

**WOMEN TEACHERS' STORIES AND EXPERIENCES: A CASE STUDY
OF THE EX-B. ED WOMEN STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG.**

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DECLARATION

This dissertation, unless specifically indicated to the contrary, is my own original work.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine and explain the experiences as well as influences and other determinants on the careers of female educators who studied for the B. Ed at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. For some time, it had been observed that although women comprised the majority of part-time students in the B. Ed programme, most of the women experienced gender based problems which could only be addressed by research informed by evidence from these female graduate students' stories.

Accordingly, when in 1999 the School of Education set out to determine the extent to which the B. Ed as a course was influencing change in educator practice, a focus on gender was initiated. In line with this, a mini study focusing only on some of the female educators was designed. The purpose was not only to determine the influences of the B. Ed on practice (as was for the main study), but locate these influences in gendered relations. This research report is based on this smaller study.

By means of in-depth-interviews eleven women were studied. These women were part of the sample of the bigger study which comprised volunteered male and female educators. The interview schedule included questions relating to the women's background, putting a specific reference to the early lessons in their lives and the impact they (lessons) had on the choices they made about their careers. Women were further asked to relate their experiences of the constraints both during their B. Ed studies and at their workplaces, which are a result of the socially defined roles of the two gender groups. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed for analysis which was done descriptively.

The study revealed that their backgrounds determined their career choices, and that the B. Ed had a positive impact on their practices as educators. As women they had a lot of pressure from their studies that left them with limited time to spend with their families. Women are still under the influence of the gendered social expectations in terms of what they do at school and

at home, hence some inconsistencies between their beliefs and practices were exposed. Through the feminist perspective, this situation ironically makes them unwilling promoters of gender inequality.

These findings led to the conclusion that women are aware of the gender inequalities in education and within the society in general, but they need to accept them as anomalies, so that they can be given proper attention. A call for gender awareness programmes was therefore made. These programmes should be made part and parcel of the initial teacher training, so that gender biases within the education system are confronted and deconstructed.

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a background and overview of the study. The main focus of the study is on a few women teachers who did their Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) at the School of Education, Training and Development of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. The chapter begins with a brief historical overview of the South African female teachers, and then goes on to a detailed description of the research problem and the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The aim was to investigate the influence of gender on the female teachers' experiences during their B. Ed study and at their workplaces afterwards.

1.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF 'WOMEN TEACHERS' IN SOUTH AFRICA

Today, teaching is regarded as predominantly a woman's job. This has not always been the case. According to Spencer (in Biddle et al, 1997) historical records globally, show that teaching has not always been exclusively viewed as a woman's work. She quotes an American example that during the colonial period, teachers were mostly men because they were the most educated, and women's place was thought to be in the home, "not in the classroom". During this time, there were schools for little children (today's primary schools) and these children were taught by women in the homes for very low pay. It is stated that these women were mostly incompetent since this was the era during which women were restricted in their education.

The predominance of women in teaching in the United States started at the beginning of the American Civil War. After this war, men wanted to go for more lucrative jobs leaving women in the majority in teaching, more especially in the elementary schools. More men were found in the secondary schools because of higher qualifications which entitled them to higher pay. This situation was also true of

schooling and teaching in the United Kingdom, and a lot of other countries, (Spencer, in Biddle et al, 1997). Women had to remain in the primary schools not out of choice but because they had low qualifications, while men with their higher qualifications were considered for higher positions and were therefore superior to women.

South Africa has been no exception. The only difference is that its situation has been exacerbated by the racial discrimination, that characterised all forms of life before 1994. Job reservation resulted in teaching being one of the few occupations available for black women. Kotecha (1994) states that in the hierarchy of a racially determined status of occupations, white men were at the top followed by white women, while black women were at the very bottom preceded by black men. However, the legislation preserved primary teaching for women. Black women were admitted into primary teacher training with very low qualifications and some training was even free. Men were actively discouraged from teaching at the primary schools. Tragic measures such as firing them and closing down primary school teacher training facilities were taken, and a few men who insisted on teaching at primary levels were forced to accept low pay. The then South African president, HF Verwoed was quoted as saying;

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 than male teachers. The department will therefore... declare the assisted posts in... primary schools to be female teachers' posts....(Kotecha, in Lessing, 1994:71).

This provides one of the reasons why there were and there still are more women teachers than men in the primary schools.

Another reason is the qualification imbalance between men and women that also resulted from the Bantu education. Historical records according to Pandor (in Lessing, 1994), show that black women teachers were the most underqualified. She indicates that Bantu Education did not produce enough matriculants who would go into advanced teacher training. Women were relegated to the lowly paid

primary level where they were stuck because of the conditions of service. These conditions included factors such as; loss of permanent position on marriage, and meeting certain expectations in order to be granted study leave. The direct victims of the system have been women who never had the opportunity to upgrade their qualifications. They were therefore stuck in primary teaching level where only a junior certificate of education was required, (Pandor in Lessing, 1994).

The problem with this status of black female teachers is that due to inadequate provision of education, they are not able to enjoy better conditions of service that are enjoyed by other “women of colour” and their male counterparts. Historically, female teachers lost their permanent positions as soon as they got married, and could only be offered study leave after eight uninterrupted years of service, (Truscott, 1992). As a result, many women were not able to apply for study leave since they had to leave work often for accouchement leave which was not granted pay until April, 1991, (Pandor in Lessing 1994). Men got higher wages, and they still stand better chances of promotion to higher posts such as principalship and inspectorship. All these factors have resulted in the low representation of women in positions of power and authority, yet they still dominate the teaching profession.

Since 1994, the new democratic government has engaged in the process of educational transformation. The main aim of this process is to reconstruct the South African education system, and to redress the imbalances of the apartheid era. Educational reforms target curriculum development, teaching methodologies, governance and management, as well as professionalism of teaching, (Ndlovu, et al 1999). As a response to the need for upgrading teachers’ qualifications and for introducing them to the new policies and expectations of the present system, in 1997, the School of Education, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, introduced a Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) degree. For the first time, as a senior degree, the B. Ed became available to practising educators with a minimum qualification of a four- year- teaching diploma (M+4). Most students who enrolled for the B. Ed degree, were black women teachers who travelled long distances despite having other household responsibilities that demand a great deal of personal and financial attention.

The records show that out of the three hundred and twenty (320) students that enrolled for B. Ed in 1997, from both Madadeni and Pietermaritzburg centres, one hundred and ninety-eight (198) of them were women, and this constituted about 62 percent of the entire student body. From the 198 women who were registered as students, 73 percent of them were primary school teachers, and only 3 percent of the women were non-black.

In 1999, the School of Education formed a research team that set out to conduct research on the 1999 B. Ed graduates. They were interested in the question of whether teachers' beliefs about teaching and their classroom practices have changed as a result of the B.Ed. The aim was to find out whether students' expectations have been met, what students see as strengths and weaknesses of the programme, so that the B. Ed can be improved. They also hoped to make the research information available to a bigger community so that the research results could be published in an educational journal. This study developed as a result of the researcher's involvement with the School of Education research team. The researcher developed interest in working on women given the fact that they constituted the majority of the 1999 B. Ed graduates.

Aware of the background outlined above, the researcher set out to explore the women's experiences by listening to what they gave as reasons for choosing teaching and doing the B. Ed and what they do and believe in with regard to their roles as women in the teaching profession. It was believed the women's perceptions about teaching cannot not be divorced from their own personal backgrounds in addition to the educational crisis they all experienced as black South Africans. As a result, the study put emphasis on the teachers' biographies.

1.3 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND THE RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Women who have two jobs- that is, an unpaid one within the home and a paid one in the workforce- have many demands made on them and only twenty-four hours a day in which to fulfil them. Some of the demands can be not only time consuming but also conflicting, (Clarricoates, in Spender and Sarah, 1988: 69).

The majority of students, who enrolled for the B.Ed degree in 1997, were women. In addition to family responsibilities that need their particular attention, these women also had long distances to travel from their homes to their work places, and from their work places to the study centres. The researcher developed interest in the status of women and wanted to gain insight into the life experiences of these women. The aim was to listen to the women's voices as a disadvantaged gender group "that has been silenced by the managerial voices in education", (Jessop, 1997:104).

Thus, the purpose of this research was to gain insight into women teachers' career choices and the effect the B. Ed programme has had on their lives. That included finding out how the teachers' practices and beliefs may have changed as a result of having done the B.Ed offered by the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg; the problems they encountered while studying the course and the challenges they are facing in their work places that may be peculiar to them as women. This was done in order to explore what teaching as an occupation means to them personally as women, so that some of the reasons for the majority of the 1997 B. Ed students being women, are understood.

As the historical records stated, black South African women were not given the opportunity to study further, and they were exposed to teaching and nursing as the only occupations available for black women, (Kotecha, in Lessing 1994). The research intended to look particularly at women from a gender perspective since they were given few job opportunities generally, and they had few chances to improve their teaching career in particular. The study developed out of the belief that teachers are key players in educational change, and as a result they have to be well equipped in order to face new challenges posed by the changes. Underqualified teachers therefore, who are mostly women, feel a tremendous pressure to upgrade their qualification. The assumption was that women have considered the B.Ed as their best opportunity to upgrade their qualifications and improve themselves professionally, so that they are in a position to meet the demands of the changes. Since for some time to come, women will form the bulk of teachers globally, we need to understand and hence address influences on their professional status, so that positive approaches can be used to impact on their competencies. Improving the competencies of the bulk of workers in any organisation has significance for system effectiveness. This is more so in the case of female teachers since many do not or cannot

leave teaching. This study was undertaken to aid in this process.

1.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The research was informed by the theoretical framework of “feminism” (Acker, 1994) in education, which sees women at a disadvantaged position that results from the sexual division of labour in social relations. Acker (1994), says that the feminist theory brings about the awareness of the injustices women suffer because of their sex, and attempts to suggest ways to improve women’s lives. Thus, she argues that feminism as a theoretical framework may be used to address questions of women’s subordination to men. Within this broad spectrum, feminism looks at issues relating to how the subordination arose, how and why it is perpetrated, and how it can be changed. In this way, feminist theory leads to the understanding of gender inequality and how it can be eradicated. A feminist analysis was therefore thought appropriate for this study since it deals with women’s lives and experiences as undergone in a patriarchal society that is informed by a sexual division of labour.

Biddle et al (1997), associate studying life stories and the work of teaching with feminist studies. They make reference to the work of Acker and Middleton who remark that “their work and other feminist studies provide vital and insightful studies into teaching as a gendered profession,” (Biddle et al, 1997:144). Another feminist work which provides an understanding to the reasons why the study probed women teachers about their background is quoted by Biddle et al as that of Nelson (1992), who remarks that:

Numerous studies have shown that there is a gap between what we can discover when we rely on published accounts of some historical event and what we can discover when we ask questions of the on-site participants of those same events. This gap looms larger when we are looking at women’s history because of the private nature of so much of women’s lives, (Nelson, in Biddle et al, 1997: 144).

Women are traditionally associated with private, dependant and domestic activities as compared to men whose activities are public, and autonomous. This could be due to the underlying African perspective that “a woman’s place is in the house”. The contrast, which exists between men and women from the social outlook, implies that men and women “ occupy different spheres in social relations, ” (McLennan in Pendlebury, 1993\94:59), and as a result, their reasons for choosing teaching as a profession may also be different. Acker (1994), argues that men and women work within socially acceptable circumstances and ways of looking at life, and if culture recognises some degree of difference between the two gender groups, then feminist theory should provide the necessary perspective and possible explanations for the findings. The study therefore investigated what informs women’s choice for the teaching profession, so as to understand better their reasons for choosing teaching, and understand their position from a gender perspective.

The research was further guided by the theory of “symbolic interactionism” with its emphasis on social interaction for the construction of meaning. The research therefore penetrated deeper into the women’s lives in order to explore their perspectives and strategies, and how those are influenced by the contextual circumstances of their work places. Goodson (1992), shows that much research has been specifically done on the experiences of women in the teaching profession, but the findings do not reflect the lives of women the way they are. The suspicion is that some important information is being “overlooked, consciously avoided, or distorted,” (1992:12). The research therefore aimed at involving the whole person of the teacher, and not just the narrow professional, in order to expose what has been hidden or ‘distorted’. Teachers had to draw from their experiences of childhood, marriage and parenthood to acknowledge their emotional involvement in their own teaching, so that a better understanding of their own views could be provided.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is believed that the outcomes of this research will be useful for the improvement of the B.Ed course itself with regard to students’ needs and interests, and also lead to a better understanding of women’s views in relation to their own experiences as teachers so that their lives can be improved. Teachers’

views are important in this regard because they are necessary for the teachers' own understanding of new policies that are brought about by educational changes. It was hoped that if results of the study are made available to the women teachers themselves, they could help them understand their situations so that they could do something about it. Scholars in the field of gender equity could benefit from the study as well as the education system in general.

As women are in the majority in teaching, they stay longer in the classrooms than men. Improving their teaching can improve learners' own learning and hence achieve a measure of school effectiveness. By addressing constraints to their professional competency, women will stop seeing teaching as a dead-end job, but as a career in which they choose to remain and work to improve. The professional status of any occupation is dependent on the quality of its members. Understanding women's hardships and consequently addressing them can lead to teaching becoming a career of choice. Society as a whole has much to gain as able and committed educators choose to remain in teaching. Studies such as this can help in some small way towards the attainment of such a goal.

1.5 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

The purpose of this section is to provide operational definitions for the concepts used in this study. Lack of clarity regarding the concepts often leads to confusion and misconception. It is hoped that the clarification of the definitions that are pertinent to the study, will enhance meaning and understanding.

1.6.1 Women teachers

In some sections of this research report, the phrase "women teachers" is used instead of "female teachers". The phrase 'female teachers' would be grammatically correct in this context, but since the study deals with women only, and with a particular focus on gender issues 'women teachers' is used to emphasise the gender differences. Thus, as the study is interested in the teachers' experiences as women who are committed to their families at home and to their work in the schools, it highlights this

commitment by using 'women teachers' as a gender group studied from a feminist perspective.

1.6.2 Sex and Gender

✧ Sex is described as a distinction between male and female made on the basis of biological criteria. It represents the mainly reproductive biological differences which distinguish men from women; that is, the physiological differences that include differences in genitals and in reproductive capacities. Gender on the other hand, is the social distinction between men and women, that incorporates the whole trappings of character traits, behaviour patterns, roles, manners, occupation and status that is acquired, suppressed or developed by reflecting social attitudes, (Byrne 1978). That is, gender, unlike sex, is influenced by factors that are socially determined such as culture, religion, history and economy and these factors are prone to change, whereas the biologically determined features cannot be easily changed. Thus, gender is made by society, (Measor and Sikes, 1992), hence a possibility exists of gender differences between members of the same sex, (Abraham, 1995).

✧ As gender is made by society, gender roles are therefore learned through the process of socialisation, which is described as a process through which individuals learn to become members of their societies. Socialisation provides rules and behaviours giving conditions on certain activities, roles and responsibilities which are appropriate for a particular gender group. It is through this process that females associate themselves with the socially defined feminine activities and males with masculine ones.

1.6.3 Feminism and feminisation

Weiner (1994) traces the origin of feminism from its initial meaning as "having the quality of females"(p. 51), until it came to be used as a perspective on sexual equality. Measor and Sikes (1992) indicate that feminism starts from the position that the ways in which women are treated are unfair, and therefore concentrates on developing strategies of change in order to create full rights and opportunities for these women. The study therefore shares a definition of feminism with the book

dictionary which defines it as “a belief advocating the cause of women’s rights and opportunities, particularly equal rights with men, by challenging inequalities between the sexes in the society”, (Pearsall, 1998).

Mazibuko (1995), indicates that feminism tries to bring to light how the social role of women has been constructed in certain ways which restrain them from fully participating in social structures such as education and politics. Feminism therefore questions the ways in which these social structures operate in ways that discriminate against, and oppress women, denying them an opportunity to reach their full potential.

Feminisation on the other hand will be used to refer to the predominance of women in teaching, that also resulted from the sexual imbalances between males and females in the division of labour. As indicated earlier, teaching has not always exclusively been reserved for women. But a number of circumstances resulted in the situation whereby men moved out of the system, and more women were attracted until they dominated the teaching force. This has made school teaching appear to be a feminine profession, hence why it is said to have been feminised.

1.6.4 Profession and Career

This definition is not intended to get into what makes an occupation a profession, nor is it intended to get into the discussion of whether teaching is a profession or a semi-profession. Arguably, a semi-profession would be an occupation which does not have all the characteristics of a profession. Etzioni (1969) labels school teaching as a semi-profession because it has shorter training, members lack control over technical knowledge, and there is a decreased form of supervision or societal control. Profession therefore refers to occupations which identify with a body of knowledge that defines an area of expertise; the development of associations which help increase group identity; appropriate codes of behaviour for those in the occupation; and a commitment to clients, (Maclean, 1992).

A career on the other hand refers to an occupation undertaken for a significant period of a person's life and with opportunities and progress. In this context career is seen as different from profession in the sense that it is seen as an individual construction, in which people see their lives as a whole and interpret the meaning of their various attributes, actions and the things which happen to them, (Hughes, in Sikes et al, 1985). Biklen, (1995) adds that careers take place in the public sphere and are measured by an individual's participation in the wage-labour system and the status that accrues from that participation. As Acker (1994), puts it, individuals have work histories, perspectives on the past and desired future, the capacity to make choices, and all these make up a career. This brief definition will not get into the debates forwarded by some authors about teaching being a career or not. In the South African context, and in terms of the above definition, teaching is seen as a career which the women in the study chose to follow.

1.6.5 Equality and equity

Equality is understood to be the state of being same in status, rights and opportunities. Arnot and Weiler (1993), argue that equality rests on differences rather than identity. That means, it is only applicable in so far as there is no absolute identity, but rather an agreement to treat the same groups which have some other qualities of diversity. Giving men and women the same chances to education would be providing equal opportunities which means that their talents and potentials as individuals are fostered by removing any barriers to their full potential.

Equity on the other hand is known as the state of being fair and just, especially by paying particular attention to special cases. For example, attempting to correct gender imbalances by proposing affirmative action strategies which give women priority in order to increase their representation in educational management positions, would be an aspect of gender equity aimed at achieving gender equality. Thus, for purposes of this study, equity and equality are not used interchangeably, and the latter is not used to refer exclusively to women issues, but they are each used in accordance with the clarifications provided above.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

As has been seen, the study begins with a brief outline which introduces the reader to the whole research, and presents a background to the research problem. The next chapter reviews the relevant literature to this study, by trying to illuminate gaps in the gender related issues within the teaching profession. The third chapter covers the methodological aspect of the study; which outlines the procedures and strategies that have been applied in the study. The findings of this study are analysed and presented in chapter four, and the interpretation and discussion of the results with reference to the research framework are done in chapter five. Chapter six serves to draw conclusions and make recommendations that are based on the findings and conclusions made. 1

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The review of literature in this study attempts to show what female teachers have gone through within the education system. Gender issues with regard to education have not been sufficiently explored in South Africa, and what was found in the literature was very limited. The literature therefore does not only focus on the South African context, but goes beyond in order to highlight the fact that women teachers have been discriminated against, world wide. The literature attempts to clarify, confirm and dispute some of the issues raised in the study. This chapter is particularly limited to feminism as a theoretical framework, to feminisation of teaching, and the global position of women teachers. Most other literature is reviewed throughout the study. The literature also briefly reviews the historical status of women teachers in trying to understand their position in the post 1994 South Africa, as this understanding is found important to inform future policy.

2.2 FEMINISM AS A RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

As has been indicated in the previous chapter, the study is informed by the theoretical framework of feminism. This section attempts to broaden the understanding of feminism by drawing from the three main approaches to feminism, in order to come to a perspective that informs this study. Acker (1994), posits that in addition to questioning women's subordination to men, feminist theoretical frameworks work as guides to understanding gender inequalities, and as guides to action against those inequalities. Lather (in Holland, 1995), supports this by arguing that feminism is a form of attention which puts the social construction of gender at the centre of one's inquiry. Thus, feminism argues for the "centrality of gender in the shaping of our consciousness, skills and institutions as well as in the distribution of power and privilege" (1995: 295). Lather further argues that it is the goal of feminism in the social sciences to correct both the invisibility and distortion of female

experience in ways that illuminate women's social position.

