deal with it. He also indirectly prepared her by delegating all duties and responsibilities to her, except those dealing with money. He only handled money related issues. *"He was hardly at school, but when learners were paying fees he made sure that he was there".*

> *He delegated to me in fact all duties except finances. He did not even give me a chance to maybe draw budgets and stuff that was his area but with the rest of the other things it was all me.*

This was the area Biziwe felt she needed more support, but she also attended many workshops on management and that contributed in preparing her for the senior management post she was holding at that school.

She believes in the power of women and wishes that more of them could apply for these posts because most of them are single parents who run their own homes and she cannot understand why they shy away form occupying management positions. She believes women should be involved in community work and be empowered through workshops.

Biziwe likes teaching but does not really enjoy being principal of a secondary school. She would rather be a principal of a primary school because there is just too much pressure in the high school. She gets called to the district office even during the holidays and that leaves her with very little time for her family. Also, the expectations are too high – every one wants to see the Grade 12s passing and if that doesn't happen, the department sends the community behind her. There are too many demands and parents in the rural areas are not very supportive because they don't understand and mostly poor and uneducated.

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Sindi started her primary schooling in the former Transkei where she quickly got through because she happened to be one of the smart ones. She then went to do her secondary school in 1962, after which she went to Shawbury Institution for her PTD training until 1965. After qualifying as a teacher she decided that she did not want to be a teacher anymore and went to train as a nurse at King Edward Hospital. Sindi started nursing and after she got married, went overseas and finished her degree in nursing.

She continued with her nursing career until she came back to South Africa in 1982 January. At that time her last born was still small and the hours that they were working at the hospital where she was offered a job did not tally with being a mother. So she decided to stay at home until she was offered a teaching post at a neighbouring school later in the year.

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In the teaching profession, Sindi was first employed as an assistant teacher but was later promoted to being an HOD. Shortly after she got the promotion, she was recruited to go and train with a pool of teachers who would be promoted to senior positions. After the first workshop she was asked to go for an interview for a deputy principal post. She got the post of a deputy principal and was transferred to another school, where she still was at the time of the interview. She stayed at this school as a deputy principal of one of the male principals, who later left to further his studies. Another male principal came and there was some turmoil in the school and he got displaced to another school. Sindi was then asked to act in this post where she later became permanent.

Sindi confesses that she wasn't very keen to apply for principalship after what happened to her previous principal. She also believed it was too strenuous, and she kept hoping for an opportunity to go back to nursing which never came. But then people thought because at least she had been deputy principal she knew the situation better than any one else and so she applied. So when the post was advertised people pushed her to apply for the post and she applied for the post and got it. She got appointed as a principal in 1994.

After she assumed the principalship post, Sindi did not get a lot of support from some of the community members who initially felt the post was better suited to a man. Male teachers had a tendency of undermining her authority until she "pulled out her eyes" and handled them the legal way and they saw that she meant business. There was also a tendency for people to look down upon the school because it was headed by a woman and people did annoying things like using some school facilities without her consent. But she has since made so many improvements in the school and earned her respect. This is how she puts it:

> *At the time when I took over principalship the school was in tartars, it was nothing but a kraal of cattle, and then I started looking for funds for the school to be renovated. And that is when they started recognizing that a woman really is not just somebody who is just there in long dresses but it's somebody who is actually working. If you are a principal you are neither woman nor man, but what works is the vision that you have.*

She therefore does not believe her appointment had anything to do with her gender, but more with the fact that she was more familiar with the place. There were a series of programmes which were not necessarily geared for women principals, but helped her cope in this post. She also believes the HOD post she occupied at the previous school really prepared her for principalship with all the guidance and support she got and continues to get from her former principal and her former circuit inspector.

At the time of the interview, Sindi was divorced and her children were grown and had moved out of the home. She believes her marital status gives her all the time she needs to attend to the school issues.

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Thully was born and bred in the rural northern KZN where she started and finished her schooling. Her parents were not able to take her to school and felt she had enough after doing her standard six. In her area at that time, it was enough for a girl to be able to read and write. She didn't have to go any further. However, because she was smart her pastor helped her out until she finished matric and got a first class pass. Her two siblings never had a chance of going further than Std 6 and that makes her the only educated person at home.

Thully had her first baby in 1977 August after completing matric and had to stay at home the following year to look after the baby. In 1979 she went for nursing for one year. But she was unhappy at the nursing school. She did not like how everything was done and felt she did not belong there. Coincidentally, she fell pregnant again and had to leave the nursing college as pregnant unmarried women were not allowed in the nursing colleges. Although she did not like nursing, Thully was frustrated because that meant she had to go back home without money and worse with an unplanned baby. Her second baby was born in 1980 and she told herself that she had had enough babies and took the necessary precautions. Falling pregnant and being suspended from a nursing college was a blessing in disguise for Thully – she then went to teaching and left nursing for good.

In 1981 Thully went to the University of Zululand to study for a BPAED. She recalls how she had a hard time adjusting into university life being from a rural area, and how difficult it was to study at university. But she was so determined to get her teaching qualification so she worked very hard. After her BPAED she taught for a while and then enrolled for a B. Ed in the early 1990s and finished in 1995. After that she registered with the University of Witwatersrand for a management course because she felt she was more involved with management issues as a deputy principal.

Thully started teaching in 1986. Her first school was not very exciting because there was very little to do since it was a very well established and well-resourced school. It was just too comfortable and there was very little room for professional growth. As a result she did not learn much. She got a transfer in 1988 to the school where she was at the time of the interview. She recalls how different things were and how dysfunctional the school was when she first came. They were accommodated in the premises of a neighbouring primary school with only three classrooms. It was so difficult to teach because it was too crowded. They had no staff room, no library and no other resources until their own school was built in 1990 through hers and the principal's efforts. But she is grateful because that is where she learned real work.

When she came to this new school the principal made her his first assistant. She suspects that was because she had a degree and other teachers only had diplomas. Thully recalls that at the district office they were not quite happy that she was the principal's assistant because they did not accept women in management positions. But her principal was comfortable with the situation and they worked very well together until he left the school.

Thully worked as a 'deputy principal' unpaid for five years. Then in 1994 the post was advertised. She applied and got it. She stayed as the official deputy principal until 2002 when the principal of the school resigned. Her principal resigned in 2000 and she started acting until 2002 when the post was advertised. She got the post after being begged by her colleagues to apply. When the principal resigned there were so many problems in the school such that everybody felt de-motivated and did not want to do the work. The principal and the governing body were just not visible. And she felt overwhelmed because she was just "a principal with no tools". There were decisions she couldn't take simply because she was deputy and yet she was the highest visible management person.

At that point she felt she was not going to apply if the principal left. There were just too many problems and she felt she wouldn't know where to start. She did not feel well equipped to deal with a situation like that. *"My self-esteem had gone so low. I felt very bad, I even thought of resigning, but I had children at university and I had to work for them. That's the only thing that kept me here".* Her principal had been involved in politics and he would spend most of the time away from school and so she would do everything. Although she was unhappy about it, she admits she learnt a lot and to a large extent that is what prepared her for the management function.

Thully confesses that it never occurred to her that she would be a principal because she describes herself as an introvert. And she had always associated that kind of work with very outspoken people. But her strong point had always been the fact that she does whatever job she is given to do and strives to succeed in whatever she does. And her former principal used to give her lots of work to do and she would do it because she was eager to learn. Her appointment as deputy principal was actually an eye-opener that she could work in these positions.

As a principal, Thully got a lot of support from within the school after her appointment, but not much from the department or other principals from neighbouring schools because they used to come to her principal for help and advice, and they still came even when he was gone. So instead of her getting help she continued to support and helped other schools. Her former principal continued to play the mentoring role even though he had left the school in such a mess. But as soon as the principal left the school changed overnight and everybody (the learners, teachers, the community, governing body and other staff) was in the working mood, were supportive of her and she also felt motivated. That year results improved from 36% the previous year to 85%.

Thuli loved what she was doing and felt her experiences made her very strong. She believed she could handle any problem and so she was prepared to stay as a principal until she gets a promotion.

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Carol was born and bred in a small township outside Durban. She did her primary education there and went to one of the Catholic rural boarding schools for her secondary

education. She was not sure of what she wanted to do after her matric but ended up going to a College of Education because it was an obvious choice in those days. She did her STD after which she was offered a teaching post at level one in a secondary school. However, she was able to do her FED in Management and Human Resource Management privately as a practicing teacher.

Her first employment as a teacher was in 1989 at a school in the Northern KZN very far from home. She worked there for 4 years and then got a post in the school she was at the time of the interview, which was a bit closer to home. This transfer happened in 1994 and she was still a post level one educator. In 1997, when these promotion posts were being introduced, she got promoted into the HOD post. She described her interview for this post as very frightening and tough but she made it because she was determined.

The post itself was very challenging for her because there were lots of things still going on within the school. There were challenges form inside and out, from the community which believed she was too young for the post and the staff who were more senior to her and were not happy with her appointment because she was new and yet they had not applied for the posts themselves.

She occupied this HOD post for three years and there was a vacancy for principalship in the same school because her principal was an old man who had been due for retirement a long time ago. When the principal finally retired in 2000, she started acting in this post because she was second in command and when the post was advertised she decided to apply. She was appointed officially as principal of the school in 2001 after acting for a year.

During her acting period Carol encountered lots of challenges from the community, which could not just accept a young unmarried woman principal in their school. Their old retired principal has been there since the inception of the school and they really did not believe a young woman like that could run that school. They were saying that the principal *"had big shoes and how could this young woman enter those big shoes and doubted whether I was going to cope"*.