Some feminist writers such as Acker (1994), and Weiner (1994), draw a distinction between the three perspectives within the feminist theory referred to earlier. These perspectives alluded to are the radical feminism, socialist or Marxist feminism and liberal feminism. According to Acker, (1994), radical feminism looks at gender oppression as the deepest form of oppression which underlies all other forms of oppression including that of class and race. Feminists argue that there is a relationship between education and family life; that schools contribute towards male dominance through the school curriculum and other educational policies. Weiner (1994), asserts that there are two basic assumptions within radical feminism. These are: the importance of the concept of "patriarchy", and the universal political oppression of women. Weiner describes the concept of patriarchy as the historical dominance of men over women. Measor and Sikes (1992), say that radical feminism argues that it is patriarchy that oppresses women, and that patriarchy must override other forms of inequality. The other key assumption is the "universal political oppression of women" which makes men oppressors and women the oppressed class. Radical feminists therefore examine the patriarchal processes of schooling and power relations between the sexes in the classroom. The criticism put against radical feminism is that of its over generalisation that makes every man an oppressor and every woman the oppressed. This generalisation makes women helpless victims of the patriarchal structure who need to be liberated, instead of viewing them as agents of their own liberation, (Measor and Sikes, 1992). However, radical feminism argues for the fundamental change in the social structure that eliminates male dominance and patriarchal structures.

The second perspective is that of socialist feminism which argues that capitalism should be eliminated in order to liberate women, since it holds that class, race and gender oppression come from capitalism. This approach focuses on women's position within the economy and the family. With regard to education, socialist feminism questions the reproduction of gender divisions within the school system of a capitalist society. The argument here is that schooling is a perpetrator of sexual and social divisions of labour in the family and workplace. The socialist approach to

feminism further sees a link between school and motherhood whereby women play a 'mothering' role in the schools. It therefore argues for "pooled child rearing" as described by Delamont and Coffey (1997), in order to improve the economic status of women.

The third approach is that of liberal feminism which posits that more attention should be given to the security of equal opportunities for people of both sexes. Weiner (1994) asserts that liberal feminists explore the apparent failure of females to achieve in schools, higher education and work places, in contrast to their male counterparts. She argues that liberal feminism equals rights in education. In this perspective the individual women should be as free as men to determine their social, political and educational roles. Liberal feminism in education aims at removing all the barriers that prevent women as a disadvantaged group of gender from working towards their fullest potential. It argues against sex stereotypes and sex discrimination, and argues for equal opportunities.

Thus, socialist or Marxist feminism and radical feminism are interested in more radical changes to eradicate inequalities in schooling, whereas liberal feminism encourages individual women to make full use of their opportunities in education, (Measor and Sikes, 1992). This study identifies with the latter approach as has been seen in the historical background which outlined the effect inequality of opportunities has had on the status of women teachers. However, the study is not confined to unequal opportunities, but it also touches on the issue of the involvement of family relations in education, as put forward by the socialist feminists, and on issues of patriarchal structures raised by radical feminists.

2.3 FEMINISATION OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION

For the purposes of this research feminisation is used to refer to those sexual imbalances between males and females in teaching, that led to women being in the majority in the profession. Acker (in Walker and Barton, 1983) posits that the global sexual division of labour in teaching has changed over time in response to government policies, wars and social attitudes. She indicates that

sometimes the balance shifted towards men, because of their high education. However, the predominance of women in teaching according to Spencer (1997), was seen more when the job market opened for males and closed for women. It was then that men left teaching and women got employed for very low wages in the school districts. In South Africa, women dominated teaching particularly at primary school level because of the government policy that was insensitive to the individual needs, that confined women to teaching in the primary schools. Women continue to dominate teaching as Chisholm (1998) states that in 1995 women constituted 64 percent of the teaching population as compared to 61 percent in 1991.

Aspinwall and Drummond [in De Lyon and Migniuolo, 1989] argue that women only occupy the field of primary teaching in quantity and not necessarily in quality, while some writers assume that the predominance of women in teaching itself, causes the low status of the occupation corresponding to the status given to women in different societies. South African legislation for example, as stated by Kotecha (in Lessing, 1994), restricted women to primary education training which left them no other choice of a 'better' career. Most of these women were not necessarily competent teachers since they did not even have proper matriculation. Chisholm (1998) shows that in 1994, only 11 percent of the black women teachers were qualified as compared to 87 percent of highly qualified white female teachers. There was also lack of teacher training institutions, all due to Verwoed's plan that downgraded the entire black education since 1953, (Kotecha, in Lessing 1994).

Delamont (1996) makes reference to one of the old myths that were held about women that could have contributed to the attitude that was generally held against women and education. She says that it was believed that "natural girls" who wished to be "well married" were to avoid being educated because it impaired their abilities to become "useful" mothers. Delamont confirms this by quoting one woman doctor who asserts that; "the woman of average brain attains the intellectual standards of the man of average brain only at the cost of her health, of her emotion, or of her morale", (Kenealy, in Delamont:1996:2). This myth could have led to the belief that a woman's place is in the home, and led to women having teaching and nursing as the only professions suitable

for them since both professions involve taking care of other people, which is similar to motherhood. This explains the social belief that naturally women's minds are weaker than men's, and therefore women's place should be at home where they (women) are supposedly not doing a lot of work that requires much thinking.

According to Aspinwall and Drummond (in De Lyon and Magniuolo, 1989) teaching children has been a woman's work for so long that it seems a natural occupation for them. They believe that there is a connection between the lower status of primary teaching and the number of women in this field. This feeling arises from the fact that women apply for primary teaching in higher numbers than men. Women are further associated with qualities of patience and gentleness, and that is why the most difficult and demanding job of ensuring the promotion of all aspects of children's development is seen as relatively easy and satisfying for women. Hence they believe, "teaching like mothering is a question of doing what comes naturally", (Aspinwall and Drummond 1989:15).

2.4 THE ATTRACTION AND PLACE OF WOMEN IN TEACHING

Despite the political pressures that have been imposed on female teachers globally, it is evident that the majority of women feel much more comfortable in the teaching profession rather than anywhere else. Partington (1976) states that British and American research has confirmed a common experience that teaching appeals strongly as a career to many women. In South Africa, this is evidenced by the fact that women are still mostly found in the teaching profession yet almost all other professions are currently open for both males and females. Partington goes on to say that teaching is popular amongst women because it is highly congruent with feminine roles and work styles in patriarchal societies. He says that it compares well in prestige and salary with a lot of other alternatives, and its hours are well suited to women with families.

Etzioni (1969) adds that women feel comfortable in teaching because teaching is "an agreeable job that makes few demands" (Etzioni, 1969:200). He says that teaching techniques change so slowly that it is easy to return to the job after a long period of absence. As a result women remain in

teaching because it meets their maternity demands. Partington (1976) disputes this by suggesting that there have been some major educational changes in the countries of the world, that have led to many married women who were initially experienced as secondary school teachers to seek posts in the primary schools when they returned to teaching after their maternity leave. He goes on to argue that these world wide educational changes have not made any difference with regard to the dominance of women in the teaching profession. Young and most able women are further attracted to teaching by some improvements such as equal pay between men and women and the allowance for part-time learning that enables women to bridge the gaps that were created in the past.

A South African perspective would however, be different to that one especially on the basis of its history. Linde (in Lessing, 1994) indicates that most able young women who would in the past choose teaching, tend to turn to other careers where they did not have access before. But women of all races still keep the education system going as men move out for better options. Pandor (in Lessing, 1994) shows that most women, especially black ones remained in teaching because they did not have anything else to do. There was nothing particularly attractive about the profession as such, but black women within the South African context always feel an urge to work since in most cases they have to provide for families as well, and this is not usually the case with other race groups. As Linde (in Lessing, 1994) states parity in salaries was claimed to have been achieved in 1992, but even after that women still received lower salaries than their male counterparts. The point being made here is that, whereas in other countries women might seem have had some control over their choice to stay in teaching, black South African women have not had the same choice. Linde (in Lessing, 1994) indicates that white South African female teachers received permanent employment in the profession ten years before their black sisters. This makes it clear that the battle for and equality has been complicated by other variables such as race.

2.5 TOWARDS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Measor and Sikes (1992) argue that theoretically, teaching is a career in which men and women enjoy equal opportunities. But on average, men continue to earn more than their female

counterparts due to a higher proportion of them occupying the senior positions which carry more money. Kelly (1996) states that women's educational enrollments at all levels started some time ago, but the increment of these enrollments does not seem to significantly change women's rate of entry into the "paid labour market" (1996:175). Most women still go to teaching, and the conception of education as an enabling condition of equality does not seem to appeal to them. He says that women are presumed to have little power or authority because they are not engaged to the same degree as men, in waged labour since theory has it that, "with wages came power, authority and autonomy", (Kelly, 1996:178).

Thus, education was seen as integrating women into the male-dominated social structures on much the same terms as men. The sex role division of labour in the family, the impact of marriage, child bearing and child rearing on women versus men, were not so much important and education gave women a chance to work like men for more wages, although household bearing and rearing children still remained a woman's job. As a result there is not much change with a woman's life because educational changes are not accompanied by changes in the household with regard to women's roles, to discrimination against women, and to remuneration sometimes for similar work. Therefore opening educational gates to women has not brought much of a difference since structures which keep women subservient to men still exist. Women continue to remain outside the positions of power and authority because they lack time to participate in politics and that is why even in the schools those very same positions are mostly held by men despite the dominance of women in the occupation as a whole.

The teaching profession seems to be a world of women, yet men are dominating in the sense that they are the ones who exercise authority, (Acker, 1979). Male and female teachers teach different subjects to different groups of children and they also assume different responsibilities, which put men in superior positions. She gives an example that, it is not surprising in a school situation to find men teaching older children and women teaching younger ones, men teaching technological subjects while women teach domestic ones, and men having administrative and curriculum responsibilities while women have pastoral ones. Acker (ibid) quotes Strober and Tyack as saying, "women teach

and men manage". Thus, women are found in larger numbers in teaching but they are under represented in head teacher and other senior posts. Delamont and Coffey (in Biddle et al 1997), acknowledge that;

This represents a classic hierarchy in the teaching profession. While women are representing an ever increasing majority of the teaching profession, the numbers securing senior teaching posts are still disproportionately and disappointingly low, (1997:211).

Delamont (1996) shows that prejudices against women are still held even at higher educational levels although they are less often voiced. She argues that universities themselves are not equal employers, yet theoretically they are seen as places of equal opportunity. She says that there are very few women in permanent and tenured teaching positions, and a few who are in careers are hardly ever promoted to higher scales, hence, the lack of female professors. Kotecha (1994) agrees that women are poorly represented in the higher levels in the universities but argues that this is not influenced particularly by the past education system since boys and girls do have equal chances of attending school as they grow up. Kotecha argues that the higher these boys and girls go, equality seems to diminish and this eventually leads to more men at doctorate levels than women. Delamont (1996) also partly puts the blame on women themselves for lack of representation in the universities' higher levels. She says female lecturers seem to prefer teaching to publishing or administration and if that is how they direct their energies, it would go a long way to explaining a lower promotion rate for women. She argues that perhaps if women were promoted more diligently, teaching would probably have a higher status than it presently does in the universities.

There has been an emphasis on teacher role models who are a source of inspiration to the teaching profession. Hall (1996) suggests that the cause of this under representation is the absence of role models for girls. The lack of role models imparts negatively in that it limits aspirations. She says that role models demonstrate the possibility of reaching certain positions and a way of doing the job once it has been achieved. McKellar (in Stone, 1994) remarks that:

In theory I should have had a distinct advantage over my peers throughout my education, but my early periods of schooling were dogged by low expectations and these were exacerbated by the absence of black female models, (p.236).

Although this brings about the issue of racism, which is beyond the scope of this study, the point she makes supports the importance of role models as a factor contributing to the poor representation of women in positions of authority in education.

2.6 CONCLUSION

As a result of the foregoing discussion, Delamont (1996) says that the place of a woman in education is that of equality, but that can only be achieved when a man's place in the house is of equality too. Hence, "women's place in education will be nearer when Mother care is renamed Parentage", (1996:18). However, women continue to dominate the teaching profession despite the imbalances and the availability of other professions. What remains outstanding though, and what the study attempts to show, is the question of whether women do choose teaching because of its compatibility with marriage and motherhood, or because they are left with no choice, or both. If women are able to make their own choices about their profession according to their own needs, then that can be seen as a case of extreme motivation in job performance. But if they find themselves forced into the teaching profession, that can be seen as a dissatisfier, that may lead to female teachers not being as effective as they should be.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the detail of the research design and the methods used. The research instrument designed by the researcher is presented and discussed, and the specific and general advantages and disadvantages for choosing the particular instrument are explained. The research procedure and the sample are described in order to contextualise the research design. Data analysis techniques used to answer research questions are also described.

As has been indicated earlier, this study was located within the bigger research project conducted by the School of Education, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. This study was based on eleven female educators who were part of the broader sample comprising both men and women, in the bigger project in which the study was located. The bigger project alluded to was primarily interested in why students in general, both men and women, enrolled for the B. Ed, and their experiences on the programme. The students' experiences included their difficulties in the programme, and the effect the B. Ed has had in their lives in general, and in their teaching practices in particular. The researcher was a member of the research team working on the bigger project. The interest to work on this study resulted from the fact that women formed the majority of the student body of the 1999 B. Ed graduates, despite the domestic responsibilities they have at home as mothers. The study was therefore located within the bigger project in order to explore the gender related influences on the selected women teachers' own learning and teaching. The eleven women were therefore interviewed and the interviews formed the dominant strategy of data collection.

3.2 RESEARCH SITES

In this section, a broad overview of the areas in which teachers who were involved in the research were found is given. The interviews were carried out at the teachers' own schools with the intention of getting to feel the ethos of the school and to gain some insight regarding the environment. The researcher was convinced that both the physical environment and the ethos of the school have an influence on a teachers' experiences and practices. However, out of the eleven interviews that were conducted, one teacher's school was not accessible to the researcher due to some problems within the school itself, and the interview was therefore held at a place convenient for both the researcher and the subject. In that case, descriptions of the school were provided by the interviewee.

The research relied heavily on volunteers; that means it was dependent on the teachers who were willing to participate in the research. The majority of the 1998 B. Ed graduates were largely from the township and rural schools, and therefore most participants were from those areas. The rural sites of the research extended from schools on the edges of Pietermaritzburg and Madadeni (the B. Ed centre which is about two hundred and fifty kilometres away from Pietermaritzburg) in New Castle, to the ones in the deep rural areas, which were not beyond one hundred and fifty kilometres away from the places indicated above. The rest of the schools were in peri-urban townships around Madadeni. The rural areas on the edges of Pietermaritzburg were not more than fifty kilometres away from the city centre, and only five teachers were from the Pietermaritzburg region while the rest were from the Madadeni area. All schools visited were primary schools except for one secondary school from where there were two respondents. The schools were all populated by black students and black staff and they were all co-educational day schools. Below, detailed descriptions of the research sites are given.

Zwane primary school

This was the first school to be visited and it is situated at the top of a hill about thirty-five kilometres away from the Pietermaritzburg city centre. The area is typically rural without facilities

such as electricity and running water. The students fetch water from one of the village taps nearby. Broken windows are evidence to the politically motivated violence which ravaged the area in the 1980's and early 1990's.

The road that leads to the school is a long, curvy, gravel one that winds around a hill and which small cars find a serious challenge to travel. Students are mostly from neighbouring villages. For teachers who stay far away from the school, and for villagers nearby, the public transport is a bus which has a very fixed time schedule during working hours. Other than that, people rely on motor cars that are owned by very few individuals and some small retailers in the surrounding villages. The teacher who was visited stays in the township about twenty kilometres away from the school and together with other teachers who travel the same distance, they have arranged means of getting to and leaving the school since they do not have their own transport. There are no other social services available and people go to town (the city) for almost everything.

Indlela primary school

The second teacher was visited at Indlela primary which is about twenty kilometres away from the city centre, and seven kilometres away from one of the biggest townships in Pietermaritzburg. The school is situated at the top of a hill and is isolated from all the neighbouring villages. The dirt road only went as far up as where the school was, and there was no public transport available to the school, since the taxis only went as far as the end of the tarred road, (about ten kilometres away from the school). Teachers who do not have cars have to make special arrangements to get to the school.

Facilities such as electricity, running water and telephones were not available, but preparations were being made to have those according to the information obtained from the teacher. The environment was generally happy with a sense of cooperation felt amongst the teachers. Good relations also seemed to have been established amongst learners who were witnessed working cooperatively.

Rock primary school

Another visit was made to Rock primary which is about thirty kilometres away from the city centre. The teacher visited stays in the urban area right next to town and has to travel to the school daily by public transport. There are taxis running through the area and the dirt road (which is impassable in rainy weather) to the school is only about three to four kilometres long from the tarred road. The community around the school goes to Pietermaritzburg town for other services except for a few services which include a small health clinic and a circuit office for education.

The school seemed organised, as seen through the punctuality of students and the teachers' rushing to the classrooms at the end of the short break. However, the respondent complained about lack of cooperation from the community around the school. The families around the school were mostly poor, and they broke into the school buildings from time to time to steal anything they could lay their hands on. The respondent (who was the principal) even had to keep some of the stuff such as computers and overhead projectors at her home.

Dlula lower primary school

Dlula lower primary is a very small school on the outskirts of a large township about fifty-five kilometres away from Pietermaritzburg. The school is easily accessible due to the tarred roads around the whole area. Electricity and running water were not available despite the school's closeness to the big township. There seemed to be good working relations between the principal and the teachers and this was seen when the principal gave his own office for the interview. Gender equality was promoted amongst learners and this was evidenced by the sharing of duties between boys and girls in the school.

Prince primary school

The last teacher around Pietermaritzburg was not visited at her school due to lack of cooperation between her and her principal. According to the information provided by the teacher, the school is in the deep rural area about thirty kilometres away from the city centre. The school is surrounded by a hostile uneducated community which does not see the importance of the only one school they have in the area, since they steal anything from the doors of the classrooms to the chalkboards. As a result, there is a serious shortage of desks and chairs which makes life very difficult for the teachers. The area has some buses running for public transport which is also used by teachers who stay far away from the school. The working relations between the principal and other teachers are not so good according to the information provided by the respondent.

Bangeni secondary school

The rest of the teachers were from the Madadeni learning centre which is about two hundred and fifty kilometres away from Pietermaritzburg. Two teachers were from one big secondary school with a total enrollment number of approximately one thousand three hundred learners and thirty-seven teachers. The school is in a rather developed rural area which had most of the social services, such as a bank, post office, health clinic and supermarkets. There were electricity and telephone facilities, but there was no running water in the school. The school had a big library and lots of books which were lying on the floor because there were no shelves, and no desks and chairs for learners to sit and read in the library. There seemed to be good working relations detected from the cooperation of the principal with the researcher. The school also provided some residential cottages for teachers who stay far away from the school.

Sizwe primary school

Sizwe junior primary is situated right in the middle of a peri-urban township about ninety kilometres away from Madadeni. The school had an enrollment number of approximately one thousand

learners and twenty-five teachers. There was no electricity, no telephone and no running water in the school, but other facilities such as desks, chairs and books were in abundance, although most of the chairs and desks were old.

The school had a welcoming atmosphere. The researcher was warmly received by the principal and other teachers. Community involvement was also reflected in the improvements around the school which according to the respondent who happened to be the principal of the school, were due to the efforts of the people around.

Rech combined school

Rech is a combined school just outside the township about sixty kilometres away from Madadeni. It is an old school with many buildings, taking more than one thousand five hundred learners. Electricity, water and telephone facilities were available together with a library and photocopying facilities. The school is easily accessible since it is less than a kilometre away from the main road.