She did not have support from staff because they had some negative attitude towards her which some times made it difficult for her to do her job. She suspects it was mainly because she is a woman and young and maybe the fact that she is not from the community. When she tried to empower them and delegate some duties they though she was running away from her own responsibilities and they ended up not doing the work saying it is not their responsibility. She therefore did not have the desired support from her early acting days from her colleagues and the community.

As a principal, Carol remembers how everyone was shocked with her appointment including principals from other schools. She recalls how they used to remark when she attended the principals' meetings. People were passing remarks like: *"Who is this young woman now. Do we have kids now here?"*. So she felt she had to work very hard to prove

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herself that she may be young and unmarried but that did not have anything to do with her capabilities. At the time of the interview she mentioned how she was still encountering some of the challenges but she was coping.

She believes her HOD post prepared her for principalship and that is why she felt confident to apply for the higher post in school management, although she never really aspired to become a principal before. She drew her inspiration from her late sister who was very vocal about women empowerment issues. But in the real work situation she did not have a personal mentor and was not inducted into the position.

At the time of the interview Carol had recently married. She had already noticed the sacrifices she had to make in terms of her new family and the school whereas before she would have all the time for the school.

She believes most women lack assertiveness and that is why they do not apply for promotions and continue to promote men in positions of power. *"When they have the opportunity to elect somebody, they elect a man"*.

Carol did not see herself staying in education for long, because she does not like the promotion route – from principalship to inspectorship. She does not think it was challenging enough for her. But at that moment she was quite uncertain of what her next step was. She realized there are more options open now and if she were to be given a chance to start all over again, she would definitely aspire for something else other than teaching.

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Zipho is a principal in the rural KZN Midlands area surrounded by sugar cane fields where most of the parents to the learners work. Although working in KZN, Zipho was born in Johannesburg. Her mother sent her to Natal before she started schooling because she was busy with work. So she grew up at her grandmother around the same area where she was working at the time if the interview.

After matric Zipho went to college in 1987 for her STD. Then she got married in 1988 and that was her last year of study until 2001 when she enrolled for her FDE and completed it in 2002 with the University of Pretoria. When I spoke to her she was enrolled for her B. Ed honours with the same university. She started working as a teacher at one of the local schools from 1990 to 1999. In August of 1999 she was redeployed to the school where she was at the time of the interview, which was a little far away from her KZN home.

Zipho was one of those teachers who were affected by the R & R process where teachers who were declared in excess were transferred to other schools. She was therefore redeployed to the school where she was as a post level one teacher. She remembers how the atmosphere in the school was so different from what she was used to, that made her

feel something was terribly wrong. The learners came to school when they wanted to; they left when they wanted to. And it was something that she was not used to. So as a post level one teacher she started fighting against the learners. She tried to involve her colleagues, who initially were not bothered by the situation and were more upset because some of their former colleagues had to be out of school to make space for people like Zipho and they had embarked on a go slow.

When Zipho came to this school in August 1999, there was a male principal was somehow preoccupied with other businesses of his own other than the welfare of the learners and the school. In 2000 a post for a communication HOD was advertised. She was teaching English and the principal advised her to apply for this post. Fortunately she got it was even much closer to the principal at a management level. The principal was hardly at school minding his own businesses, so Zipho was left practically running the school. At this point her colleagues were more cooperative and they worked together to try and improve the school.

Zipho tried her best to prepare the matric learners for all subjects using her own car to transport them and seeking private tutors to help. At the end of that year they managed to get a 5% pass rate, only one learner out of thirteen passed. She felt really guilty as a teacher. She tried harder the following year with the help of her colleagues who were a bit motivated and they achieved a 94.4% pass rate.

While this was happening, Zipho was a mere HOD and the principal was coming less and less to school, asking Zipho to be in charge of everything. Then in 2001 the principal resigned and asked Zipho to apply for the post. Although she had been doing everything, Zipho says at that time she didn't see herself as a principal. She was happy in the classroom and did not really want to miss that. It was only when she came to this school that she felt things were not right and thought perhaps she could make a difference as a principal, a woman and a mother. She thought she knew how to go about moulding these pupils into becoming good adults.

So eventually she was introduced to the school as the acting principal by the SEMs and she acted from July 2001 until the post was advertised in August. She applied for the post and was invited for the interview and fortunately she got the post. She was formally appointed as a principal of that school in November 2001 and she had been principal since then.

Zipho attended a very short course on management that was organized by the department while she was an HOD, and acknowledges how helpful the programme was in helping her deal with some of her responsibility as a manager. This was a workshop meant for principals and she only managed to attend it because her principal could not make it. She admits that it contributed in making her the kind of manager she is.

Getting the management post for Zipho was not a hassle at all. She did not experience any discrimination at all and was offered the very first principalship post she ever applied

for. However, she admits feeling a bit intimidated by other contestants who were all male and who kept bragging about their achievements and what they are going to do **when** they get the post. She was the only lady amongst eight shortlisted males.

As a new principal, Zipho got tremendous support from the community because the people were aware that things were not right at the school, but just didn't know what they should do to put things right. So when she came and started setting things right she had the backing from the community. And she also got support from her colleagues and felt she also won the support from learners. She thinks however she could do with a bit more support from the department in terms of facilities to run the school. They rely on donations from NGOs and other god-willed residents who can afford.

Zipho spends most of her time attending to the school business and believes for her it is a blessing that her husband runs business far away from home, because even as it is they always fight because he feels he travels too long distances to and came back from work. Her own children are really missing out because she gives herself more to the learners at the school because she feels that they are more disadvantaged than her own children. But she still feels she is doing injustice to her children, although they get lots of support from the schools they attend. She just feels she is needed more at the school where she is teaching. But that is causing quite a lot of tension in her marriage because her husband does not like that place at all. She feels she is being pulled this side by the family and that side by the school.

Zipho feels as a woman she is making so much difference in management and although she thinks she is biased, she does feel that a woman does more in a management position than a man. Because men are much more of control freaks, but women as mothers even those that are not mothers yet, have this maternal instinct inside them. They care about the welfare of the learners and that of colleagues. And that generally makes them good managers compared to the other sex. She feels that with women juggling a career and motherhood comes natural and most men would find it difficult. "Women are able to stretch themselves wide". She does not believe that men are superior to women but thinks it is more a cultural thing where black African people have been brought up to believe that it is only men who can lead. But when you really get down to it, it is not a gender thing. It is how you are as a person. How you feel, your goals and ambitions as a person.

She believes the attributes that women should have are assertiveness, sensitiveness which men lack. Because she would really love to see the school headed by a woman because she has seen that women can really do a better job than men. Then it would be leadership in terms of the learners and the community as a whole. She so wishes she could have been given a chance to run a school earlier in life because then she would have made so much difference.

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Xoli grew up in the Northern KZN and started and finished her schooling in the same area. She completed her matric in 1985 but only went to the University of Zululand in 1987 to study for a BPAED degree. She did not necessarily want to be a teacher initially but she thinks she lacked career guidance in terms of what options were available for her. Her parents had also retired and she needed to get in and out of school as fast as she could. She graduated in 1990 and started teaching at a secondary school outside her home area in 1991.

She stayed in her first school for three years but then she left because of the post 1994 elections' political riots in the area. She went back to her home area and got another post still at post level one. She stayed until 1995 when she got married to a man who lived in the area where she first started teaching. To be with the husband, she had to go back to the area and beginning of 1996 she assumed a post level one teaching post in the same old school where she first started teaching. In March the same year she took a maternity leave but she was later called back from home to come and act in the place of a principal because the principal was being promoted into circuit inspectorship.

She believes she was chosen because she was the highest qualified teacher with a degree and if she hadn't left the school three years ago, she would still have been the most senior teacher. So she took her maternity leave for only three to four weeks and came back and started acting in the post of principal.

When she started acting, she had a bit of support from the governing body but had lots of problems with the educators who would just not accept her as their superior. This applied to both male and female teachers but it was worse with females. They would leave when they wanted to and just refuse to take instructions from her as their authority. She also did not have support from the community and this she believes was because the parents just did not care about the school. The school was in the industrial area where most of the people were there because of work in the factories. So she believes they do not have a sense of ownership of the school and just don't care what happens. So the parents would not attend meetings when she calls them. Xoli was the only principal who succeeded a female principal and parents' attitude had been the same under the leadership of her former principal.

Xoli acted from 1996 and got officially appointed as principal of that school in 1998. She admits that before she was asked to act she never thought of being a principal. She was afraid of the post. She had still been contemplating applying for the HOD post but not principal. She got a bit of motivation from her district manager and the chairperson of the governing body who encouraged her to go for it. When she started acting, she was not prepared for the job and did not know what she was supposed to do. But then she learnt on the job because even her former principal never gave her any guidance. The person who was helping the principal as vice also was not helping so she had to find her own assistant. She chose a male teacher because she felt it made her feel better to have a male figure assisting her.

She also did not get support from her circuit manager but instead there were some problems created for her by him like just transferring the educators without her consent. So for her it was not very smooth sailing and she had to work very hard to find her own way. There were no programmes for new school managers and no workshops for induction or anything like that. Xoli also lacked support from home where her possessive husband did not want to see her with any male even those she was working with. It became a problem in the long run and she felt she was better off without him. So at the time of the interview she was divorced and believed her status helps her manage the school better. Her one child also lives with her sister.