Thuto-ke-thebe combined school

Another combined school was Thuto-ke-thebe which is also located in the township about one hundred and fifty kilometres away from Madadeni. The school had basic facilities and is almost close to everything since it is situated about seven kilometres away from the town centre in that area. Learners were from diverse backgrounds, but mostly from poor families and this was reflected in the way learners were dressed. Most of them were not in proper school uniform while others wore dirty clothes which were not in good shape at all. There was some hostile behaviour amongst learners, and some bullying instances were witnessed by the researcher. The school population is not homogeneous age wise because of its combined nature.

Beko primary school

Beko primary school was the last school visited and is situated in the township in Madadeni and enclosed in a wire fence. The school lacks facilities such as electricity, running water, libraries and others. A telephone service was available in the school. The school had a typical hierarchical structure of authority where everybody's roles are distinct. A gap was felt between the principal and the teachers, and teachers did not seem to be quite comfortable in the presence of the principal.

Thus, apart from a few schools, the general sample of schools comprising the study was of functioning but deprived schools. Most schools were in disadvantaged areas and as a result did not have sufficient facilities to run the schools, although they were fully operating. This picture is important to the study as respondents themselves are discussed.

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLE OF THE RESEARCH

The study was conceived as a case study for the B. Ed women graduates of 1999 from the two learning centres of Pietermaritzburg and Madadeni. The sample of this study was selected from the sample of the bigger project which comprised both men and women, as indicated earlier. Letters were written to all ex-students who graduated in April 1999, to inform them about the research. The letters were accompanied by forms which they had to fill in, to show that they were interested in participating in the research. The forms included details that enabled the researcher to select the sample that was appropriate for the study. That is, the information related to whether the respondents were male or female, whether they teach at a primary or secondary school and their levels of authority within the schools.

Out of approximately three hundred graduates who received the letters, only thirty five of them responded and fifteen of them were women. Since this is a case study that deals with gender related influences and experiences, the main focus is on women as has been seen. Although it would have been desirable to study all fifteen (15) women who responded, not all were available for the

purpose. There were two dropouts who decided they did not have time to be interviewed anymore because of some activities in their schools, and others were not accessible through the telephone. Attempts to get hold of them completely failed. It was further attempted to get substitutes for them but unfortunately those who responded were all men. This was done on the presumption that a substitute sample can be obtained in cases where there is a high rate of non-cooperation. Borg and Gall (1979) posit that under circumstances where the researcher cannot get a large enough sample, those within reasonable distance can be checked, but the random selection of substitutes does not remove the possibility of bias. Consequently, only eleven (11) women were available for the study.

As a result of the study using volunteers, the selection of the sample was highly dependent on the number of respondent volunteers, as has been seen. Nonetheless, the sample comprised female representatives from both primary and secondary schools (although the majority were from primary schools), and from all hierarchical levels such as principals, heads of departments and level one educators. Borg (1981) states that ethical constraints on the researcher require her to obtain informed consent from human subjects before involving them in a research project. He goes on to say that most educational research places high demands on the subjects, and as a result even if the researcher selects a random sample he or she can rarely get cooperation from all the subjects selected. This was basically the reason why the research relied on volunteers. The research was also demanding in terms of the subjects' time since it involved in-depth interviewing, and this would discourage most potential respondents.

Volunteer subjects provide a biased sample since volunteers may differ from non-volunteers in many aspects, which affect the research depending on the specific nature of the investigation, and this can be seen as a limitation in this study. According to Rosenthal and Rosnow (in Borg 1981), volunteers tend to be of higher social class and more intelligent than non-volunteers. As a result, the bias in the voluntary nature of sampling may produce a sample that is not representative of the population from which the sample was drawn. Borg and Gall (1979) point out that the use of volunteers in research greatly complicates the interpretation of research results and their generalisability to the target population, which includes many individuals who would not volunteer.

However, this is a case study of a small sample of female teachers as they experienced the B. Ed at the University of Natal. Statistics which would have allowed generalisation were not envisaged, as both sample size and nature of research questions constrained it. Borg and Gall also posit that educational research requires the consent of the subjects because they are human. Hence, the study could not avoid using volunteers since subjects cannot be used against their will. Generalising of the results was also not planned given the small number of subjects and the gender bias, and as Randal (1999) puts it, attempting to generalise results undermines the credibility and validity of a case study. As former B.Ed students, the respondents were already selected in some way and a bias would have been difficult to avoid.

Eventually, a total of eleven female educators formed the sample, which comprised two secondary teachers, three principals, two heads of departments and four level one primary teachers. This was thought to be a sufficient number for this particular case study as in-depth-interviewing were to be used as the data collection technique.

3.4 RESEARCH TECHNIQUE

The research is a gender study that is based on a case study of the 1999 B. Ed female graduates. As a gender study, it is informed by the feminist research paradigm (as has been indicated earlier) since it looks at the imbalances between males and females, that are caused by the sexual division of labour in social relations generally, and in the teaching profession in particular. The study shares a definition of feminism with Harraway (in Delamont 1997), who says:

Feminist theory and practice... seek to explain and change historical systems of sexual difference, whereby 'men' and 'women' are socially constituted and positioned in relations of hierarchy and antagonism, (Harraway in Delamont, 1997:199).

In this study, the focus was limited to the eleven female teachers only, who constituted the sample of the study. The purpose was to determine and explain the gender related influences on teachers'

own learning as B. Ed students, and on their teaching as educators in primary and secondary schools in Kwazulu Natal. The research aimed at studying this sample using the feminist perspective.

3.4.1 The qualitative paradigm as supported by feminism

As a gender study whose central focus was on women's experiences as perceived through the feminist approach, the study employed the qualitative paradigm because it enabled the interpretations of women to take centre stage. Biklen (1992) shows that there is an intersection between feminism and qualitative research, and this intersection became quite helpful to the researcher to make sense of the ways gender constructed the subjects' world as female teachers.

Data collected were qualitative in nature and involved an open-ended, in-depth-interviewing technique. The open-ended nature of the approach allowed subjects to answer questions from their own frames of reference, rather than from one structured by prearranged questions. Biklen (1992) argues that in-depth-interviewing as a qualitative research method, enables the researcher to explore respondents' understandings, emotions and actions in their own words rather than the researcher's predefined categories that translate the women's experiences, which may distort those particular experiences. Borg and Gall (1979) argue that as the questions become more close-ended, they lose their qualitative nature since they require subjects to answer in a rather channelled way.

Holland et al (1995) argue that qualitative methods are more consistent with feminist values than are quantitative ones. This is due to the understanding that many aspects of women's experiences have not yet been articulated or conceptualised within the social science. The suspicion is that (according to Holland et al) qualitative methods have concealed women's real experience through their 'mechanical' nature. This has led to the advocacy of qualitative methods, "as methods which offer a more human, less mechanical relationship between the researcher and the researched", (Holland et al, 1995:221). Hence qualitative methods allow women to express their experiences fully and in their own terms.

In outlining the key aspects of the naturalistic paradigm in her doctoral study, Jessop (1997) indicates that the use of interviews as a qualitative research method, helps the researcher gain great insight into the respondents' lives. As a result, the researcher is able to use the collected information to draw conclusions about teaching and its experiences and what these experiences mean to those who are being interviewed. Thomas (1995) advocates this by quoting Bateson who argues that the process of making sense out of one's experiences is particularly important to women for the fact that it reveals the hidden nature of their achievements, which may not only be hidden away from the researcher but from the interviewees themselves. That means inviting female teachers to talk about their life stories and experiences in their careers assists the respondents themselves to reflect on those experiences which form the basis of their knowledge. Additionally, respondents are assisted to develop a better understanding of their own positions in their particular situations, as it is acknowledged that "teacher knowledge comes from within a particular school, school system and society", (Elbaz in Thomas, 1995:13). Accordingly, this study hoped to achieve similar results by utilizing the interviewing research method.

Gender relations in teacher-student interactions were crucial since the teachers and students' classroom interaction is central to gender equity and other educational processes. As Edson (in Sherman and Webb, 1988) argues, qualitative inquiry is a form of "moral discourse, an attempt to understand ourselves in relation to the larger world", (p.3). Some information on the women's biographies and historical background became essential to the study in order to understand how the women perceived themselves in relation to their teaching world. Sherman and Webb substantiate on Edson's 'larger world' by saying that it includes both the past and the present, and a historical study as a way to reveal better the relationship. Hence the qualitative nature of the study that involved the biographies and histories of the female teachers enhanced the researcher's belief of the biographic background as the basic unit of human understanding.

Thomas (1995) asserts that biographic work must entail an examination of 'experience' and 'self' as key constructs, and Biklen (1992) further sees the latter as a construct of symbolic interaction. This is another theory which guided this study since the latter pays some attention to the human

interaction amongst women teachers and those around them. One of the assumptions that the study sought to examine was that women were attracted to teaching because the profession seems congruent with feminine roles. These feminine roles are characterised by the interaction between the teachers and learners, between teachers and their family members and amongst the teachers themselves. The study also hoped to expose through the feminist theory, some of the sexist assumptions in teaching which may be the result of those interactions. Interviewing was therefore a preferred technique because it enables probing for relevant information from the subjects. The interactive nature of interviews enhances the collection of descriptive and qualitative data.

3.4.2 Interviews

For the purposes of this particular research, the oral interviews on female teachers' life histories formed the most important aspect of data collection. The study involved in-depth-interviewing which was characterised by open-ended questions. Studying teachers' lives through these interviews gave a useful insight into teachers' own choices that informed their career practices and beliefs, and also their approaches to changes in the education system. Goodson (1992) indicates that it is imperative to listen to the voices of teachers because they carry the exact tone and feelings that are conveyed by the way the teacher speaks. It was assumed that for the researcher to fully understand the experiences of the teachers' work, "personal testimony" (Nelson 1992: 168) was needed. That is why the study used interviewing as a dominant technique of obtaining data.

3.4.2.1 Advantages and disadvantages of interviews

Interviewing involves collection of data through direct verbal interaction between the researcher and the researched. It is this interactive nature of interviewing that is seen as an advantage because of "its adaptability", (Borg and Gall 1979). This means that the responses of the subjects can be used to alter the interview situation because there is immediate feedback, as contrasted with the questionnaire. The responses may also be used as follow-up leads to obtain more data and greater clarity.

Another advantage is that interviews allow greater depth and dig deeply enough to provide a true picture of opinions and feelings of the subjects, rather than questionnaires which are often shallow and fail to dig deeper for more information. Thus in an interview, the interviewee may reveal information that may not easily be revealed under any other circumstance, since the interview tends to yield more complete data regarding aspects of the self. More specific to this particular study was the fact that personal information was required in order to understand better the influences behind the female teachers' choice of career and their own perceptions of themselves as female teachers. Therefore, the interviews became more advantageous in this regard because they enabled teachers to talk freely about themselves.

Interviews enable the subject to shape the content of the interview, by enabling the respondents to tell their stories in their own words, as this is a good feature of qualitative research. They also help the respondent to raise issues that the researcher may not have previously thought of when planning the study. Thus, they ensure flexibility and freedom to explore participants' spontaneous remarks.

On the other hand, Borg and Gall (1979) indicate that the interview as a research tool does have definite limitations although it has some important advantages over other data collection tools. They state that its adaptability gained through the interaction between the interviewer and the respondent may lead to subjectivity and possible bias. This bias may result from aspects such as the eagerness of the respondent to please the interviewer, or the tendency to seek out answers that support certain preconceived notions. In this case, this would have been an issue were the researcher a university lecturer as was the case with the main study. That the women respondents of this study were interviewed by a fellow graduate of the B. Ed programme, eliminated this possibility, allowing for frank and collegial exchange of ideas through the interviews.

Another disadvantage of the interview is that it is time-consuming and therefore the number of subjects from whom data can be obtained is limited. This is overcome by having a limited sample in the research as was the case in this study. Interviewing large numbers of respondents also necessitates having several interviewers as was the case in the main study. The limitation of having

several interviewers in one study is that they have different ways of asking questions which may favour their different biases, which may be counter-productive to the study. Although training interviewers can minimize this, it does not replace the consistency derived from using the same interviewer for all interviewees. In this case however, this did not arise because all the eleven interviews were conducted by the researcher.

3.5 RESEARCH TOOLS

For the research to take place some tools were used for data collection. Below is a detailed description of the tools themselves and how they were utilised. Advantages and disadvantages of using such instruments are also discussed where necessary.

3.5.1 Interview schedule

An interview schedule was used for all interviews which constituted the major form of data collection. The questions in the interview guide were divided into sections which included inter alia, teachers' biographies and teachers' beliefs about teaching. In this kind of study the respondents had control on most of the important data, but the researcher still had to exercise some control so as to enable collaborative inquiry, since the respondents' accounts are based on personal and biographical factors. Thomas (1995) asserts that under certain conditions biographic work by teachers, either autonomously or collaboratively with the researchers, helps with their (teachers) professional development. As a result, "gains in teacher professional development have positive advantage on pupils", (Thomas, 1995:11). Thus, listening and studying teachers' stories in this particular research was not only beneficial to the researcher, but also to the teachers themselves since they were able to reflect on their own practices.

The questions used for this study were adapted from those used in the main study conducted by the School of Education research team. Additional questions addressing gender issues were designed by the researcher. Overall, in format and scope the university research interview schedule was used.

3.5.2 Tape-recorder and audio tapes

A tape-recorder and audio tapes were used to record the interviews which were later transcribed for analysis. Tape-recording was the main technique of data recording. The use of a tape recorder was necessary because the study involved extensive interviewing as a major form of data collection, and it was helpful to the researcher to capture all the necessary information without any interruption that can disrupt the effectiveness of communication between the interviewer and the interviewee as it may be the case with note taking, for example. All in all, eleven audio tapes were used, corresponding with the eleven female teachers who were interviewed.

3.5.2.1 Advantages and disadvantages of a tape recorder

Although the tape recorder was preferred in this research, it has a disadvantage of changing the interview situation to some degree. The respondents may be reluctant to give personal information when they know that their responses are being recorded. With the use of a tape recorder the respondents are conscious of their responses and they may not want to reveal some personal information when they know there is a possibility of being listened to by some people other than the interviewer. The researcher overcame this by thoroughly explaining the purpose of the interview and the recording, so as to gain the confidence of the respondents and help in minimising any undesirable effects of having the interview recorded. Carlgren et al (1994) argue for the establishment of mutual trust between the researcher and the researched. They say that the development of a relationship that is based on trust, enables the researched to feel sufficiently free and relaxed to be themselves and share all the necessary information whether it is tape-recorded or not. They further assert that this relationship functions as a very useful tool of qualitative data collection.

Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) also make reference to the fact that during tape recording it may be difficult to control noise, and this often seriously interferes with the understanding of the content. Moreover, tape recording does not capture non-verbal data such as body language and facial

expressions. But they argue that if these difficulties can be overcome, the use of audio tapes offers considerable promise to the researcher as a way to collect, store, and analyse data.

Borg and Gall (1979) suggest that the use of tape recorders reduces the tendency of the interviewer to make an unconscious selection of data that favour his or her own biases. They see this as an advantage of the use of tape recorders since the tape-recorded data can be played back many times and can be studied more thoroughly than would be the case if data were limited to notes taken during the interview. The tape recorder also speeds up the process of the interview because the researcher does not have to do extensive note taking. More specifically, in this case tape-recording assisted the interviewer to pay more attention to the interviewee, than would have been otherwise possible. As indicated earlier in cases of non-verbal data that were not captured by the tape-recorder, field notes were used.

3.5.3 Field notes

The study also made use of some short field notes which described the setting and the subjects where necessary. Field notes were also used in cases of data that could not be captured by the tape-recorder, such as body language.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

This section presents the procedures that had to be followed in order to enhance the process of data collection.

3.6.1 Negotiating Access

To obtain access to research sites and hence to the respondents, appointments with the subjects were made telephonically by the researcher. In replying to the initial letters asking them to participate in the main study, subjects had provided telephone numbers at which they could be reached. Although most of them had provided both home and work telephone numbers, it was found more appropriate for the researcher to contact the respondents at their work places rather

than at home, since most people use their home telephone for private purposes. Moreover, most of the teachers get home after working hours and it was not easy to get hold of them, and special arrangements had to be made. A number of problems were experienced here though, since most of the respondents had to be contacted through the school office or reception telephone. Some receptionists were found to be uncooperative, such that it became completely impossible to contact some teachers during working hours. Consequently, the only alternative was to call them at home, except for those who happened to have cellular phones.

The research itself did not have anything to do with either the school itself or the principal, except in three cases where the respondents were principals. But in cases where that did not apply, the respondents themselves had to explain to the principal that the interest was not on the school as such, but on the teacher who happened to be an ex-student of the University of Natal. In general, principals were found to be cooperative and all interviews were held on school premises except for the case of one teacher whose principal insisted that she did not want to see any people from the university “in her school”. The teacher was then interviewed at the university premises and she herself provided all the necessary information about the setting of the school she came from.

3.6.2 Interviewing

Teachers were provided with the interview schedule in advance as a way of enabling them to think about the responses beforehand. However, this can be a bias since studied responses may lead to lack of validity, but care was taken in asking the questions to ensure that respondents do not give what they thought the researcher wanted to hear. In cases where it was felt that such responses were given, probing was done to seek more valid responses. Providing the respondents with the interview schedule beforehand was intended to help the researcher get well thought out, genuine responses that are not prompted by the pressure of the interview, nor by the thought that certain responses are desired.

The researcher travelled to the subjects’ schools where the interviews were conducted. The interviews were conducted during the teachers’ free time. The purpose of the interview was explained to the respondents. The interview sessions were all allocated sixty minutes each, but since

they were characterised by a natural flow of interaction, none of them took the exact allocated time. They were mostly slightly more and a few were slightly less, depending on the openness of the interviewee. However, this did not have a negative impact on the quality of the data collected since the researcher was in control, and used probing in order to illuminate certain issues.

All the interviews were tape recorded and there were eleven audio tapes in all. The interviews were transcribed onto disk and further printed out in order to enhance data analysis.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The processes of data collection and data analysis were done in a sequence. However, the researcher made some ongoing analysis during data collection that helped in narrowing the scope of data collecting, as stated that in qualitative research “the process of data analysis is like a funnel: things are open at the beginning (or top) and more directed and specific at the bottom,” (Biklen, 1992: 32). The ongoing data analysis also helped the researcher develop some other questions that brought out themes that were not emerging from the original questionnaire. For example teachers’ views on gender relations were not actually emerging from the original interview schedule, and therefore some questions on women’s role in society as compared to men’s were added after the first two interviews, since they were believed to be important in enhancing the researcher’s understanding of the women’s perceptions about themselves. Therefore analysis on women’s perceptions on their role in society was only done on nine transcripts instead of eleven as it was the case with other categories.

Since the data were qualitative and descriptive, they were analysed inductively in order to allow the development of “bottom-up theory”, (Biklen 1992). The tape recorded data were transcribed in preparation for the analysis process. The transcripts were read thoroughly in order to discover codes and emerging themes around which to categorise the data. The thorough reading of the transcripts was done in order to check for incomplete and / or irrelevant data, and also to facilitate the organisation of the data into meaningful chunks of information.

A “coding” system of data analysis was developed in order to organise the data. Jessop (1997) defines “coding” as “a complex process by which the researcher labels units of meaning or categories according to a system of codes, usually developed through a close reading of data”, (pp89). Indeed, a thorough reading of the data was done and topics covered by the data were searched for. Emerging themes were also discovered and phrases were written down to represent these themes. According to Biklen (1992), these phrases are called “coding categories” and they were used as a means of sorting the descriptive data that had been collected, in order to physically separate the material related to a given topic from the rest of the data.