She could also do with a bit more support from the department in terms of running the school in general. There is not much that had been happening in terms of empowering women but a 'Women in Management' initiative had been launched but there was nothing happening afterwards. She believes more women should participate in management so that they can form support structures for one another. At that moment it was feeling quite lonely for her because she was the only female principal in her circuit, and worse she did not have a lot of support from her own colleagues. When I talked to her, Xoli did not like teaching anymore and she was waiting for the slightest opportunity to get out. She was studying for an MBA and was hoping to work in the commercial world if she does not get a promotion within the education department.

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Gugu started her primary in the Northern KZN where she was born. After finishing her primary education her father could not afford to help her continue with her studies because they were so many at home. Gugu became a "born again" that same year and she was then able to meet people who were able to help within the religious community. She was able to finish her secondary school education in 1987 and went to the University of Zululand, where her education was paid for through donations from other religious people until she finished her BPAED.

She started teaching in 1992 as a post level one educator of English and Afrikaans. She describes her initial teaching years as very successful because she performed well, produced good results and was liked by the learners. In 1993 she joined the religious community and became a nun. From then her life began to change because she had to move and change schools every time the nuns changed convents. So in 1996 she had to move to another school because the whole community of nuns was moving to another mission. She managed to secure a permanent teaching post at a local high school because she thought she was going to reside there permanently.

She recalls how dysfunctional the school was when she first came. The school was just in the bush where the culture of learning and teaching did not exist. It was well known for its strikes, not submissive learners and uncaring community. It was totally worn out with hardly a window pane or door. The principal was hardly at school. To add insult to injury, 'gansterism' was also rife in the area. They would raid local buses and robbed

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pensioners their money. The local people were too scared to tell the police and with the nearest police station being about fifty kilometers away it was even more difficult.

At this school too, Gugu managed to win the love of the learners as far as teaching and learning is concerned. But she recalls that she was not very popular with the local boys who accused her of 'taking away their women'. As a young nun, Gugu would teach the girls about good behaviour and how to take care of themselves as girls, and they would be very interested in what she says and most of them wanted to emulate her and become nuns. So the local boys did not like that because the girls were not interested in them. She says it became so bad that the sisters were even attacked at the convent by the local gangsters.

Unfortunately when that happened the principal was playing truant and he had not been to school for the past four months and the school had just been running all by itself. And it was at the time when the corporal punishment was abolished in the school. So the behaviour of the learners was totally wild because most of them thought they could just do anyhow because corporal punishment was not there. Learners came and left as they pleased and nobody said a word. Everybody did as they pleased and the situation remained like that until end of the year.

Gugu was not able to go to school until end of the year because she was afraid. So in January the following year (1996) she went to the circuit office to tell the inspector that she was afraid to go back to the school due to what happened. She had joined a group of community people which was going to the same office to ask for a new principal because the old principal had left the school to run on its own for over half a year.

It so happened that after the long talks with the local and the chief inspector, the inspector asked whether there was anyone qualified who could act as a principal and the people who were there all pointed at Gugu. The inspector just asked her how many years she had been teaching and she said five years and she was instructed to take over and act as principal just like that. Gugu felt so dumbfounded and overwhelmed because everyone who was there was cheering and clapping their hands. She didn't know what to do. She was not ready and that was the last thing she had expected. She had convinced herself a long time ago that she did not want to be a principal and if she gets tired of teaching she would rather further her studies and become a lecturer. In fact that was what she was aiming for, not principalship or any management post in the school.

So Gugu was introduced as principal of this school on the 20th January 1997 and although she hated it, she felt she could not decline because the people were happy with her. The other sisters were also happy for her and promised to help her with prayers. Because she had convinced herself she would never aspire for the post, she had no clue what was happening in the office. So she found herself being dumped at the position and at such a school. Some of the old educators of the school did not support her because they did not understand how she could get the post yet she was such a new teacher.

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Because the principal had been away, she had to start so many things from scratch with the bank balance of R2.50 for the whole school and a deficit of R30 000 owed to different people for different reasons. Gugu started by raising funds to renovate the school and she was getting discouraged because people thought it was a waste of resources and energy. The school had been running like that for years. But as a young person she really felt ashamed at how the school looked and felt she would not even want to show people where she was principal. So she went ahead with the renovations.

She had a hard time introducing the rules and regulations of the school, the code of conduct for the learners because they were not used to being ruled. But eventually they become under control and slowly but surely the culture of learning and teaching was restored. She underwent a number of workshops and also got assistance from the principal of a neighbouring primary school.

When the post was finally advertised, she was not even interested in applying. She felt it was a bit too much. She was pushed by the school governing body because they believed she was the only person who was qualified and could make it. She became a principal officially in 1998 but from the day she started acting, she had worked very hard and put all her effort in it. She had lots of problems from the teachers to the learners but she managed to bounce back having one strike, which she managed to deal with. When Gugu arrived at the school it had only six classrooms but in 2003 they had sixteen classrooms with a lot of other facilities. There had also been a steady increase in the matric results, which was something that was never seen before.

Like many other female principals, she believed they could do with a bit more support from the department both in terms of running the school and women because she believed they face more challenges. She admits she had made a lot of difference in this school and although she thought it would be hard to go back to post level one teaching, she did feel like quitting sometimes when she has problems with the new policies being put in place by the government. She did not enjoy it that much then and was looking at opportunities to move out.

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Thando was the youngest acting principal I interviewed and she was also the most ambitious one. She was born in the KZN rural areas and schooled there. She went to one of the prestigious high schools in the Northern KZN and after matriculating, she went to university for her teaching degree. She later did her B.Ed in management through correspondence and at the time of the interview she was registered for a Masters in Education.

Thando started teaching in 1997 in a small rural secondary school. In 1998, there was a crisis at school and the principal was suspended and had to be replaced. Thando served as the acting principal before the new principal came and when the new male principals came, she also played a big role in helping him settle in the school. She was promoted to

be the HOD in 2000 and deputy principal the following year because the school was growing.

In 2002, Thando's principal left the school to further his studies and Thando became the acting principal and she was still acting in 2003 when I interviewed her. Thando was very ambitious and she is one of the only two participants who had always aspired to become principals. That is why she has been improving on her qualifications. Now that she was acting, she was aspiring for something bigger and would like to see herself as a regional director one day.

The school in which she is teaching is so far away from her home such that she has to leave her children with the helper during the week and is only able to be with her family on the weekends. As a young woman principal she does experience some resistance from some male staff but Thando does not let that get in her way of work. She gets a lot of support from the governing body and from her husband. Her school also get a lot of departmental support since it was identified as one of the 'nodal' schools given management and academic support.

Thando would like to see more women participating in principalship and believes that women have the potential.

APPENDIX B

February 27, 2003

FROM: Ms Pontso Moorosi
       School of Education, Training and Development
       University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg
       Scottsville 3209

OFFICE CONTACT NUMBER: 033 260 6131
CELLPHONE: 083 423 8610
FAX: 033 260 5080

TO: Secondary and High School Principals
    Kwazulu Natal

Dear Sir or Madam,

Re: Questionnaire for Secondary School Principals

I am doing a PhD study on gender in education management with the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. The title of my thesis is: **POLICY AND PRACTICE RELATED CONSTRAINTS TO INCREASED FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT: EVIDENCE FROM KWAZULU NATAL.** My research attempts to find out the problems that are related to policy that addresses gender in education management, how that policy is implemented and sustained and whether or not it has an impact with regard to getting women to participate in education management.

This research was prompted by the fact that women are under-represented in education management, although they constitute the majority of the teaching profession. Policy interventions have been made to try and bridge the gender gap in education in general, and although there has been some significant differences in some areas, the same cannot be said about education management, especially in the secondary and high schools. I would therefore like to have an interview with some school principals about their experiences in the management posts with regard to policies, training and support programmes that are put in place to help women get into management and cope with their tasks.

Kindly assist me by filling in the attached questionnaire in order to enable me to determine the promotion pattern in Kwazulu Natal, to understand the male-female ratio of the management team of your school and to select the sample I need for my study. Please use the enclosed stamped envelope to send back your filled questionnaire or fax it (the fax number is provided above) as soon as you receive it.

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Please feel free to contact me on any of the provided contact details if you have any query or need clarification. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Pontso Moorosi

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill in the questionnaire and post it back as soon as possible. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose other than this research. Only my supervisor - Dr Volker Wedekind and myself will have access to it. Should you wish to provide additional information, please use the back of the page.

1. Your Title (Dr/Mr/ Mrs/ Miss/Ms): _____

2. Surname: _____

3. Your Name(s): _____

4. Your contact Details:

School telephone: _____

Cellular phone: _____

Home telephone: _____

School Physical Address:

_____

_____

_____

Home Physical Address:

_____

_____

_____

5. Age: (tick appropriate)

Less than 30	
31-35	
36-40	
41-45	
46-50	
51-55	
56 and above	

6. Gender: (tick appropriate)

Male	
Female	

7. Population Group for statistical purposes: (tick appropriate)

African	
Indian	
White	
Coloured	
Other:	

8. Your qualifications:

Qualification	Institution	Date

9. Date of first employment in teaching: _____

10. Your brief promotion history:

Year of promotion	Name of School	Position (HOD, DP, Principal, etc)	How long were you in this position?	Why left?(e.g. resigned, promoted, etc.)