In qualitative research, data analysis is closely related to results, so here, only a brief description of the analytical procedure used is given. Details are presented together with the findings in the next chapter. Codes such as “Teachers’ Family Background” were covered and under this topic there were categories which covered all the relevant information. These categories included the types of residence where teachers were born and brought up, the occupation of parents and other siblings, the teachers’ marital status and the sizes of their current families. Categories were further developed from these and tally marks were used in order to find the prevailing categories of the teachers’ background status. Other codes under which the data were classified included “Influences on career choices”, which covered categories such as parental influence, love for children, influences from role models, and lack of desired jobs. The same procedure of tally marks was followed for all the themes in order to determine the frequency distributions of categories, which enabled the researcher to draw conclusions on what mostly attracted the researched female teachers to the teaching profession.

Other categories that emerged included “Subjects’ perceptions of their role as women educators” and “Teaching and gender relations,” and the same procedure of analysis was followed. The results of this analysis are described in the next chapter, as indicated above.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the findings of the research are presented and discussed. As has been indicated earlier, the data collected were qualitative in nature and consisted of eleven interview transcripts and some field work notes. Descriptions and quotations from the data are presented in order to illustrate and substantiate the assertions made. Biklen (1992) states that in qualitative research, it is the onus of the researcher to convince the reader of the plausibility of the presentation, so that what was said to the researcher makes as much sense to the reader. The quotations from the transcripts are therefore used in order to bring the reader closer to the subjects, since the quotations do not only tell what was said, but also reflect how it was said.

4.2 TEACHERS' BACKGROUNDS

Given the historical position of black South African women in the apartheid government, as presented by Kotecha (in Lessing, 1994), black South African women were historically disadvantaged in the sense that they never had equal opportunities with their male counterparts and other women of colour. In a hierarchy of a racially determined status of occupations, black women were at the very bottom and at the top were white men. Men had a wider choice to decide upon, but black women were confined to primary teaching because of their low qualifications which were a result of the then apartheid government through its discriminative education system which put black people at a disadvantage. It is with the belief that women's personal backgrounds played an important role in their choice of teaching, in addition to what they experienced as black South African women, that the study gave much attention to the respondents' biographic background as a foundation for understanding their position as female educators.

The first set of questions in the interview guide were intended to explore the respondents' background with the hope of understanding the foundation of the teachers' interest in teaching. Categories developed in this section sought to find out the respondents' type of residence, parents' and other siblings' occupations, the respondents' marital status, and sizes and status of their present families. Results showed that the teachers' backgrounds played a very crucial role in the teachers' choices of their careers, since they were found to have determined some of the decisions respondents made about their careers and continued to influence the respondents' decisions to study further. It was assumed that the women took an advantage of improving their qualifications through the B. Ed, since they had been deprived of the opportunity to pursue further studies. Thus, from the respondents' ages and qualifications prior to the B. Ed, the assumption was confirmed as will be seen in the course of the discussion.

In this study, as has been indicated earlier, eleven women educators were interviewed, and as the research is a case study of a small sample of ex-B. Ed students of the University of Natal, details of the results of each interviewee are presented. The characteristics that are developed to explore the respondents' background are examined in detail below.

4.2.1 Respondents' family background

It was found important to have a clear picture of the teachers' family situation since this helped the researcher to make sense of the way they grew up and the influences their upbringing had upon their career choices. The rural background of teachers was assumed to have had influence on the teachers' careers in the sense that there was lack of exposure to different opportunities due to limited facilities in the rural areas. As a result, teachers had a limited range of careers from which to make a choice, as compared to those from urban areas. This was assumed to be a possibility given the lack of exposure black women generally had, and in particular those from the disadvantaged areas

Teacher 1:

The first teacher interviewed was born on a farm in a rural area where she started her grade one. Her education was further continued in a township school where her father was a principal, and this became the respondents' home until she finished her education and training. Her mother was a qualified nurse who decided to become a housewife after marriage. However, the father was able to send all the seven children in the family to school without any problems. The surviving siblings (only four out of seven) are all formally employed.

Teacher 2:

The second interviewee was born and bred in a township. All her education was done in the township although she moved from one school to another within the township. Her mother was self-employed and her father was a skilled labourer in a factory, and they were able to send their five girls to school. Parents were very strict and always kept gates locked to prevent the girls from roaming the streets. Three of the girls including the respondent are teachers, while two are not formerly employed.

Teacher 3:

The third teacher was born in a well to do family in a low cost urban area in the Natal midlands. She comes from a family of seven, four of whom are teachers (excluding herself). The respondent received primary education through home instruction and went to high school in one of the towns. Parents were not literate but they were self employed and rather rich.

Teacher 4:

Like the other two respondents, the fourth teacher comes from a family of seven. These children were all brought up by their uncles in the deep rural Northern Kwazulu Natal. Their father died at an early age, and they were also deserted by their mother, a teacher, who went away to marry another man. They grew up under very hard conditions as uncles also had their own children, and they sometimes had to go to school barefoot in cold weather. Her siblings are not successful and do not have formal

employment due to lack of sufficient means to study further, but they have ways of surviving.

Teacher 5:

The fifth interviewee was born and educated in a rural area. Her parents were very old and it was difficult for her to go to school because her father, who was the only bread winner was pensioned. She had to go to school through the use of pension funds and it was really difficult. She was the last born in a family of six children, and there was the age gap of forty-five years between her and her parents. That is why the father was pensioned before she finished her schooling. Other siblings were already working as there is a big gap between them, but they had their own families to take care of.

Teacher 6:

The sixth teacher comes from a deep rural area in the Eastern Kwazulu Natal, where she received both her primary and secondary education. She is the second born in a family of eight children. Her mother was not working and her father started working as a garden boy but unfortunately, he did not believe in educating girls because he had a belief that it is a waste of time and money to educate girls because they leave parents and get married. The respondent was therefore educated by her grandmother who was also struggling and never had enough to even buy her shoes. By the time she reached standard nine, her father had got a better job and he had changed his attitude and paid for her fees in standard nine and ten, but he could not take her any further due to insufficient funds. So the respondent had to work as a housekeeper for two years and used her savings to complete her training. At the time of the interview, the respondent was the only one professionally advanced in the family and the only one capable of taking care of their widowed mother, while the boys who were given the opportunity to go to school, struggle to look after their own families. The last born (a girl) is still at school but has two children who are looked after by the respondent.

Teacher 7:

The seventh respondent grew up on a farm which was owned by both her grandfather and her father in a rural area. Her mother was not working, but being the only child in the family, she never

experienced any problems with regard to her education. She left her home for her secondary education to stay with an aunt who was a teacher in another rural place in Kwazulu Natal.

Teacher 8:

The eighth respondent was born in a family of three children. The children grew without their mother and father. The parents were separated and later died and left the children to be brought up by their grandmother and an aunt in a township in the Natal midlands. The grandmother used her pension funds to send them to school. The respondent had to help the aunt by selling from house to house in the location, the dresses that were sewn by the aunt, so that she could help her with the fees. She only got her junior certificate from school, and the rest of her education was completed privately. She also managed to get her Bachelors degree through correspondence.

Teacher 9:

The ninth respondent was born and brought up in the rural area just outside one of the biggest townships in Pietermaritzburg. As the second born in a family of ten children, the respondent grew up under very hard conditions since she only had her father as a breadwinner. The mother was a qualified nurse but after marriage the father did not allow her to work. Unfortunately, the father died at an early age leaving all the responsibility with the unemployed mother. The respondent only went as far as the junior certificate level through formal schooling, and she received the rest of her education through private studying when she was already working.

Teacher 10:

The tenth interviewee was also born in a rural area in the Northern Kwazulu Natal. She is the first born in a family of three. The parents were self employed and as children they never had any problems regarding finances during their school days. At the time of the interview the two other siblings (brothers) were formerly employed and had their own families.

Teacher 11:

The last respondent also did not have problems. She was born and bred in a township in the Natal midlands. Both parents were working; her mother as a matron at a hospital and the father as a secretary. So they (herself and three other siblings) never experienced any financial problems during their studies. All her siblings were employed and had their own families.

According to the above presentation, five teachers came from very poor families and they encountered different problems during their upbringing. Parents were either not working, retired or ~~did not have good jobs~~, and as a result, children struggled to go to school. Two of the respondents were abandoned by their parents and were brought up by their relatives who were also not well to do. The poverty reflected in these cases had a very significant impact on the respondents' choice of career, as it put a lot of pressure upon them in terms of earning a means for a living. As will be seen in the next section which covers the subjects' influences on their career choices, two respondents who came from poor families were not able to pursue their careers of first choice because they felt they were too expensive. They therefore resorted to teaching since their parents could only afford to take them to a teacher training college which was less expensive. This serves to confirm the fact that as respondents were black women, there were already limited opportunities for them since most chances were open to men and other 'women of colour'. This situation of poverty only made matters worse for the already disadvantaged group of people as compared to those whose parents could afford to pay for them throughout their education and training. It becomes vital to mention at this point that the five teachers who came from poor families were all born and bred in the rural areas. The one who came from a disadvantaged township was also from a poor family, where there was also lack of exposure with regard to what respondents could do for a career. Thus, poor academic and family background added up to minimising chances for respondents who were already from disadvantaged areas.

The findings also reflect a great majority of respondents coming from the rural areas. In addition to the five subjects discussed above, three more were also brought up in rural areas although they did not necessarily come from poor families. This brings respondents who were brought up in the rural areas to a total of eight, leaving only three, two of whom came from townships and one from a low

Table 1. Respondents' age categories

AGE	NO. OF TEACHERS
20-30	1
31-40	5
41-50	4
51-65	1

These results indicate that respondents could have been victims of the Bantu Education policy (which left women educators with very low qualifications) who did not want to miss the B. Ed opportunity when this was introduced by the University of Natal in 1997. Since most respondents are in their middle ages, it follows that they mostly entered the profession at an age suitable for having babies and starting families. Traditionally, African women generally have to have children early to prove their sexuality to men (Kaabwe, 2000). This is one of the reasons that studies have found schooling to be an effective means of controlling reproduction in Africa. Schooling delays pregnancy; the syllabus often teaches mothering, dress-making, cooking and nutrition. Learners appreciate the benefits of having fewer children by learning to value a material standard of living obtained in this way, (Stombach, 1998). Kotecha (in Lessing, 1994) stated that promotions and other benefits such as study leave were not granted women unless they met certain requirements which included that they should have eight years of unbroken service. Given this condition, the respondents had no chance for upgrading and this explains why they did not want to miss the opportunity offered by the University of Natal's B.Ed.

4.2.3 Respondents' qualifications

It was assumed that respondents considered the B. Ed as the best opportunity to upgrade their qualifications since they had been disadvantaged in the past. Kearney (in Kearney and Ronning, 1996) makes an assertion that women are presently under-represented in higher professional life in general, and that is why most female educators are found in the positions of first level educators yet they are claimed to dominate the teaching profession. According to her, this is due to low qualifications as

cost urban area. The implication of this is lack of exposure to alternative types of careers, as has been discussed above.

Another important finding made from the home background results is that only two of the respondents' mothers had formal employment. One was a teacher who deserted her children, and the other was a matron at a hospital. There were two other mothers who were qualified nurses but who did not work after marriage. This is also important to the findings in general since it has implications for the issue of husbands being considered as breadwinners, although it is not directly related to the subjects themselves. The concept of "conjugal attitudes towards women's role" as explained by Lemmer (in Edigheji, 1999) has relevance here. In this context men are regarded as household heads and breadwinners of the family, and women's careers are seen as secondary. It is in this sense that mothers are often role models for their children, so that what the mother does, is often good for the daughter. Other characteristics which formed the background of the respondents will be looked at in the next sections.

4.2.2 Ages of the respondents

With respect to age, it was assumed that respondents joined teaching at the height of the apartheid era which was characterised by few job opportunities for black women. It was also assumed that the age at which respondents started teaching could have been a very crucial stage for them with regard to their reproductive function as women. This would therefore provide an explanation for the women's status in teaching as an occupation, and how that has affected their career development. Pavalko (in Maclean, 1992) maintains that "careers exist through time, and so age becomes an important consideration in understanding them" (p.28).

The findings revealed that the majority (nine out of the eleven respondents) were in their middle age, while one was thirty and the other was above sixty at the time of the study. The ages of the respondents are provided in a table below in order to highlight the differences which were found to be quite large. The illustration of these ages helped the researcher make sense of the references made by some of the respondents to their grand children while one talked about her eight months old baby as her first born.

compared to their male counterparts who have always had chances open. Women are believed to dominate the teaching profession, but they are still not fairly represented in the administrative positions (Kearney in Kearney and Ronning, 1996). Maclean (1992) argues that one possible reason for the under representation of women in administrative positions is the fact that married women tend to put family consideration before the pursuit of a work career or promotion in their occupation. This issue will be revisited in the section under marital status.

The respondents' highest qualifications and their positions of authority are illustrated in the table below, in order to highlight the assumption made that since black women were academically disadvantaged, they regarded the B. Ed as the life time opportunity to upgrade their qualifications and improve themselves professionally. It should be borne in mind that the 1997 B. Ed at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, was introduced for the first time as a senior degree to cater for students who had any four year diploma (M + 4) in teaching. The normal entry requirement into the B. Ed is a Bachelor's degree which was held by only one respondent. The order of teachers in the table below corresponds with the outline of the respondents' family backgrounds seen earlier in this presentation.

Table 2. Respondents' positions in the schools and their qualifications

TEACHER	POSITION	QUALIFICATION
1	Principal	HDE
2	L1 Educator	FDE
3	HOD	FDE
4	L1 Educator	HED
5	L1 Educator	HDE
6	L1 Educator	FDE
7	Principal	HED
8	L1 Educator	BA
9	Principal	PTD
10	L1 Educator	HED
11	HOD	HED

The above results only reflect what was considered to be the respondents' highest teaching qualification before they did the B. Ed. It must be mentioned that respondents had many other qualifications before the ones that are shown above, since most of them left formal schooling only after completing their junior certificate. This proves valid the assumption that respondents were eager to improve their qualifications and therefore the B. Ed came as an answer to their prayers. This will be further explored in the section that deals with the reasons behind the respondents' enrolment in the B.Ed, later in the discussion.

4.2.4 Marital status

The respondents' marital status helped the researcher understand the respondents' positions in their work places with regard to promotions and other conditions of service. It is generally believed that marital status is very influential on an individual's career and promotion aspirations, since whether or not the respondents are married has a significant influence on their career and promotion patterns, (Maclean 1992). It can be argued that women's reproductive nature had a negative impact on other

conditions of the teaching service. For example, given the historical information as presented by Kotecha (in Lessing, 1994), women were expected to complete eight uninterrupted years of service in order to be granted study leave. As has been indicated above, the age at which these women entered the teaching profession was crucial in terms of their reproductive function. Consequently, they were bound to break the service in order to attend to other needs of their feminine nature such as child bearing. Their marital status also contributed to understanding the respondents' situation before they enrolled for the B. Ed. Historically, women generally were given few chances for promotions because of their lack of stability at work. Women's instability at work results from the fact that, as females, they always have to go on maternity leave, and as minors in the patriarchal family structure, they would be expected to move away with their husbands and as a result they could not be trusted to occupy positions of authority.

Respondents were therefore asked about their marital status. The results showed that four of the subjects were married women who lived with their partners. Two were divorced, and five never married. Of the four women who were married, one lived with her husband who was a retired teacher, her two grand children and her youngest child while the rest of the children worked and lived on their own or with their families. The other married respondent lived with the husband who was self-employed, and her three children while the fourth child was at a tertiary institution and not living with the family. There was also the younger brother of the husband since both spouses' parents are deceased. However, the youngest child was nine years old and this put less responsibility on the respondent while she was studying, as elder children were old enough to care for the young one. The third married respondent lived with the husband, a fellow teacher and a current B. Ed student. Other members of the family consisted of two children of the respondent and three of hers and her husbands' siblings. The respondent's children were both between the ages of four and seven. Unlike the three discussed married respondents, the fourth one did not have extra responsibilities as she only lived with her husband who was a school inspector, and one of her four children, and the rest of the children were in boarding schools.

With regard to the two divorced women, one of them lived with her daughter and her (the daughter's) two children, who were five years of age (they are twins) together with the respondents' youngest son who is almost the age of her grand children. The other divorcee lived with

just one grand child since her only son lived on his own. The remaining five respondents were unmarried but they all had at least one child each. Three of them had just one child each, who was looked after by the respondents' own parents. The respondents themselves still live with their parents. Only two of the unmarried women lived with their children; one had one eight months old (during the time of the research) baby, while the other had three children of whom the oldest was eighteen and the two younger ones were four years and nine months old, respectively.

According to these findings, the sizes of the respondents' own families did not seem to be very big since none of them appeared to be staying in a family of seven or more members. Members in the families all ranged between two and six. This was found to be quite different from the situation in the teachers' own families of birth where most of the families were very big and some were even members of extended families. This had an advantage to the respondents as students in the sense that since they did not appear to have too much responsibility in terms of looking after the children and financial obligations, they had less pressure during their studies for B. Ed as contrasted to what was anticipated. The fact that some respondents still live with their parents made them have enough time for their studies since parents helped them with taking care of the children, as will be seen later in the discussion.

However, it was important to notice that all respondents had at least one child, even those who were not married. This proves valid the assumption that women's femininity is important to them as stated earlier, hence creating time to look after families and children is equally important. This could have some influence in the women's choice of career, as teaching gives them time for their families and generally seems congruent with feminine roles. But this did not determine the respondents' choice of teaching career as will be seen later. However, as indicated earlier, that historically women were considered as minors, the findings of this study from the respondents' background do not portray respondents considering themselves as supplementary wage earners, but as the sole wage earners in most cases. This is reflected by the fact women who were not married were sole breadwinners in their own families. Even for those who are married, one of them had a retired husband and she was the one taking care of the family financially. Moreover, the husbands do not necessarily appear to be doing any work superior to what the women themselves are doing (except for one who is a school inspector) considering the fact that as men, they always had open chances for "better" job

opportunities. Two of the husbands were mere teachers and the other is self employed.

Thus, although family appears to be important to women, and although teaching is regarded as compatible to marriage and motherhood, these factors do not seem to have had much pressure on the studied women's decisions about their careers. But more on what actually influenced the women to join the teaching profession is explored in detail in the next section.

4.3 INFLUENCES ON CAREER CHOICES

This section explores the major influences on the respondents' choices of their careers. Respondents were asked to relate what they think played the major influence in their choice to become teachers, and the assumption was that teaching was the most available occupation for women because of their historical backgrounds. In this section respondents relate what they believe influenced their decisions to become teachers. In response to the question, teachers gave more than one reason each, and these reasons formulated categories that were developed for the question. The categories included; parental influence, love for children, money and status, influences from teacher role models, influences from prior experience, and others that were mentioned by individual respondents.

4.3.1 Influence from prior experience

When asked about their most important influences on their career choices, four teachers related the influence back to their own schooling days that resulted from the minor tasks of responsibility they were given as students. One respondent, asserts to have discovered her inner qualities to become a teacher during her early school experiences and indicates that the encouragement was directly from her own teachers as reflected below:

Respondent: *Myself being a teacher? I can say that it started at school, because most of the time I was the one who was given some work to do in the class and sometimes I did explain difficult things to other learners while I was at school - I always say I was a teacher when I was doing Std V until Std X because I never encountered any problems, since I started schooling I never failed, and some of my teachers encouraged me to become a teacher, (transcript 8 pp2, 1999).*

Some influences were not necessarily as direct as the above response indicates, but they also came as a result of prior experiences as two other respondents indicated that they were encouraged to become teachers, out of the experiences they had from teaching at a Sunday school. One respondent was encouraged by her mother who thought the respondent would make a good teacher because of her experience from the Sunday school. Another one thought after the same Sunday school experience that she should follow a career in teaching.

The fourth respondent got a job on a farm school after standard ten, where she got motivated and decided to follow a teaching career afterwards. It is also important to mention that this respondent ended up in teaching at a farm school because she could not find any other job and was not admitted into any college. More of this however, will be discussed in the succeeding sections.

4.3.2 Influence from teacher role models

Another major influence came as a result of subjects' role models. Seven respondents, had got the inspiration to become teachers from their own teachers whom they considered to be their role models. In these cases, respondents were attracted by the way their role models presented their stuff, the way they carried themselves around the school premises and the respect they received from the community in general. Two respondent were inspired by their Afrikaans teachers and they even decided to take Afrikaans when they were at a teacher training college.

In two cases the very same teacher role models were the subjects' parents, and this inspiration developed from what the parents did in the home to the way they carried themselves in the school. The two extracts below depict the situation where subjects were inspired by their own parents as teachers.

Respondent: *There are two people that I remember - the first one was my father. My father he was my role model. Whenever he went to school he had a tie on, a suit, and polished shoes. Then he used to iron his suits himself and he never took them to the dry-cleaners - he used to buy benzine and powdered soap, and he'd make a foam out of that and clean his suits and then press them. I remember that. So I liked the way he dressed, and I liked the way he talked.*

I remember one day, my father used to come home and say, either my mother wanted money for food or - I've got much more, I've got credits - do you know what a credit is? I learnt that when I was doing Std. III or IV - he used to say Credit is an octopus that takes you into its tentacles until it is impossible to escape. I knew that thing from Std. IV. (laughter).

Interviewer: *OK, so, I mean, the way the father carried himself around, and made you develop that interest in becoming a teacher?*

Respondent: *And he used to teach us as well, he used to learn us, his own children. And ask us questions maybe, he was teaching Std III and IV, he would ask you the thing he was teaching at school, and hit you, as if you are still at school! And I liked that! I said, I'm going to be - I like to be a teacher, and do the same things to my children! (laughter), (transcript 11pp 3, 1999).*

Interviewer: *And when you look at the type of school you went to, and the type of teacher that you had, do you think some could have influenced you, or did you simply go to teaching because of the influence from your father?*

Respondent: *I think it was from my father. I used to look at what was happening in the school, the community and you know, when they, often look at them as a role model, you know, they used to respect my father. The students used to like him, so when - partly in the interests of weights within, (transcript 6 pp3,1999).*

Other than parents, some of the respondents' siblings were teachers and this became an indirect influence to the respondents. Teacher 2 had two sisters who were teachers, while Teacher 3 had four siblings who were teachers. These respondents confirmed that the influence to join the profession came from the family. All respondents indicated that they did have at least one teacher who really inspired them and made them develop the love for teaching. This applied even to those respondents who indicated that their original intentions were not to become teachers.

Generally, the assumption that teachers teach in the way that they themselves were taught, proved valid, although two respondents indicated that it is not necessarily so. But since all teachers (including the two who said they do not necessarily teach in the way they were taught) had at least one teacher whose way of teaching they really admired, it was concluded that the respondents' own teachers' way of teaching had some impact to a large degree. It was also revealed from the findings that respondents now teach differently because of what they acquired from the B. Ed, but this issue will be addressed in detail later.

4.3.3 The love for children

Emphasis on the love to work specifically with young children was also made by respondents as one of the reasons why they joined the teaching profession. About three teachers indicated that they have always had the love for children and they thought the school was the best place to work with children. These teachers seemed to have associated teaching with motherhood since they indicated that nursing and watching the children grow was what they liked most about the teaching profession. It was through these responses that the assumption that women associate teaching with mothering was proved valid. The following extract illustrates the love that the two teachers emphasised towards children:

***Respondent:** In fact, I loved to work with children, I love children. I used to play with them, so I think I was brought up to be a teacher, so I can have the children, and have time with them, (transcript 4 pp 4, 1999).*

***Respondent:** Well, I like children, especially the small children, so I just decided that well, I might as well go for teaching. I liked it! When I was at College, I wanted to see them, you know, grow into good citizens, so I think I mainly, that's the thing that I just wanted to do, to educate them, in the way that I was educated. Then I continued like that, (transcript 6 pp3, 1999).*

Two respondents indicated that the love for children was instilled into them during their initial teacher training, and it contributed to their developing a career in teaching since they had already chosen teaching as an occupation.

4.3.4 Teaching as a first choice career

The findings also revealed that it is not every teacher who has always had the desire to become a teacher. Some respondents did mention that it had never been their original intention to be teachers, but they found themselves in the profession because teaching happened to be the most available occupation to them at the time they were looking for jobs. One teacher indicated that she went to a teacher training college because she did not get admission in to any of the other colleges she had applied to. This respondent originally wanted to be a nurse, and she applied to nursing colleges for three years after matriculation, but she never got admitted into any nursing college. After that she

applied to a teacher training college and the first application she made was successful and that was how she became a teacher.

Another respondent did a secretarial course after matriculation but did not get any job since only experienced people were required. She applied to a teacher training college and it became easy to get a job in teaching after training because no experience was required.

Parental influence also played a big role as has been indicated earlier, even in cases where subjects themselves did not want to become teachers. The following excerpt is an example of where a parent played a role in influencing the child to become a teacher:

Respondent: *Basically I didn't like teaching, I wanted to be a nurse, just like my mother. But unfortunately my father had another belief, that every of his child should become a teacher, (transcript 6 pp2, 1999).*

The above issue leads to the subjects' choice of teaching as their first choice career. In response to the question on choosing teaching as a career, only five of the eleven respondents indicated that they chose teaching as their first choice career, while the remaining six were forced into the profession by circumstances such as parental influence, low qualifications and lack of availability of space in other institutions as has been seen above. Lack of funds from the parents to provide for their children's education is another reason why two other respondents did not follow their first choice careers, as reflected in the following responses:

Respondent: *In the first place, I understood that teaching is the - is a bit cheaper, is a cheaper profession, ...*

Interviewer: *Cheaper in what sense?*

Respondent: *... in some institutions, you know, education is not expensive compared to maybe when you are doing B.Sc.... ,B.Progs, all those things under law and maybe science. So I found it comforting for my family, ja, because we're not that much ..., (transcript 10 pp4, 1999).*

Interviewer: *Mmm-hmm. Was teaching your first-choice career?*

Respondent: *No, I had so many things in my mind, I liked nursing, in fact with nursing I liked the uniform! (laughter). And also I liked to be a lawyer, that was my idea.*

Interviewer: What prevented you from being a lawyer?
Respondent: Coming from a very poor family, and my mother was not working, (transcript 11 pp5, 1999).

The last respondent indicated that although teaching was not her first choice career, she did not necessarily want to be a nurse, but she worked in a hospital just because it was the only job available. All she needed then was means of earning money, and after working in a hospital she got temporarily employed in the place of a teacher who was on accouchement leave, after which she then developed interest in teaching. She also indicated that she had a low qualification (a junior certificate) which only enabled her to train as a primary school teacher.

Thus, of the six respondents who did not choose teaching as a first choice career, three of them wanted to be nurses while one was undecided but firstly went to a hospital to look for a job. One of the last two who did not want to be teachers, wanted to be a lawyer, and the other did a secretarial course first. As Lessing (1994) indicated that teaching and nursing were the only professions available for women in the past, these findings show that the respondents themselves had their choice of career limited within teaching and nursing. Jessop (1997) also states that apartheid has played a role in limiting paths for black South African women. This proves valid the assumption that teaching and nursing were mostly available as occupations for women, since the majority of those who did not want to become teachers wanted to be nurses. The issues of poverty and low qualification are also seen inhibiting the women to pursue the careers of their own choice.

4.3.5 Expectations from the teaching profession

As has been indicated earlier, teachers had manifold reasons for entering the teaching profession, and amongst other things, what also influenced the teachers' decision to become teachers was the need for money and the status gained from the profession itself. That is, what teachers themselves expected to gain out of the teaching profession became the motivation behind following it as a career. In addition to a lot other influences, the status gained from the profession and the money that teachers earn influenced six of the respondents as they indicated that they were inspired by teachers who had money and drove nice cars. This also revealed that earning some money was more important

than the manner in which it was acquired.

The findings also revealed that, teachers were also ready to help their communities through the profession besides the material things they had expected to gain. This was evidenced by the fact that when they were asked what they expected to gain personally out of the profession, a majority of seven out of eleven respondents indicated that they had hoped to be good guides and counsellors to the learners as well as to the community at large. One teacher mentioned that “every job comes from teaching” and that she always had serving her community at heart, so she thought teaching was the best place since she sees it as an important job that serves the community through the learners she teaches. The extract below illustrates the teacher’s sentiments:

Interviewer: *Um, so what did you personally hope to get out of teaching?*

Respondent: *In fact I just wanted to help my people to have better education, just to build a nation, and perhaps I can contribute. Those days people needed education a lot, because I lived in a farm, and that's how people were not educated, they worked on the farms, they suffer, and everything like that. I thought perhaps I could make a contribution to help those people. And uplift them to higher levels of life.*

Interviewer: *Did you then see teaching as an important job?*

Respondent: *Yes, I thought it's very important, because it's not a matter of teaching children alone, even the community. Everyone you meet, even parents themselves, they need to be educated. So I believed it's a great thing to do, because I'm going to work with many people, not even children - the youth, the parents, the nation as a whole, the community. So I think yes, it was a good job to do, because I can add a contribution, (transcript 4 pp4, 1999).*

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter that the teachers’ backgrounds are believed to have some impact on the teachers’ decisions about their careers, this extract shows the determination of the respondent in helping her own people at the farm.

In response to the question on what they hoped to gain out of the profession, three respondents indicated that what they only wanted out of the profession is the status; that is, earning big salaries and driving nice cars. At least two teachers indicated that they had always admired the long holidays that teachers have so that they could have time for family and leisure.

As evident from above, respondents had many different reasons for entering the teaching profession. However, respondents seemed to have considered teaching and nursing as mainly the available occupations for women, as it was reflected that they either wanted to come be teachers or nurses except for two cases. Other reasons for having chosen the teaching career were dependent on the teachers' various backgrounds and the individual teacher's sense of obligation to serve the community as the mothers of the children they teach. Teachers' career choices were also inspired by parental and former teachers' influences. Other respondents were attracted by the respect that teachers received from the community, the status they gained and the need for money.

Thus, respondents' choice of career seemed to have been generally limited to teaching and nursing. The reasons that prompted the respondents to decide to settle in teaching have some significance to the general outlook the women had upon themselves. Looking at the ages of the majority, it follows that they could have started working at the time when women still looked up to men to provide for them. However, none of the respondents joined the profession just to while away time, not even those who did not choose teaching as their first choice career. But all of them were eager to do something in order to earn a living.

4.4 TEACHERS' TRAINING AND CAREER MOVE

As a way of understanding the respondents' positions at their places of work, teachers were asked to describe their teaching careers. This helped the researcher to understand better the reasons why respondents decided to further their studies.

All teachers interviewed did their initial teacher training at a teacher training college after which they obtained either the Primary Teaching Certificate\ Diploma (PTC), for those who teach at the primary schools, or Secondary Teaching Certificate\ Diploma (STC) for those who teach at the secondary level. Three respondents got their STC (but one left secondary school after encountering some discipline problems with the learners and went back to primary school), and nine other respondents got their PTC. For all the respondents, the initial teacher training was the last time they studied full time. They all studied for higher diplomas after their first training, but they all did it through distance learning since they had already started working. Four of them attempted to study with a university

for a higher diploma, but only two out of the four managed to complete their courses. The other two were attempting a junior degree through correspondence, but they indicated that they dropped everything when they heard of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg B. Ed. Only one respondent had a junior degree which she also obtained through private studying.

The findings reveal that most teachers were content with their initial training, since their expectations were met, except for two who said that the lecturers had problems of disciplining them as learners (which did not necessarily have a negative impact on what they had to learn). They all expected to gain knowledge which they would deliver to the learners and the methods through which what was learned would be delivered to the students. None of the respondents was necessarily disappointed with their first teacher training since what they learned is what they had expected, but one respondent still thinks she missed some skills from her initial training. However, it was revealed that this respondent only realised she missed this from her original training after doing the B.Ed, as the following transcript illustrates:

Interviewer: *Is there anything you think you missed in your initial teacher training?*

Respondent: *Er, comparing XXX College with Natal, I can say I missed life experience, because they were just concerned about the knowledge, normally. They didn't er, bother to get us some skills that we do have, ja, they were only focusing on the content of the (XXX), (transcript 2 pp 5, 1999).*

None of the respondents were stranded for a job after their first training, and they all taught at primary schools except for the teachers who did their training in secondary education and therefore taught at a secondary school. It was revealed that all teachers who began teaching at primary level are still teaching at that level, and none of them has upgraded to teach at a higher level. The only exception was one respondent who started teaching at a secondary school, but got frustrated by the lack of discipline amongst learners which prevented her from doing her work as learners were not cooperative. After a year the teacher decided to leave secondary teaching and went to a primary school where she was later promoted as a head of department (HOD).

Despite the situation, promotions amongst respondents were involved (although in few cases) since the findings showed that at the time of the interviews two of the respondents were heads of

departments, while three were principals. The other remaining teachers were level one educators and had never been promoted since they joined the profession. None of the respondents had problems that could be related to their training when they first got to their work places, except for the fact that in two cases teachers had problems with the school principals who would not allow them to implement what they learned from the colleges. One of the respondents, who was frustrated in her work place after the initial training, indicated that what she learned from college was different from what was practiced in the school. So when she got to the school, the principal expected her to do what was done in the school, and she did not have the chance of practicing some of the good things she had learned at college.

All teachers got employed in the schools around their area, that is, in the townships or in the rural areas, and none of them worked in the town schools, including the one who was raised in the town. It was also found that five of the teachers were presently teaching in the schools where they first started working, and all of them were teaching at co-educational schools, as well as the two teachers who were teaching at a secondary school.

However, six of the teachers had taught in many schools and kept moving from one school to another whenever they needed to do that. It was three of these teachers who got promoted to the principalship along the way, and two got promoted to the position of the head of department. Two of these teachers indicated that they kept moving because they wanted to gain a wide experience of the ways in which different schools are run, while one did not do it voluntarily but kept on being transferred. Two other respondents indicated that they moved because they wanted to go with their families as the following extracts illustrate:

Respondent: *From my training I went to teach at Winterton for my year - no, I went to teach at Impendle first, and from then I went to Winterton, also as a teacher. And then Winterton was a farm school, it was too far, I only stayed there for a year, and decided to come back. Thereafter I got married. Then I went to teach at Dargle with my husband, now he was a teacher too. So he got a promotion as a Principal, for farm schools, he picked me so that we would be together. So we taught there. Then we stayed for some time, I can't remember - about two to three years, then we separated, said I must go away, so I went to Hermansberg as a teacher (XXX) part of Greytown.... Then I came back and I went to Balgowan, that is where I started with my*

principalship, (transcript 11 pp7, 1999).

Interviewer: *OK. So when you were teaching at your first school, you were not staying with your husband?*

Respondent: *No, no.*

Interviewer: *OK. He was already here?*

Respondent: *He was already here, mmm. I was so struggling, I wanted to come this side, but it wasn't so easy, (transcript 5 pp9,1999).*

Although the second extract does not show how and when the respondent joined the husband, they both show how valuable being with the family was to the teachers, such that they had to leave their own schools and joined their husbands. As seen earlier, women were not always entitled to positions of authority because of their instability at work, caused by their wanting to be together with their families, which is evidenced in the above extracts. However, one of the respondents eventually got a principalship post, and according to the findings, this happened after her separation with her husband. It is worth noting that two (out of three) of the women who were principals got the posts after their divorces from their husbands, probably indicating that these women were more stable then, as Maclean (1992) indicated that unmarried women tend to be more stable in their occupations than those who are married since, the latter focus more on family than occupational matters. As a result, women without partners prosper more career wise than those with partners.. Besides that, all respondents seemed to have been determined to improve their qualifications, despite the fact that they had to do it through correspondence. This brings the discussion to the next section which looks at the respondents' further studies.

4.5 FURTHER STUDYING: WHY TEACHERS ENROLLED FOR THE B. ED

Teachers had various reasons for studying for the B. Ed, but what seemed dominating was professional improvement and status reasons. All respondents gave professional improvement as a reason for studying the programme in addition to various other reasons. Teachers made reference to the educational changes in South Africa, such as the introduction of the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and Curriculum 2005, and said that they wanted to equip themselves for the challenges posed by the changes, so that they can get ready and become "responsive to their changing environments". Here is what two of them say in relation to the changing world around them:

Respondent: *In fact, I chose to study for a B.Ed. because I saw that life changes! So I needed to be responsive to my changing environment, and to move with the times. With the knowledge and skills I had, I could not cope, I could not solve all the problems I encountered. So my expectations were that I would be equipped with knowledge, skills, attitude, and that I would be empowered, so as to be able to cope in the changing world, (transcript 4pp12 1999).*

Respondent: *I wanted to cope with the changing environment. We - I saw that South Africa was now changing, they were changing, even education was now changing, so I saw that no, I must enrol for the B.Ed so that I can cope with the challenges. And the other thing, I wanted to be able to compete with other teachers from other countries, so that's why I wanted to equip myself, not to drag myself. And the other thing's money, (transcript 1 pp8, 1999).*

All other respondents had professional improvement as the reason why they enrolled for the B. Ed, and they also mention the recent changes in the country for which they had to equip themselves in order to meet their new challenges. Other than that respondents also mention that they studied for the B. Ed in order to have more money and to gain academic status, as also reflected in one of the above extracts.

Teachers were also asked for any particular reason why they studied for their B. Ed with the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg (UNP). It was assumed that they were attracted by the fact that UNP introduced B. Ed for people who had a four year teaching diploma, (M+4). That is, under normal circumstances only one of the eleven respondents would have been admitted into the B.Ed as a senior degree, since she was the only one with a junior degree, while the rest held higher diplomas. Prior to 1997 a Bachelors degree plus teaching experience served as requirements for the B. Ed. It was only two respondents however, who admitted that they studied with UNP because they wanted to take advantage of the changed admission requirements.

Six respondents stated that they studied with the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg (UNP) because of its location. These respondents indicated that they could not be far away from home because their children would suffer, since they had homes they could not just abandon, as reflected below in the two responses to why they studied with the UNP in particular:

Respondent: *Yes, I can't be away from home, and I had at that time when I did my B.Ed. I was staying with my sister's daughter, so I'm going with her, and she was doing her Std X, so I couldn't leave that home (transcript 11 pp8, 1999).*

Respondent: *No, I cannot say! Because I cannot compare it with any except that what was in my mind is that it's next to my home, as I was saying, it's just next to my home. That was most important to me that, all right, I'm no more going to do this thing. Yes, (transcript 3 pp 10, 1999).*

Four other respondents also indicated that UNP was closer to their homes and they would not think of any other institution since they had to be with their families the whole time. This shows that families meant so much to these respondents, such that they felt they could not be separated from them.

The status of the university, and good reputation are other reasons mentioned by the remaining five respondents for studying with UNP. This they got to know through their interaction with their friends who have been to the university before.

When asked about their expectations and what they gained from the course, respondents indicated that their expectations were generally met because they are now able to do things they could not do before. They stated that their teaching methods and their approach to teaching in general have changed as a result of the B. Ed. As indicated earlier that three of the subjects were principals, they showed that they have gained some management and administration skills which they never applied before and which they did not have the opportunity to acquire from their initial training. They said that their management skills have changed and they now have a better approach to the running of the schools, and as a result their expectations of the course have been met since they are now better teachers compared to what they were before.

The rest of the teachers who were two heads of department and level one educators also indicated that their expectations of the B. Ed were met, since their classroom practices have changed from the seating arrangement of learners in the classroom to the content of learning and methods of interaction amongst learners, as will be seen in the next section.

4.6 CHANGES IN TEACHING AFTER THE B. ED

As indicated above that teachers thought the B. Ed met their expectations, this section looks at the actual changes that teachers thought were prominent in their classrooms as a result of the B. Ed.

Respondents indicated that before they did the B. Ed, they mostly employed the teacher-centred approach, where they would always stand in front of the class telling students everything without actually making them participate. But after the B. Ed they realised that involving learners in their own learning is quite important. Almost all teachers have devised techniques of engaging learners in the learning sessions, more than before, as reflected below:

Respondent: *(Sigh) I can say before I did B.Ed I kind of had an attitude there is to stand in front, but I - I could see that the learners were so stiff, I used to teach and teach, and then afterwards come up with 5%, 10% - I didn't like that! I tried to find ways like louder, talk louder - but when I went to Natal University, I then realised, No, I must change my attitude, I must change the way - I must just change the whole classroom, the way they sit, as you see my arrangement. Then it started to - then it started to change ... (transcript 1 pp14, 1999).*

This is an instance of a teacher who made some changes in her classroom as a result of the B. Ed. As the respondent indicates, most other teachers also began with the physical arrangement of learners that enhances the interaction amongst learners themselves. Some teachers said that they engage learners in group work and this is what they never did before. None of the respondents focused more on learner interaction before they studied for the B. Ed. Almost all teachers indicated that the subjects they teach are very important, except for one who thought that her subject is useless because it does not have any examination. So when asked how they think their subjects should be taught, they all argued for interaction of learners, and the facilitating role of the teacher.

Other than that, respondents also made reference to the ways of assessing learners and said that they now use continuous or formative assessment and do not only rely on tests and examinations as it used to be the case before they did the B. Ed. Four respondents said that the changes were brought about by the content of the modules themselves which also helped them change their attitudes as reflected

below:

Respondent: *Yes, yes. Because in class I used to teach them English, when a child speaks Zulu, I used to say, "No, no, this is not a Zulu period, and I don't know Zulu. You're supposed to speak English!" Yes. But now when we are doing Lilt, they advise that if a child cannot express himself in a second language, just give him or her a chance to speak in his mother-tongue, (transcript 8pp10, 1999).*

Two respondents also indicated that they benefitted from some lecturers as well as from the interactions with other students (that is, the way the contact sessions were structured).

Generally, the B. Ed has changed the teachers' way of teaching and they are satisfied with this. The respondents have all made big changes in the physical structure of their classrooms and their teaching methods. To them, the B. Ed has been an eye-opener since before they did the course, they never saw any thing wrong with their old methods of teaching. But now they believe what they have acquired from the B. Ed is much more constructive, and they are quite content with that.

4.7 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS AT THE SCHOOL

From the foregoing analysis it is evident that for teachers, the B. Ed has been an enjoyable experience which has improved their classroom lives as well as their beliefs about teaching. However, respondents seemed to be frustrated by the different contexts in which they were working. The problems they come across sometimes prevent them from implementing new ideas they have acquired from the B.Ed and these problems are characterised by lack of cooperation from learners, colleagues, parents and community in general. Lack of sufficient resources and authority demands are other factors frustrating teachers and inhibiting them from doing what they would like to do.

At least two respondents indicated that they have problems with learners' attitudes towards the subject they teach. The subject is Afrikaans and in both cases learners do not like it because they say "it is the language of apartheid, the old subject for the Boers, so we don't like it". These were the actual words of the learners quoted by the frustrated respondent. So the new interactive methods that respondents have acquired from the B. Ed, just become useless in this regard since learners are not

always willing to participate during the Afrikaans lessons. The two teachers were the only Afrikaans teachers amongst the subjects, and they encountered the same attitude problem.

Teachers also indicated that they are mainly frustrated by lack of cooperation from parents and community in general. Four of the respondents who teach in the rural areas had problems with the parents who did not want to participate in the education of their children. Respondents indicated that what they have learned about OBE, from one of the B. Ed modules, is that parents are very important stakeholders in education and should be given the opportunity to participate in their children's education. Now what frustrates them is that parents in the rural areas are so poor and so illiterate that most of the things teachers say do not make sense to them.

The lack of understanding from the parents leads to the community's lack of sense of ownership of the school, such that they vandalise the school property that is used by their very children. In one case, the teacher who was a principal even had to keep some property at her own place. The following extracts depict the situation in some of the schools.

Respondent: *There are many circumstances, especially the uproar about, not by the teachers themselves, not the kids, but by the community. There are so many things that we'd love, for instance I've got this material, I've got the two computers, five overhead projectors, a TV and a VCR.*

Interviewer: *Mmm-hmm, you have them at the school?*

Respondent: *I have them here in my home, I can't take them to school, because of vandalism, (transcript 6 pp16, 1999).*

Respondent: *Ja, like the school that I'm in, so it's in the rural area, deep rural, and it's so vandalized, there are not doors, no windows, just - it's just there - and it's so hard to teach a child who's just shivering, it's so hard to paste your good things on the wall, because the other day we won't find it. So it's very hard. We have to take things to the people outside, if we want to keep it safe, (transcript 5pp 1999).*

Respondent: *They even take the cardboard - they just cut them and take them, to do their wardrobes! Take the chairs and tables to their homes, even desks, (transcript 5pp19 1999).*

It is obviously a serious problem when the school cannot make use of such good resources which are already in the school's possession, because of the community's lack of cooperation. As the

respondent indicated above that chairs and desks are being stolen, it therefore becomes difficult for teachers to work when children do not even have chairs to sit on, and are shivering because of the cold wind coming through broken windows panes.

Lack of resources becomes another factor that prevents teachers from implementing some of their ideas, although this is not always brought about by vandalism. Two respondents indicated that their schools are poor and have very few classrooms which get so crowded that they are not able to work properly.

Respondents also indicated that they were frustrated by lack of cooperation from colleagues. The following extracts show how:

Respondent: *Here at work mainly? Ja, there are some of the things. Like now, the working place is somehow not a comfortable place. When you're trying to do something like innovations, maybe taking children to do something different with them, some of the teachers refuse with their children, and when it's time for extramural activities there are those teachers ja who can refuse with their children, then maybe find that the teacher will be leaving the children late, then you start accusing the children, ja. Because maybe - I don't know what - maybe the way - what is their feeling when they did that? Ja, (transcript 10pp15, 1999).*

Respondent: *No, I can't suggest that. I may suggest by teachers - but teachers don't want to work cooperating, they don't. And the other thing, teachers do not want to accept the changes, like my principal, he is so conservative! You know, he sort of hate these changes, the OBE. You know, when - whatever things that pertain to OBE, he says, Oh, you, Mrs Xaba, she knows all about OBE! How can I know all?? (laughter). So, eh, teachers are so negative, ja, (transcript 5pp 21, 1999).*

The last excerpt shows how the authority is also frustrating due to the attitude they have towards changes. The management of the schools also gives teachers problems in terms of what teachers may want to implement. One respondent indicated that it really becomes difficult for her because the management does not allow for change to happen in the school. Communication is only top down and therefore their ideas and suggestions as teachers are not listened to.

Thus, three respondents were frustrated by their management which does not work cooperatively with the teachers, while the rest had their problems ranging from learners and colleagues' attitude, to lack of community involvement that results in the destruction of the schools' properties. Lack of sense of ownership amongst the community members is seen here, which is probably caused by the fact that since the community is mostly illiterate people, school does not necessarily mean much to them and that is why they cannot protect it.

4.8 HARDSHIPS EXPERIENCED DURING THE B. ED

Despite the fact teachers thought the B. Ed has been a worthwhile experience, they encountered a lot of difficulties that ranged from understanding the modules themselves to paying their tuition fees. Respondents experienced a lot of different problems, though what appeared as problems to some was not necessarily so with others, as will be seen. There was an assumption that hardships would be severe for women due to the requirements to juggle work and reproductive roles, since the B. Ed is a part-time degree programme.

Seven respondents complained about too much work and too little time. Since they were part-timers, teachers had too much work because other than the demands that were placed upon them by their B.Ed, they still had their work from the schools where they had to mark exams and prepare for their lessons and other work related things. To illustrate this, the extract below shows one of these subjects' response when asked about the main difficulties experienced while she was studying for the B. Ed:

Respondent: *The way - the assignments - it was the time. I had to adjust myself, I had a responsibility at school, responsibility at home, and I had to see my - I had to see that I do my work so I had some difficulties. And the way they taught us, they were - they were teaching us in a different way. So I had to adjust myself to the new ways of teaching. So these were the difficulties. And I tried to cope eventually, (transcript1 pp 18, 1999).*

The transcript above also reveals the fact that teachers had responsibilities at home to which they had to attend. So they had to do a lot of adjusting so that everything fits in their schedule, and it was not very easy according to the respondent. Other respondents who complained about too much work also

indicated the fact that they still needed to create time for the family in addition to every thing, and most of the time they had to sacrifice time to be with their children.

The complaint about time does not only centre around school work, but some teachers also indicated that they had to sacrifice their leisure time because of their commitment to the programme. One respondent indicated that she had to sacrifice time for family, friends and funerals because there was too much work to do.

The problem of finances was also mentioned by the respondents, although it was surprisingly experienced by quite a small number of subjects. It was assumed that teachers would have had financial problems since none of them had any financial assistance, and they had families to take care of. However, it was only three subjects who had financial problems and the rest were doing quite well. One of these respondents indicated that the problems she had were so serious that she thought of withdrawing from the programme, but she got some assistance. As indicated earlier that problems did not apply to subjects in the same way, the following transcript depicts how one respondent considered her financial problem:

Interviewer: *You never had any financial problems?*

Respondent: *When I had a financial problem, I just go along, alone. I think perhaps to solve the problem, I never have problems, because they're always around you. If in fact I find that I can't pay, I just go along. And pay it later on, (transcript 4 pp25, 1999).*

One other problem relating to the B. Ed that troubled more than half of the respondents is the issue of transport to and from the learning centres. More than half of the respondents did not have their own cars and they were coming from far off places. As a result, they encountered problems in trying to secure reliable transport, and they were consequently either late for their classes or late to arrive back home since they relied on public transport.

However, the general findings show that teachers did not have as many problems as it was anticipated. Most of them according to what they said, did not get out of their way to make special arrangements for their families while they were out to study. In fact, it appeared to be quite natural

to them to have the pressures of the household chores and as a result, they did not seem to perceive the pressure of household responsibility as a problem, as reflected below:

Respondent: *Well, to me as a woman? Well, since we were in the last year, we were both studying, so even if we had the same assignment, it was we did Curriculum Studies together, but I - that didn't excuse me to do my job at home, because I had to clean my room, and to cook, and he had to sit down and do his job there. Well, it was unfair, but I understand, that was my job.*

Interviewer: *You took it as part of your role?*

Respondent: *And I had to take care of the children, but he was doing his work. His assignment, (transcript 5 pp23-24, 1999).*

This reflects a typical woman who understands her duty as taking care of the household chores, and this finding generally shows a woman who has a traditional outlook towards herself. The respondent admits that this was unfair, and that means she is aware that she is at a disadvantaged position. But she was prepared to play along because she believes it is her job. This is what makes empowering others generally difficult, because the disadvantaged have to be shown the ways in which they are disadvantaged before they see it as relevant, and this is not easy. This point above, also strengthens the point often made that women's academic achievements are lower because of scanty time spent on task; that women high performers work harder than their male counterparts, (Hall 1996).

When relating problems which they think were peculiar to them as women, respondents mostly talked about their responsibilities in the home. Although to some of them it appeared to be quite natural for a woman to have such duties as has been indicated above, they still made reference to it and indicated that those were problems they would not have encountered if they were not studying. However, it was an unexpected minority of only three of the subjects who pointed this issue out as one of the problems they encountered and only one respondent felt that studying for the B. Ed has been too much for her as reflected below:

Respondent: *Yes. They were. Because I would have failed! Using my phone over night, call - cross-nighting - yes. And you see, my - my daughter said, one said to me, mother but you're a teacher, but you can't help me! You cannot - you cannot! When you say - come - when he comes with work and I say, "Oh, I'm still busy with my assignment" - you can't concentrate to your children. Perhaps those who are - I can understand I'm a hard worker, perhaps those who are better I think can cope with their children. Myself, I couldn't, I*

couldn't. And this thing, studying - it became a battle to me. But I - because I wanted it! I had to sacrifice! (transcript 3 pp21, 1999).

This reflects a true picture of a woman who was really frustrated by studying, and who felt that it took a lot of her family time.

The issue of problems being perceived differently by respondents also extended to the issue of personal problems that are particularly related to women. When asked about any special problems relating to them as women during their B. Ed studies, one respondent replied “no”, yet she indicated that she had some pregnancy complications which led to a caesarian operation and was not able to attend tutorial sessions for about three months. Although this appears to be more of a problem experienced because the subject is a woman, it still depicts a situation of people whose perception of a problem is different. This shows that some women consider such problems as so much part of their life that they do not perceive them as problems any more.

Getting back to the issue of respondents having to make special arrangements for their families during their study, it was only three teachers, who made special arrangements for their children and families in general. They had to hire maids during their time of study, and one of the respondents found the services of the maid redundant after the period of study. For the other three respondents though, this was not necessary because their parents were there for all the support they needed, and these were those teachers who were still living with their families of birth. With the other seven respondents, four already had maids in their homes even before they started studying, and the remaining three never felt a need for a helper since they were living with children old enough to take care of themselves.

From there, teachers shared their individual personal problems, but which nonetheless, they felt were peculiar to them as women. These included sicknesses and other female factors such as pregnancy and nursing the young ones. At least two respondents had pregnancy problems during their B. Ed study, but only one admitted it was a problem.

However, in spite of all the hardships they went through, none of the respondents regrets having done the B. Ed. They all agreed that the course was intrinsically fulfilling. Despite their ages, six of the

respondents are positive that they still want to study further although they all indicated they need a break, while four of the remaining said that their going back to studying is conditional on factors like finances and time being available. One of them said she can only study further if it is something different, while the other said she relied so much on her study group, that she will only go back to studying provided she has that particular group with her, (which is highly unlikely). The last respondent showed that her main problem was the difficulty of the study material, and she therefore feels reluctant because she was really struggling to understand it.

Thus, respondents did come across a number of problems in studying for the B. Ed, but they all found ways to solve their problems. Most of them seemed to have been in control and it was entirely up to them to solve their own problems. They all find the B. Ed to have been very informing. The issue of problems not being interpreted in the same way and the implications for that will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.9 TEACHING AND GENDER RELATIONS

There seems to be an assumption that teaching as a profession has some element of femininity. The assumption arises out of the belief that since teaching deals basically with children, and especially children at low levels, women who are by nature caretakers of children, can do this job cheaply and well, (Spencer 1997). As the theory of feminism informs this study, it was found quite relevant to seek the teachers' views on gender relations with regard to teaching.

The findings of the study show that there was a great emphasis put on the love that subjects felt towards working particularly with young children, which was evidenced earlier as one of the reasons why respondents joined the teaching profession. The passion for young children that was reflected by the subjects' responses on why they became teachers was thought to have some impact on the notion of a female dominated teaching force at low levels. This notion was also supported by the fact that a majority of nine out of eleven subjects, were teaching at primary schools, while the remaining two taught at one secondary school.

At least two teachers showed that they had always associated primary teaching with women because of their motherly nature. These respondents argued that mothers have a ‘soft spot’ that men do not have, and that women tolerate little kids better whereas men can only handle grown up children. The teachers’ responses also reflected the fact that respondents themselves taught at primary schools because they feel that is where they belong as female teachers. There is also the assumption that discipline problems involving older children are better handled by male teachers who are physically stronger than their female counterparts. As indicated earlier, one female teacher left secondary teaching for a primary school because of the same discipline problem.

This was further supported by the fact that from the field notes collected, all the nine primary schools that were visited, were dominated by female teaching staff and in some cases there were no males at all. The following table illustrates the number of male and female teachers per school:

Table 3: Distribution of number of teachers by gender per school

School	Female Teachers	Male Teachers	Total
A	16	6	22
B	7	3	10
C	25	0	25
D	23	0	23
E	14	0	14
F	10	5	15
G	22	0	22
H	18	15	33
I	21	14	35
J	8	29	37
TOTAL	164	72	236

It is worth noting that the only high school (school J) that was visited had thirty-seven teachers all in all, but only eight of them were women as shown above. It may also be interesting to note again

that five of the above illustrated schools (school A, C, D, E, G), were headed by women and four of them were those in which there were no male teachers at all as the table depicts. School 'H' and 'I' had bigger numbers of male staff because they combined both primary and secondary schools. Generally therefore, this sample of teachers come from schools where the majority of the teachers were females (164 or 69%), and only 72 (31%) were males. However, only 5 (2%) of them were female principals, a factor of under representation with respect to gender. Without information on the qualifications and teaching experience of the male counterparts in the relevant schools, the issue of inequality in promotion to the principalship would be invalid, but an assumption can be made that issues of the past policy may have worked to limit these teachers' chances for promotion, as discussed earlier.

Despite the above situation, when they were asked whether they regarded teaching as a man's or woman's job, six respondents said they looked at it as both men's and women's job for both levels. Three of them said that teaching is for women only, while two said primary teaching is for women and higher level teaching is for men. The view that teaching is for both men and women at all levels was further supported by what respondents do in the schools in order to promote gender equality especially in their classrooms.

This shows that these teachers are gender sensitive, and as the SACE Code of Conduct suggests, gender equality is important to them. As indicated earlier that respondents see instilling values into learners as one role they play as parent-teachers, all respondents agreed that they treat learners equally and that they also promote equality through a number of different ways. Seven respondents said they promote gender equality by equal sharing of duties between boys and girls, while one works on the seating arrangement in the classroom such that boys and girls are mixed, and the remaining three keep emphasising to them that boys are not superior to girls but they are equal.

Overall, it is evident that the findings reveal some imbalances with regard to the positions held by men and women in the teaching profession. However, respondents seemed to believe that men and women have equal chances since they are aware of the gender equality and equity issues as they try to promote them in their own classrooms.

4.10 HOW TEACHERS VIEW THEMSELVES AS WOMEN

When asked about what they consider to be their roles and responsibilities as female teachers, most respondents said they see themselves as mothers whose job does not end in teaching the subject matter of the school, but extends to mothering the children, the kind of service learners cannot get from male teachers, respondents believe. In response to the question referred to above, seven of the women saw their roles more as parents than just teachers, and therefore their responsibility as that of guidance and counselling, as the excerpts below suggest:

Respondent: I do help them as a parent, and sometimes I add to them as if I'm not a teacher, just a mother. Even if it's somebody, if one of the learners have done something wrong, I just call him aside, and then I talk to him or her as a parent! (transcript 7 pp9, 1999).

Respondent: My role? I think, as a teacher, most important, when I'm teaching in this smaller school, with these small kids, I think I have to help them with the basic reading/writing, right, all this work for school. And then as a teacher, and I have to be a mother, a parent, where you advise them, you help them here and there. You comfort them sometimes, if there's the need. Er ... then as a leader, we have to allow people who come for help, yes, in the community! Try to explain things, yes, (transcript 3pp11, 1999).

Teachers also see themselves as very tolerant and patient people as they believe they have the ability to withstand the behaviour of the young children, which they believe men do not have time for.

Teachers further see themselves as role models to pupils and as a result they believe they are responsible for the intellectual growth of the pupils. The following transcripts illustrate how teachers think they should play their role as people from whom learners should copy.

Respondent: I think my role is to be a role model to the pupils, because the pupils are very observant, in whatever thing I do, I must make sure that when the pupils see me, or when they copy, they copy the right thing. They say well, this is the teacher, I would like to be one day! And then I think I'm responsible for the life - I mean, for the lives of the pupils, not the physical lives, but the intellectual lives of the pupils. That's why I used to try to study hard to collect some information from somewhere else rather than the text book, so that I help these people. But I also think that in motivation is more important, and it's my responsibility to motivate the pupils and to listen to them in

whatever way they come, (transcript 7 pp9, 1999).

Respondent: *Well, I think I'm responsible for the education of the learners that I teach, because as it is, I should play a role. They have to learn something from me, other than what I tell them. So er, as it is now, it is said that you should not give them corporal punishment, so I must make sure that they are disciplined, you know. The way maybe I teach them can discipline them, maybe the way I dress, the way I talk to them, can discipline them. So whatever I say or do, I should think that I'm the role player, so they should see good things from me. Ja. So, I'm a responsible person, yes, (transcript5 pp12, 1999).*

Teachers also see themselves as leaders, and this role of leadership does not only end at the school level, but also extends to the community in general. One respondent indicated that she saw her role as a leader who leads learners, colleagues and the community.

When asked about the difference between the role played by men and women in the school and in the community in general, respondents did not necessarily see the difference since they showed that there is no line of demarcation between what men and women should do. On the contrary, teachers felt that there are things that can only be handled by women which could relate to either boys or girls, as the following excerpt illustrates:

Respondent: *.... I think that women have more to play than a man. In the sense that, in that er, I don't see men being good counsellors, especially being a woman to her - there are things that we as Africans believe a man cannot say, even if he's fond of the children, whereas a woman is free to say anything, even in front of a boy, I can talk, we can tell it now. For instance, when a child receives her -is menstruating, a man cannot counsel that child, cannot help that child. But with us they feel free, and even if a boy had a problem, it's fairly good to tell a boy, not, this is this, and this is what's going to happen, (transcript 11 pp10, 1999).*

Some teachers also felt that although men's and women's roles should not necessarily differ, women have more of the love that learners need than the one that men can give. Some respondents felt that women can handle both boys' and girls' emotional problems better than men do, and therefore practically the role that female teachers play in the school is much more significant than that of male teachers.

Nonetheless, the majority of responses still reflected the issue of equality, that is equal exposure to life issues which does not necessarily empower any gender group, and this further enhances the respondents' belief that men and women should have equal responsibilities. However, this is not what appeared to be happening. The respondents did not seem to be sharing equal roles with men as they claim, since they indicated that taking care of the domestic responsibilities is their role as women, and it is not a man's duty according to them. Respondents say that they believe that even in the society in general, men and women should play equal roles. But they also indicated that a woman should always be a woman in the sense that she should take care of the family, and at this point it was felt that there was a gap between what they believe in and what they practice. Thus, although the term equality was used, the sense one gets is of equity; for certain roles women are better than men, and these women take that for granted.

In an attempt to understand how they perceive themselves as female educators, respondents were further prompted to say more about themselves in relation to men. To a large extent women were found to have outgrown a traditional outlook towards themselves that leaves them as mere housekeepers since they completely disputed the traditional saying that "a woman's place is in the kitchen". This was detected from their responses which reflected that this is an old outdated way of looking at a woman which does not apply any more. Eight of the respondents refuted the saying, while the remaining three admitted that "partly" women still belong in the kitchen. The following extracts not only show what women said about the issue, but also reflect how some of them strongly felt about it:

Respondent: *Noooo! I don't think the women's - it's in the kitchen - it's up to train individually. We must - you must lift your head up, you must try to explore. Don't take it that OK, because they've said the role of you to become a woman in the kitchen, so you must just sit down, no - you must try to face the challenges, and show them that you can make what the men can do. (transcript1 pp11).*

Respondent: *No, I don't believe in that. Maybe that thing can refer that in the past, yes, but now the present woman is no more in the kitchen. So expensive ..., (transcript 2 pp9).*

Respondent: *No. Not - in these days it's not like that. Ja. Because women are now engineers - they can do - they are capable of doing things, because we've had*

womens here in - like in England, you remember Margaret Thatcher, yes, was a President, and it's not in the kitchen as such - we can do the things that can be done by men. Ja, (transcript 10 pp10)

Respondent: No, not now!

Interviewer: Not now?

Respondent: But we used to. It's not easy to change, because there are still that opinion - still that system we're just forcing them, (transcript 3pp12).

Respondent: No, not at all. A woman's place is in the house, and out in the community, (transcript 4 pp 15).

From the last three excerpts it is evident that this was an old perception which women of today do not believe in. However it is also evident in some excerpts that however liberated women may think they are, they are still more responsible in the house than men are. One more extract which clearly reflects that, is of a respondent who admits that women are not completely out of the kitchen:

Respondent: Well, well, partly, it's in the kitchen, but not that it's only in the kitchen. There are lots of things that women should do in the outside. As it is now, we have powers equal to men, yes. There are a lot of things that you should do, not that you should only stay in the kitchen and do those kitchen things now. There are lots of things, we should be creative, (transcript 5 pp 13).

Respondents evidently see women as men's equals, but according to the findings to some extent they still see a woman's role in the kitchen, since they do not give clear cut "no" answers to whether they agree with the saying or not. Nonetheless, what these women appear to be arguing for, is the fact that "women's place is not *only* in the kitchen", as it probably used to be the case in the past. This is also supported by the fact that as has been seen, most women are still prepared to do what has been known as their duty in the house. This was reflected through the way they accepted their role of taking care of the household chores, such as cleaning the house, cooking and taking care of children, without considering themselves as supplementary wage earners.

Thus, theoretically, women believe that they are free from the traditional perception that their responsibilities are more in the house than men's. But practically they still give more attention to the domestic roles and they seem to be quite comfortable with it.

4.11 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Generally, the findings revealed that respondents' backgrounds played crucial roles in the respondents' choice of careers. The historical background they all share as black South African women contributed in their decisions to become teachers since they appeared to have been exposed to teaching and nursing as the only available occupations they could follow as black women. Various family backgrounds such as poverty, low qualifications and coming from disadvantaged areas were also very influential on the respondents' choice of career.

Studying for the B. Ed (which they all did for professional improvement), was a worthwhile experience out of which the respondents' approach to teaching has changed for the better. This happened in spite of the problems that respondents encountered. These included insufficient finances and time due to the work loads, since they all were part-time students. Although some respondents were frustrated by the practical situations in the schools, they were determined to serve their respective communities as they believed they had more to offer as people who are not just teachers, but mothers of the society in general.

Findings also revealed that respondents take family and the roles they play in the families as women very seriously. This was reflected by the fact that all respondents had at least one child, and that they believe that time should be created for attending to family matters such as child bearing and child rearing. Respondents appeared to have a traditional outlook towards themselves since they believed that it is their role as women to take care of the household responsibilities. However, they did not consider themselves as supplementary wage earners as one would anticipate with women who see their role more in the house than outside. Rather, respondents were mostly breadwinners since most of them were not married and therefore depended on their own income to pay for their own and their children's education, and for other expenses.

Respondents were found to be mostly teaching in the primary schools because they believe that was where they belong due to their motherly nature. They put emphasis on the love to work with younger children so that they can give them the love and care that men cannot give. This proved further the fact that these women consider themselves more as mothers than as mere teachers. Although they do

not necessarily agree that their roles should be different from those of men's, a contradiction was sensed where they said that they play a more important role than that of men inside and outside the school, in spite of their saying that roles should not differ according to gender.

The purpose of this chapter has been to present the results of the analysis of the interview data collected on the background details and the respondents' views on teaching and gender relations. The research has revealed some important issues with regard to the respondents' backgrounds and what prompted them to join the teaching profession. Some gender aspects relating to the profession were also revealed as well as the way the respondents generally look at themselves as teachers and as women. What these findings mean to this research is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter draws together the various results presented in the previous chapter. The discussion of these results is organised on the basis of the research theoretical framework of feminism which is outlined in chapters one and three. The results are compared with findings of other studies already undertaken on different aspects of the background information, teaching as a career, problems encountered in the learning and teaching process and the involvement of gender relations in the teaching profession.

5.2 TEACHERS' BACKGROUNDS AND THEIR INFLUENCES ON THE TEACHING CAREER

The findings from the respondents' backgrounds, as has been indicated in the foregoing chapter, show that the respondents' backgrounds were generally very influential in the respondents' choice of career. The assumption that respondents' backgrounds determined the respondents' choice of career to a large extent, was proved valid. These women either grew up in the family of teachers, or got inspired by their teachers in their early school experiences. Previous teaching experiences also played a role in helping the teachers develop an image of themselves as teachers. In the study conducted by Knowles (in Goodson, 1992) on what influenced teacher role identity, the three items mentioned above were found to be dominant in addition to the childhood experiences in general.

Family background naturally proved to have been important in the early stages of career development. This was also found by Bullough (in Biddle, 1992), who believes that beliefs and early experiences of teaching are intimately linked. Thus, teachers who have always believed in teaching as their first choice career, would find it difficult to change, as compared to those who joined because they did not have any other option. Factors such as poverty, lack of exposure to other occupations and parental

influence in terms of what parents expect from children played a big role in this regard. Hence, Bullough quotes Pajares who argues that “early experiences strongly influence final judgements, which become theories or beliefs highly resistant to change”, (p.96). This was confirmed by three respondents in this study who indicated that they would not pursue a career in teaching if they were to study further, and two of these were the teachers who joined teaching because the parents were poor, while the other one was directly influenced by her father who was a teacher. These factors were found to have played a big role in determining teaching as a career for women since most of them had very limited choices due to their historical background as outlined in the background to this study in chapter one.

As indicated above, the issue of poverty was found to be another factor that drove some of the women into the profession. A significant percentage of the respondents were raised in poor rural households and to them a teaching career meant avoiding the deprivations of their poor rural environments. Thus, earning a living became more of a priority than the means through which this happened, and teaching was therefore seen as an “instrumental means to an end, which may be a second choice means to attaining qualifications or salaried status,” (Jessop, 1996: 146). Lortie, (1975) found that “...teaching has attracted many persons who have undergone the uncertainties and deprivations of lower and working- class life”, (p.13). The findings of this study are in line with such observations.

The family as a background institution was not only significant in influencing children to follow a particular career, but also in terms of the support in general. Ball and Goodson (1992) found from their own study that parents were supportive of their own children’s studying even when they themselves were not educated, as it was also revealed in this study. In their study, Ball and Goodson found that a very low percentage of the respondents’ parents were educated and had formal employment, and similarly in this study the majority of parents did not have formal employment because of lack of proper education. In some families, the respondent was the only one educated, while some respondents’ siblings and parents were all illiterate. In her study conducted to find out what prompted some women to become heads of schools, Hall (1996) also found that a family which is characterised by positive relationships with parents and siblings had been very influential. The point that is being made here is that despite the fact that most parents were illiterate, almost all of them

were supportive of their children's education. What was found striking about this finding is that it was a very small percentage of the educated parents who were mothers. Thus all in all, it was only two mothers who had formal employment. The other two who were qualified nurses decided to stop working after marriage and became dependent on their husbands. Blackmore and Kenway (1993) in their study, also found that since women have different attributes, they entered teaching as an extension of their nurturing role, to complement and support male activities. This suggests that these women who decided not to work after marriage, looked at themselves as women whose work is much more important in the house (so that they could remain at home while their husbands go out to work) than out in the public as compared to men. Hence, they saw themselves as supplementary wage earners who did not necessarily have to work while their male partners were working. That women are thus regarded in the labour market, seems supported by the findings of this study with respect to their (respondents') mothers.

Edigheji (1999) quotes Lemmer, who argues that an understanding of women's roles should be located within cultural and social institutions of a particular society. When relating to the South African context she makes reference to the "conjugal attitudes towards women's role", where men are regarded as the household head and the breadwinner of the family. This attitude automatically entitles men to higher wages and better conditions of service, and what women do is therefore seen as secondary. Thus, the respondents' mothers' situations could be argued to have been informed by this understanding.

Although it may seem natural that what mothers do often seems right to daughters, this has not been the case with the respondents in this study, since they did not join teaching to provide a second income as Ball and Goodson (1992) indicated, but they were the providers of "the" income, in most cases. One concludes therefore that the traditional perception about women as supplementary wage earners is probably fading out, and women are seeing themselves as men's equals in terms of earning a living. Lendi (in Lessing, 1994) argues that today's most able girls seem to be going for other careers which were not always accessible to them, but were there for boys. The assumption that women join teaching because of its compatibility with marriage and womanhood also received very little support in this study, since it was only two respondents who indicated that they joined teaching so that they could work with children.

On factors that influenced the teachers' career choice in general, different reasons were given by the respondents. Some of these teachers chose teaching as a first choice career, while to some teaching was a second or even a third choice. However, to these teachers a second choice did not necessarily mean second rate as Jessop (1996) also found from her study. Teachers all seemed committed and acknowledged intrinsic fulfillment, even though three of them indicated that they would not pursue a teaching career if they were to study further. These were the respondents who did not choose teaching as their first choice career. It was interesting to find that teachers who were forced into the teaching career by certain circumstances seemed to have developed the love for teaching. However, the assertion made by Hall (1996), that women now have their chances of entering any profession or career of their choice, but they still cluster in the teaching profession, had very little support in the study. Looking at the ages of the respondents, it was concluded that the pre-1994 South African politics played a big role in determining the black women's teaching careers (as has been seen in chapter one), since none of the respondents was below the age of thirty. It is concluded that it is probable that younger women now do make use of a vast range of the career opportunities they have, and do not flock to teaching as was the case in the former South Africa. This is supported by what Lendi (in Lessing 1999) says in the previous paragraph. For these respondents, lower levels of schooling may have played a part in their ending up in the teaching occupation.

5.3 GENDER RELATIONS AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION

The major contradiction found in the study is that the women were seen to be serving to perpetuate the traditional gender roles, although they do not perceive gender role perpetuation as a continuation of gender inequality, (Randall 1999). Women saw the division of gender roles in the society as a legitimate exercise on the one hand, yet on the other hand they claimed that roles should not necessarily differ according to gender. Measor and Sikes (1992) argue that feminist writers do not accept gender divisions as natural, but they acknowledge that most of the societies prescribe different activities and characteristics for their males and females which may come as natural to the people involved. The way women understand themselves and their roles as teachers in the schools and as mothers in the homes seems to be different from what they practice, and one would argue that it is more in line with what society expects from them. It is this conception that feminists argue makes it difficult to conscientise them of the gender inequalities when they do not see anything wrong with

what they are doing, (Arnot, in Stone, 1994). This is critical because failure makes advocacy lack the backing of those affected. For women to be empowered to liberate themselves, they have to acknowledge the contradictory and sometimes antagonistic nature of their productive and reproductive roles. Without this on their part, advocacy will remain an external force working to improve the status of women, but without their commitment or requisite legitimacy.

To some extent the women believed that they were better than men when it comes to guiding children both in the school and in the home. They believe they relate to children in a way that men cannot, and as a result they are more suited to teaching especially young people than men are. This was implied from their responses, but at the same time they claimed that men's and women's roles should not be different since men also have to play the paternity role. They also believe that they do not live in the "past world" where the woman's place was considered to be more in the house than out in the public. Contrary to this, was their assertion that most of their time was taken up by family related matters. The irony of this whole perception is that as Lather (in Stone, 1994) puts it, women are dominant in relations of temporary inequality such as parent and teacher, where adult power is used to foster the development of the initial disparity. Thus, women believe they are powerful in these areas (of parenting and teaching), whereas the feminist perspective provides a perception that they are submissive to permanent unequal relations where power is used to cement dominant dynamics and to rationalise the need for continued inequality, (Gillian, 1982 in Stone, 1994). Blackmore and Kenway (1993) argue that:

the science of evolutionary theory of the nineteenth century considered women to be psychologically, physically and cognitively different from men, thus reinforcing gender stereotypes and rationalising the complementarity of men's dominance in the public sphere, (p.71).

Women are therefore seen to be maintaining the status quo while they claim to be changing the society. Lather (in Stone, 1994) also asserts that:

To the degree women teachers serve as transmitters of cultural norms rather than cultural transformers, they, like mothers, find themselves caught in the contradiction of perpetuating their own oppression, (p.245).

Thus, it can be argued that women can be powerful as teachers, but are disempowered as women, since they are seen to be playing along with the traditional conception of gendered roles.

The contradiction in the study was also found within the school situation itself, where women are in the majority of the teaching force, but most positions of authority and responsibility are occupied by men. The results in this study showed an overwhelming difference in the numbers of women in headship positions being represented by 2% only, whereas women constituted the majority of 69% of the teachers who were in the schools from which the sample of the research was taken. The literature reviewed in chapter two, provides an explanation for the dominance of female teachers at the primary school level, and the findings of this study serve to confirm this, since women appear to have had a limited range of choices for careers due to low education levels.

Sikes et al (1985) say that this under representation of women is not only found in the educational spheres, but also in the parliaments of many countries where women could be involved in decision making at national and international levels but rarely in large numbers. Kearney (1981) says that women find it more difficult than men to follow a career which enables them to reach executive status. This happens because the years that women use to build a career are those of child bearing and family responsibilities. The results of this study prove this assumption valid since respondents mostly complained that the time that could have been spent with their families was taken up by studying during their B. Ed study. This attitude also confirmed the suspicion that women give family matters a priority. Ball and Goodson (1994) argue that:

The concept of career in teaching is particularly problematic for women teachers. Women teachers' careers are constructed in both objective and subjective senses, in radically different ways from those of male careers. And these deviant constructions often severely disadvantaged the women in the competition for promotion in the schools, (p.22).

This shows that women have different patterns of career mobility affected by their reproductive nature which leads to “reduced promotional prospects,” and they therefore experience the phases of the teaching career in a different way from men, (Ball and Goodson ,1994). Acker (1984) further supports this by saying that married female students, especially those with children, are thought to suffer from impossible demands on their time and energy from the expectation that the husband’s career will have priority in case of conflict. The respondent who admitted she allowed her husband to continue with his studies while she was busy cooking and taking care of children is a typical example of a woman who perpetuates the traditional gender roles. She considered this to be her responsibility and did not particularly see anything wrong with it. It can be concluded from this discussion that the women value their womanhood and perceive themselves traditionally, which outlook ironically puts them back into the situation they believe they have outgrown. Randall (1999) says that this is a blind acceptance of gender inequality role perpetuation. Hence, so far as the women interviewed are concerned, the major impression was that men and women do not share equal roles and responsibilities in the society, and that the woman’s place will always be in the house. A mismatch between belief and actualisation arose here and context plays a significant role, (Randall, 1999). Until women acknowledge such contradictions, change will be difficult to effect.

5.4 TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF PROBLEMS

Given the history of black teacher education as briefly outlined in chapter one, it was assumed that teachers had and continue to experience many problems during their studies and in their work places. However, it was discovered that women perceive problems differently in the sense that what appears to be a problem to one may not necessarily be so to another. The problems that respondents identified in connection with their work places were quite general while those they related to their studying the B. Ed were mostly personal.

Despite the fact that the schools where most of the women worked were mostly headed by men, they did not appear to have experienced any gender related problems as has been anticipated. It became clear from the women’s contextual problems that, to them a problem becomes something beyond their power to deal with. For instance, the attitude that learners have towards a certain subject was a problem that teachers did not know how to deal with. Another was lack of cooperation from

stakeholders which inhibited the teacher's implementation of some useful ideas. These are clearly external problems which involve other people and towards which the teachers felt powerless. The identified problems were frustrating the teachers' daily attempts to implement what was necessary. This obviously interferes with the learning and teaching process as it was also revealed by (Goodlad 1984). He says that when teachers find themselves restrained and inhibited by problems in the school that appear not to be within their control, it is reasonable to expect frustration and dissatisfaction to set in. This constrains teacher effectiveness and exacerbates the very problems frustrating teachers. Hence, the quality of education declines.

The fact that there was no mention of discipline problems from the learners, suggests to the researcher that the women felt comfortable with working with the smaller children, as love for children was another influence towards joining teaching. The experience of one teacher who left secondary teaching for a primary school due to discipline problems confirms the comfort enjoyed by women in the lower levels of the school system pyramid. Delamont and Coffey (in Biddle, 1996) quote Cunnison, who describes the contradictory position of women in the school setting. This contradiction as has been seen earlier actually lies with the fact that women dominate the teaching force and may seem to have authority in their classrooms, but beyond that they are actually very powerless since most positions of authority are held by men who are thought to be able to discipline bigger boys. Deem (1978) says that:

Whereas the task of teaching young children is thought to be mainly concerned with inculcating acceptable standards of behaviour, teaching basic skills and encouraging pupils to accept the value of learning, the task of teaching older children is of pupils and evaluation of what has been learnt, (p.10).

Deem's original concern was to draw a distinction between a primary and a secondary teacher and this approach implicitly carries along the message that for disciplinary purposes women are much more suited to teach young children in the primary schools, while secondary teaching is much more suited to male teachers. For a clearer picture of this, it is believed that responses from men would have helped the researcher to make better conclusions, but since the study was gender biased those data were not obtained. However, from the female responses available it was clear that the female

teachers do feel comfortable working with younger children than older ones. Respondents however, distinguished between emotional and disciplinary problems. In their view, they saw themselves better suited to attend to older children's emotional problems than their male counter-parts. They indicated that teenagers of both sexes sought their advice on issues of sexuality and problems of abuse at home. No reason was advanced for this ability except being women, and hence having more patience than the male teachers. Here again is a contradiction in perception between the desired equality and intangible differences.

Another issue raised from the ability to work with children is the love that some women felt for small children. Some respondents did indicate that they teach because they like working with small children. This was found to confirm the suspicion that women are natural caretakers of children as described by the former South African president in his speech quoted by Kotecha (1994), outlined in chapter one of this study. However, Lortie (1975) says that female teachers are conceived to have a marked preference for taking care of children as an attraction to the teaching profession. But he argues that, this is a social definition of women's work in society, and his own findings contradicted this conception, since it never appeared to have worked as an attraction. Goodlad (1984) argues that:

Love for children is an elusive concept to which a degree of mysticism readily is attached. It is nice to think that all teachers love children, but it is more realistic to believe that we cannot count on this attribute and know little about its development. Rather, we should expect teachers to seek to understand children's learning problems and to provide constructive guidance. These attributes, clearly, are educable. And the conditions under which teachers seek to do these things are modifiable, (p.171).

It should be noted that Goodlad in his study on finding out why teachers teach, also did not find love for children as a major reason for entering teaching. In this study, love for children has little support as an attraction to the teaching profession since it was a small percentage (27%) of the respondent teachers who joined teaching because they loved children. It is therefore considered legitimate to conclude that it is more of a social understanding that women are natural caretakers of children, than it is a reality.

Given the background information of the respondents, the fact that they perceived problems differently was found to be quite normal since some of them still lived with their families of birth who helped them to look after their children, and provided the general support they needed while they went for their studies. As a result, the pressure of family responsibilities while studying was not universal, despite the fact that every respondent was a mother. Moreover, the women did not feel the pressure of household chores since to them it is natural that a woman should look after the house and children (a contradiction indicated earlier).

It can also be argued that considering the fact that most respondents came from poor families, they may be finding their conditions luxurious as compared to how they themselves were brought up. In this case they knew they were working, and money will therefore come from somewhere. That is probably why one said when she did not have enough money she would “just go along and pay later”. In this sense background can be argued to have played a role, and a study to explore why women have this attitude towards their problems is needed, since that was beyond the scope of this particular study. However, this argument cannot be forwarded for the respondents’ health problems such as those experienced during pregnancy.

In conclusion therefore, the study became useful in providing the background information of the respondents which helped the researcher to understand the choices the women made concerning their careers. The research theoretical framework helped in providing the framework within which the women’s actions were understood and from which conclusions were made about the women involved in the study. As this is a case study, generalisations cannot be made, but the findings have given a basis for understanding the present situation of some of the female teachers in the country. This has also opened doors for further research in gender issues in education, which were found to be under researched by the literature reviewed. More of this is discussed in the next chapter on recommendations.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This research project was primarily designed with the purpose of understanding better the situation of some of the ex-B. Ed female students in their work places. This was achieved by basically listening to the respondents relating their experiences as women, both in their homes and workplaces. The aim was to appreciate what those experiences meant to them as female teachers. The study was informed by the theoretical framework of feminism, which looks at women as a disadvantaged gender group which needs to be empowered. Society appears to have built a wall between the gender groups such that there are roles defined for each group for which there is a perception that each group is confined to its own roles. One of the aims of the study was to determine how the particular women involved in this study perceive these stereotypes and how they themselves relate to the communities in their workplaces. Through the feminist perspective, the study revealed that the situation of women is rather complex, since they themselves did not understand their position. Some contradictions were revealed where there was a mismatch between what teachers perceive their role as women to be, and what they are actually doing. This chapter therefore briefly reviews the findings and suggests recommendations for practice and policy purposes, as well as for further research.

6.2 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.2.1 Policy

One important aim of this study was to determine the extent to which family background has been influential in the respondents' recruitment into teaching as a career. The findings revealed that most teachers ended in the profession because of the direct and indirect family influences, as well as their early childhood experiences. The data collected showed that parents and other siblings were direct influences to the respondents, while the conditions such as poverty and the location of the families

were indirect influences in the sense that they appeared to have determined the choice of the respondents' careers by forcing them to grab the slightest opportunity presented to them. There was emphasis on the respondents' wish to have done something else for a career, and this was inhibited by lack of money, lack of available spaces and /or low qualification that respondents held. It was concluded that the low levels of education which were gazetted by the past apartheid government worked against any wish to go into other occupations. For the most part, these findings also reveal the realism often attributed to women in career mobility. Given the combination of poverty, minimum or inadequate exposure to other occupations and low levels of schooling, women were bound to choose teaching. This therefore leads to the suggestion of the following recommendations:

(a) People should not join teaching out of desperation, as this is believed to have a negative impact on the quality of education produced by such teachers. The democratic legislation has now made it possible for women to follow any career of their choice, and this has reduced factors that compelled women to join teaching. The teachers' backgrounds cannot be changed, and there is hardly anything that can be done, at least by educationists, about the poverty of the families that prevent them from taking their children to higher education of their choice. However, what remains outstanding and needs to be addressed, is the fact that there are still women who come from disadvantaged areas who may lack the exposure that enables them to make the best choices. It is therefore suggested that career guidance information should be made available to all students and should be in the form of programmes that constitute part of the curriculum;

(b) Another recommendation can be made that the legislation should make studying conditions for women easier in order to close the imbalances between them and their male counterparts. This can be done for a number of years until the gap narrows. For example women still have to work for eight consecutive years before they can obtain study leave. This still has serious gender implications since very few women would qualify, because of their reproductive function. A rather gender-sensitive measure needs to be taken so that male and female teachers have equal opportunities. Thus, for example two rather than eight years of continuous service can be applied only to women who wish to take study leave.

Early life experiences from both family and school also proved to have been very influential in the respondents' decisions regarding their careers. This confirmed the notion of teacher role models as predominantly influential in the novice teachers' early teaching experiences. It was also revealed by the study that early teaching experiences were of substantial importance to teachers' careers, and that the B. Ed course itself helped the teachers to change their ways of teaching in order to meet the challenges of the changes. It was concluded therefore that recruitment into teaching as one of the key processes in any occupation (Lortie, 1975), informs socialisation in teaching which in turn ensures stability. In other words, the lessons from the early experiences of teachers played a very important role in shaping the teachers' identities. A recommendation is therefore made that:

(c) For future policy, practicing teachers should be allowed to contribute to the curriculum of the initial teacher training so that the curriculum deals with more practical issues. It is believed that teacher education should be focused on the development of the teacher so that teachers are able to question the content and the approach to teacher education;

(d) Induction programmes in the form of workshops organised by training colleges should be held regionally, in order to help novice teachers to cope with their actual situations in the schools.

The findings also revealed that there is a mismatch between belief and practice in relation to gender equity and equality. Respondents indicated that they believe in the equal sharing of roles and responsibilities, whereas they practically seemed to be confined to the domestic roles that are played by women traditionally. In this way, women are seen to be unwillingly perpetuating the gender inequality that they claim not to approve of. The literature reviewed indicated that South African gender issues are generally under researched, more particularly in education. It was concluded that these female teachers need to be conscientised of their situation but that cannot be done easily given the way women perceive themselves. If women are disadvantaged, they have to see themselves in that position before they can be advised of and searched for the measures to be taken, since it becomes difficult to tell people they are oppressed if they do not see it that way. At this point it would be suggested that:

(e) If female teachers are to counter gender inequality, which is believed they should also instill in the learners they teach, then their understanding of these inequalities must be developed during their initial training and be further supported by in-service-training programmes, just as the love for children is instilled into them (according to the findings). If women understand themselves and their situations well, then they will not become unconscious enforcers of gender inequality, and this can be avoided by inculcating related values at grassroots level. De Lyon and Magniuolo (1989) advocate this by saying that, “a piecemeal approach which only looks at gender issues as particular problems is unsatisfactory,” (p.9).

De Lyon and Migniuolo (1989) further argue that consideration of gender issues and sex inequality in education should not be offered solely on an optional basis or as one or two specific sessions within a general course. If gender inequality is to be properly addressed, it should spread through the initial teacher training and be raised within the general courses and subjects. Students as well as trainers should be able to confront their own biases and that which exists within the education system as a whole, (De Lyon and Migniuolo 1989). Weiner (1994), argues that ignorance is the main cause of sexual inequality and therefore knowledge dissemination is the principal solution.

6.2.2 Practice

Another important finding made by the study is that teachers do come across problems in their workplaces which inhibit the implementation of what was learned from either their initial teacher training or their B. Ed studies. Problems related to lack of cooperation from the surrounding communities were mostly encountered in the rural areas, while others relating to either management or attitude problems from students and colleagues were experienced by teachers in both rural and urban schools. It can be argued based on the findings of this study that, before education can be improved in the South African rural areas, the communities have to adopt the schools as their own responsibilities. A recommendation can therefore be made that:

(a) Rural schools, with the help of the Department of Education should develop programmes that educate the communities about the importance of the schools in order to develop a sense of ownership. This is in line with the plan of the current minister of education (Kader Asmal) as

indicated in his speech, "A call to Action"(1999).

(b) More involvement of parents and the community at large in the activities and running of the school in general should be given attention by the schools themselves. It is believed that only when the community feels they own the schools will they stop destroying the schools' properties. The environment in which the teacher works needs to be conducive to the primary tasks of the school which are teaching and learning so as to ensure the good quality of education.

(c) Principals and the staff in general, need to be cognizant and supportive of beginning teachers and those who further their studies, so that the latter are able to implement what has been learnt in order to effect change and development. This can be achieved through some workshops within the schools themselves.

The findings also revealed that the teachers liked the B. Ed programme, since the respondents indicated that they have improved their ways of teaching as a result of what they gained from the programme. It was also revealed that the B. Ed updated teachers with most of the recent developments and changes in the country's education system in general. It was concluded that the B. Ed has been extremely helpful to the teachers, and according to the respondents a lot has been missed by those who do not have the degree. Hence the recommendation is that:

(d) The in-service-training programmes should not only be aimed at providing an additional qualification and professional improvement to the practicing teachers, but they should at some stage be made compulsory for all teachers in order to update them with current educational issues so that many are as much up to date with policies and practices as possible. This would also create a bigger pool of educators with updated knowledge skills in the schools so that changes such as that suggested in (c) above can have more support than would otherwise be the case.

6.2.3 Further research

This study has also shown how women perceive themselves with regard to the roles that they play as female teachers as opposed to those played by male teachers. A contradiction between belief and

practice was sensed at this point, as indicated earlier. The study revealed that in practice women believe that their feminine gender automatically determines them to play certain roles which cannot be played by men. Women were found to associate domestic responsibilities with the feminine gender, and at the same time they were claiming that men and women should share the same roles and responsibilities and this should not be sex- determined. Thus, women attributed gender related factors to sex differences, and they saw themselves as better guides in relation to children's (of both sexes) emotional problems, and saw this as something that men, lacking patience, cannot do. This perception was thought to be ungrounded since empathy is not a feminine attribute nor is it a biologically determined factor. One believes that gender factors are socially determined unlike sex ones which are biologically determined, and cannot be easily changed. Lortie (1975), quotes Getzels and Jackson (1963) who argue that:

the psychological needs which underlie an interest in working with children are undoubtedly varied and complex, and there is no research which justifies the concept of a single personality type among teachers, (p.27).

It was concluded that this in a way portrays women to be believing that roles should differ according to sex, and that they have a traditional outlook upon themselves although they do not want to believe that. Given this contradiction between what they believe and what they do, it was difficult to come to a conclusion. However, the following recommendations are made that:

(a) Further research is needed in order to determine the source of the perceptions women appear to have. This study did not delve into the reasons respondents perceived for feeling this way. Research is therefore needed to ask questions of why women feel that they have the ability to be better guides than men, and such knowledge will be useful in preventing further practical and theoretical contradictions.

(b) Using the theoretical framework employed in this study, further research would be needed to get to understand how differences between sex and gender can be researched in order to make women realise that what is their job biologically, is not necessarily their job socially. In other words, research into the feminine gender roles and perceptions of socially correct behaviour needs to move from

information (so that women are aware of inequalities) to education so that they understand how these inequalities actually operate. Only then can we hope to see if behaviour changes, making it difficult for women to continue oppressing themselves unconsciously.

(c) Women see themselves playing both men's and women's roles in terms of providing for the families. This is the reason why most women in the study have single parent families for which they single handedly provide without relying on men as bread winners. In the case of South Africa, this perception needs further research to determine whether practical realities or other social factors are responsible for this condition. In other words, it would be informative to policy to clarify factors affecting the shift in both perception and reality in this country, this despite the small sample studied here. Kaabwe (in press) notes that the migrant labour practices of both men and women in Southern Africa condition workers to lead and maintain separate households, even for married couples. This has not changed with other salaried employment. There is need to find out the extent to which this practice is responsible for the continued lack of dependence of females in South Africa so that policy aligns itself with reality.

With regard to the problems associated with the B. Ed study, women shared mostly their personal problems as has been indicated. However, what was found interesting was the fact that they still appeared to have different perceptions of problems. For example, one said that when she was running short of money she just asked for a loan and paid later, and did not see that as a problem. On the other hand, the other said that she often thought of withdrawing from the course due to financial problems. This reflects the varied extent to which problems affected the respondents. Therefore:

(d) It would be interesting to determine male students' reactions to issues of financial and other problems. This study can be used as a stepping stone for further research of a larger sample of males and females and their reactions to problems encountered during the in-service training.

6.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The findings of this study may be useful to teacher educators, planners, policy-makers and educators themselves, so that they are more cognisant of teachers in their planning and action. In order to

accomplish change, teachers should be understood and they should give their full support so that they do not become the opponents when they are actually supposed to be the proposers. In practice this could mean that teachers should be involved in activities that include planning their own curriculum especially for in-service-training courses.

Thus, the country still has a long way to go in order to achieve the type of education that is free from gender bias. There are still many sexist attitudes towards female teachers in the entire education system, and until women themselves admit and are willing to do something about it, the culture of male dominance will always persist. It is hoped that if suggestions made above could be implemented they might lead to the improvement of gender relations in the education system.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW

I am interested in the question of whether teachers think differently about their teaching responsibilities, roles and careers as a result of their B. Ed experiences. I am also interested in why teachers became teachers, how their background influenced their choices of career, why they did the B. Ed and whether their classroom practices may have changed as a result of the B. Ed. The interest is also on your experiences during and after the study, and how those were or are affected by gender relations. The interest is particularly on women who constituted the majority of the B ED group.

In short, I would like you to talk about your **beliefs** and **practices**. It is your views that count. There are certainly no right or wrong answers to the questions. Talking about education can be difficult because certain beliefs are currently fashionable or “politically correct”. I am interested in your own views and not in “PC” responses.

The interview will be recorded on an audio tape and I’d also like to make some notes to help me remember what was said. Interviews will be transcribed later for analysis. Names of individuals and of schools are not used in reports, and nobody other than the researcher will have access to the names of teachers or schools.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHIES

1 Please tell me about your family background - where you lived and grew up.

Prompts: Region, brothers and sisters, parents’ work,

Marital status; occupation of husband (if married); Do you live together or separately; Do you stay with the family; Number of family

members; number of children ; ages of children.

What are the most important “ lessons” you learnt in your life/ most important influences?

- 2 Some people say that teachers teach in the way that they themselves were taught. When you were a learner at school, were there important events or experiences that influenced your career as an educator?

Prompts: Type of school and resources, subjects you enjoyed, good/bad teachers (role models) you remember, forms of teacher control, status of the teacher, etc

- 3 What influenced your decision to become a teacher?

Prompts: What did you hope to gain personally? Did you see teaching as an important job, one that served the community and improved opportunities and lives? If so, how would it do this? View of teaching- did you see teaching as a woman/man’s job? Reasons.

Was teaching your first choice career? If not what was? What were the influences.

- 4 Where did you train as a teacher, and what were the most important/ useful things you learnt during your initial training?

Prompts: The same or different to what you’d expected? How would you describe the institution’s view of teaching? Criticisms of your professional training? Key events or influences?

- 5 Please describe your teaching career - where you began, where you moved to next, promotions and so on?

6 Why did you decide to study for a BEd, and what were your expectations of the course?

Prompts: Personal/professional development? To make you a better teacher? Salary? Status of having a degree? Bored with teaching? Any of these linked to UNP specifically? Influences from family; who took care of travelling expenses and means; other responsibilities;(e.g cooking for family, getting kids from school etc. Was there anybody to assist? What was the arrangement? What did you do before you studied B ED?

SECTION B : BELIEFS ABOUT TEACHING

I'd like to skip the BEd itself for a moment and move to the present.

7(a) How do you see your role and responsibilities as a teacher?

Prompts: How do you see yourself at school? How do you relate to students? Are you a socialising parent who instil values into children or does your job end in the classroom ?

(b) Looking at women from an African perspective, there is a saying that a woman's job is in the house.

Do you agree with this? Why/ Why not?

What do you think the role of a woman is in the school? In the society in general?

Is it different from men's- In the school, and in the society? If so, how?

8 (a) What do you teach at your school?

(b) Do you think it's important to teach this subject/these *subjects*?

(c) Why/ why not?

9 How do you think your subject/s ought to be taught?

Prompt: Role of learner? How do you know you've taught the subject/s successfully

in the way you said it/they should be taught?

- 10 Are these views you've just described any different from those you held before you did the BEd? (If "No" skip 11 and 12 and continue with 13).
- 11 In which areas or ways has the change been most pronounced or noticeable?
- 12 Is it possible for you to suggest what aspect or feature of the BEd contributed to the changes you've just described? (When we talk of the BEd here please don't think of the formal programme or the curriculum only - our views can be changed by the lecturers and tutors we experienced, by interacting with peers, or perhaps even just getting away from school routine for a while.)

SECTION C : THE PRACTICE OF TEACHING

We're now going to shift from what we believe about teaching to the real world of the classroom and what happens in it.

- 13 If we now compare your present classroom practice with your classroom practice before you did BEd, has there been any change?
- Prompt:** ask for examples - how, where etc

- 14(a) Circumstances sometimes make it difficult for us to teach in the way we would like to. Are some of your beliefs about teaching frustrated by the context in which you work?

Prompts: attitudes/expectations of learners; demands of authorities; attitudes of parents; lack of resources; too difficult or time consuming to organise the things I'd like to do

.Are there any gender related problems; any pressures;

There is a belief that women cant hold responsibility jobs. effect of male teachers in

relation to authority;

- (b) A South African Council of Educators (SACE) Code of Conduct document has been issued, and one of the things that are stressed in the document is gender equality.

What do you think of this?

Prompts: Do you think gender equality is important? Do you think it is right to emphasise gender equality in education/ most particularly in the schools?

If you think gender equality is important how do you promote it in your own classroom?

SECTION D: CONCLUDING POINTS

- 15 What were the main difficulties you experienced whilst doing your BEd?

Prompts: academic; social; family life; financial; transport; time and work loads;

Any problems related to you as a woman- unique ones;

There is a belief that women tend to attribute things to themselves as compared to men who blame external influences for their failures.

Do you blame yourself for these problems Do you think there anything you could have done to avoid the difficulties you encountered.

- 16 How did you cope with or overcome these difficulties? To what extent were your strategies successful?

- 17 In looking back at your B. Ed experience, was it worth it? If so, in what ways have you benefited? How do you feel about having done B. Ed? Did it work as an intrinsic fulfilment? Are you happy about it?

- 18 How do you see your career developing from now?

Prompts: Do you have any intentions for further studies; reasons;

- 19 Are there any additional comments you'd like to make on your BEd experience, or about this interview?

Thank you!