11. Name of your current school: _____

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12. Date of employment in the current school: _____

13. Post level at the time of employment in the current school: _____

14. Composition of the school community:

	Male	Female
Number of Deputy Principals		
Number of Heads of Departments		
Number of other teachers		
Number of School Governing Body members		
Number of learners		

15. Level of the school (e.g. junior secondary, senior secondary, combined, etc):

_____

From Grade: _____ to Grade: _____

16. Type of area where the school is located: (Tick appropriate)

Urban	
Rural	
Township	
Other:	

17. What do you think contributed to your promotion into management?

_____
_____
_____
_____

18. What (if anything) do you think prevented you from being promoted earlier?

_____
_____
_____
_____

19. Would you like to be interviewed? _____

Thank you very much for your time.

APPENDIX D

Female Principals Interview schedule

The purpose of this interview is to find out what policies and programmes are put in place to prepare women in the promotion posts for management of the schools, to encourage them to apply for these posts and to support them in their performance as school managers once they employed.

Section A: Background
Please tell me about your background. Probe: Where you grew up, your education and up to the time you became a teacher.

Section B: Training and Preparation
Tell me about your promotion route from the first time your started teaching until you became a principal.

Probes: When did you decide to become a principal?
When did you become a principal?
When you got the post how long had been teaching?
What teacher training did you receive?
Do you think you were prepared for the principal post? If yes how? If no, why?
Did you attend any management courses or training programmes for managers before becoming a principal?
What other management posts did you get before becoming a principal (e.g HOD,DP)?
Are you aware of any policies or programmes put in place now to encourage women to apply for management posts? Do these encourage or create barriers for women? How?
What problems/ barriers did you experience in obtaining the necessary qualifications?

Section C: Getting the Post
Please share with me your experiences on how you got this post from when you applied and all you went through.

Probes:How many times did you apply for the principal posts?
How many times were you called for interviews?
Why do you think you did not get it on your other attempts?
Why do you think you got this one?
Are there any special recruitment procedures of ensuring that more women are in promotable positions?
Did you at anytime during your endeavour to become a principal feel discriminated against? If yes, how?
Do you think affirmative action laws or policies helped to open doors for you as a woman to get the post?
What problems or barriers did you experience in securing a principalship post?

Section D: Support
Tell me about the support you got after getting this job from the school community, department and from home.

Are there any programmes put in place to support women school principals?
Were you inducted or mentored when you first became a principal?
Are there any formal or informal mentoring programmes that are in place for supporting women in management positions?
What kind of support do you get from your male and female colleagues?
Would you attribute any of your colleagues' behaviour or treatment towards you to the fact that you are a woman principal?
What (if any) support do you get from your female colleagues?
What (if any) support do you get from your male colleagues?
Do you feel at anytime that you have to make substantial personal sacrifices in your work as a principal?

Section E: General
How many promotions have been made in the school over the past three years? How many women were promoted?
Who participates in promotion decision-making?
Do the management structures and decision making in the school involve women?
Are you aware of the employment practices and policies? If yes, are these implemented? What hinders implementation?
Do you and the teachers have access to training sessions on issues of gender equity in the school? If yes, how often?
Would you like to see women being encouraged to apply for management posts? How?
Is there anything else you would like to say that you think we did not cover in the interview?

APPENDIX E

Circuit Managers Interview Schedule

The purpose of this interview is to find out what policies and programmes have been put in place to address gender inequity in the management of schools. The interview intends to find out what support the department offers female principals and how it promotes female participation in the management of schools.

1. How long have you been in this post?

2. Please tell me briefly what you were doing before and how you got into this position?

3. Since you have been in this office have you participated in the recruitment and/or selection of a secondary school principal? If yes, how many men and how many women?

4. What role do you as circuit managers play in the recruitment and selection of secondary school principals' process?

5. What role do school governing bodies play in the recruitment and selection process?

6. What do you think is the general perception of the governing bodies and the communities with regard to the employment of women as principals of high schools? Can you give example(s) of particular case(s)?

7. Does the department regard it important to have equal gender representation in the management of schools? If yes, how does it show it, and if No, why not?

8. How does the department or your office try to promote the participation of women in the management of schools?

9. Are there any policies and /or programmes put in place to address gender imbalance in education management?

10. Are there any recruitment procedures used to attract women to apply for management posts?

11. Are there any regulations followed in the promotion of school educators? If yes, do you have a copy of any such document? Do the governing bodies or schools have copies?

12. Does your office offer any form of support to women in and into management positions? If so, what kind of support?

13. In your opinion do the employment policies and practices encourage or continue to create barriers for female candidates?

14. Is there anything you would like to tell me about the participation of women in the recruitment process for secondary school principalship in general and in your last recruitment in particular?

15. What else have you observed as important in understanding how secondary school principals obtain the post?

16. Does your office keep gender-disaggregated data on educators? If yes, can I access it?

17. Can you help me identify secondary schools in your circuit that employed principals in the last three years?

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX F

SGB INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The purpose of this interview is to find out the attitudes of the SGB towards the employment of women in management positions of the schools and to the legal framework on the appointment of secondary school principals.

1. When were you elected into the school governing body?

2. What position do you hold and how long is your term of office?

3. What is the composition of the governing body? How many members male and how many are female?

4. Since your term of office have you participated in the recruitment and/ or selection of a school principal? If no, why not? *(NB: If the answer is" No", skip the following questions up to 8).*

5. When was your last appointment of a principal?

6. In your last appointment of a principal, did you appoint a man or a woman? Was there a particular reason for this appointment?

7. What role do circuit managers or departmental officials play in the recruitment of school principals?

8. What role do you as governing bodies play in that process?

9. Can you share with me what your last search for principal was like? (what kind of person you were looking for, how it went, etc.)

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10. How did the governing body or the interviewing committee make its decision in hiring the last principal of the school? (what were the most deciding factors?)

11. If you were to appoint a principal for your school now, what would your ideal candidate be in terms of the following: Age, experience, qualifications, locality, gender, and race. Why?

12. Are you aware of the employment equity laws and policies on the employment of educators?

13. Do you observe them in your employment practices in the school? If not, why? If so, how?

14. Do you think they help bring equity between men and women in the management of schools? Why / Why not?

15. What do you think is the attitude of the school community (parents, learners, teachers, etc) towards female principals and why is that so?
If the attitude is negative, what do you think should be done about it? How do you think communities in general should be prepared to accept female principals?

16. Would you agree with the perception that women are better managers than men? Why?

17. Amongst all the stakeholders in the school, who do you think should play a bigger role in helping women to participate in the management of schools and how?

18. What role do you think should be played by the following in preparing post level one female educators for management posts?

- Principals
- Governing bodies / interviewing committees
- The department

19. What else have you observed as important in understanding how secondary school principals obtain the posts?

20. Is there anything you would like to add on the issue of women as principals of the high schools?

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX G

School of Education, Training and Development
Faculty of Education

✉ Private Bag X01, Scottsville
Pietermaritzburg 3209, South Africa

Tel: (033) 260 5368
Fax: (033) 260 5080

16th May, 2002

HRM Directorate: Mr MV Gumede
Provincial Department of Education
Ulundi

Dear Sir

Request for Statistical Data

I write in support of a request by Ms Pontso Moorosi for permission to access educator employment statistics from Vulindlela. Ms Moorosi is a doctoral student at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg and is under my supervision. Her doctoral research is focused on the impact of gender equity policies on educational managers in schools, with a specific focus on KwaZulu Natal.

Ms Moorosi is fully aware of the ethical requirements of the University of Natal in terms of conducting the research and will not make use of the information for any other purpose other than her research. Only Ms Moorosi and myself will have access to the data.

If you have any questions or require further information about the project, please do not hesitate to contact me. I thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

Dr Volker Wedekind
Senior Lecturer

APPENDIX H

28th May 2003

To whom it may concern

Request to interview Circuit Inspectors

I write in support of a request made by Miss Pontso Moorosi to interview circuit managers in the Pietermaritzburg district. Miss Moorosi is a doctoral student at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg and is under my supervision. Her doctoral research is focused on the impact of gender equity policies on educational managers in schools, with a specific focus on Kwazulu Natal.

Miss Moorosi is fully aware of the ethical requirements of the University of Natal in terms of conducting the research and will not make use of the information for any other purpose other than her research. Only Miss Moorosi and myself will have access to the data.

If you have any questions or require further information about the project, please do not hesitate to contact me. I thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

Dr Volker Wedekind
Senior Lecturer – Head of School

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATAL
PROVINSIE KWAZULU-NATAL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE
UMNYANGO WEMFUNDO NAMASIKO
DEPARTEMENT VAN ONDERWYS EN KULTUUR

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Navrae :   **(031) 327-0481/551**
           Fax : (031) 3686400

Reference :
Inkomba :
Verwysing :

Date :
Usuku :
Datum :   **2002-11-21**

Miss Pontso Moorosi
University of Natal
Private Bag X01
Scottsville
3209

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DURBAN SOUTH SCHOOLS

Your faxed letter dated 15 November 2002 in respect of the above matter refers.

Kindly be informed that permission is granted for you to conduct the research subject to the following:

1.   The schools which participate in the project would do so on a voluntary basis.

2.   Access to the schools you wish to utilise is negotiated with the principal concerned by yourself.

3.   The normal teaching and learning programme is not to be disrupted.

4.   The confidentiality of the participants is respected.

5.   A copy of the thesis/research is lodged with the Acting Regional Senior Manager through my office on completion of your studies.

I wish you all the success in the research you are undertaking.

Kind regards.

D.M. MOODLEY
ACTING MANAGER : EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES