UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

THE CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ALTERNATIVES TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN THE RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KWAZULU-NATAL

by

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This study undertakes to explore challenges that rural primary schools face in the implementation of the alternatives to corporal punishment. This qualitative study gathered data through the case study approach for the following key research questions:

1. How do rural primary schools implement alternatives to corporal punishment policy?
2. What are the new experiences of principals, teachers and parents after the introduction of alternatives to old corporal punishment policy?
3. How do rural primary schools manage the implementation of the alternatives to corporal punishment policy?

Interviews were conducted with educators and parents in order to collect data from three schools in the KwaNgcolosi and eMolweni areas. The qualitative approach helped the researcher to make meaning from data by seeing the bigger picture and converting the raw empirical information into what is known in qualitative research as a "thick description". The researcher used a qualitative approach to gain a deeper and better understanding of the challenges facing rural primary schools in the implementation of alternatives to corporal punishment policy. In order to get a full picture of the challenges in schools under study the researcher obtained data through semi-structured interviews.

Most educators and parents felt that misconduct was worse without corporal punishment in schools. They said that learners did not take alternatives to corporal punishment seriously, and made fun of these disciplinary measures. It was also indicated that there were dangerous conditions [such as walking alone for long distances] when detention was

used in rural areas. There was a call to reinstate corporal punishment by most educators and parents in schools under study.

In responding to the challenges in the implementation of alternatives to corporal punishment policy, educators in rural schools should be provided with guidance and training by the Department of Education on how to implement the alternative measures. Guidance educators and counsellors need to be appointed to support educators in schools. Caregivers should be allocated by the government to learners who are living alone and learners who are under the care of grandparents that are old and illiterate.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Discipline is essential for maintaining order and harmony in schools, and for providing a climate conducive to learning and free from disruption and chaos. Such discipline, however, seems to be lacking in many primary schools throughout the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal. Currently, the principals, teachers, School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and parents have to deal with a wide variety of disciplinary problems and misbehaviour among learners which is caused by peer influence, drugs, alcohol abuse and other social factors. It is important that teachers, parents and SGBs do their best to enhance and promote good behaviour.

It is important that the School Management Teams take a lead by jointly working with all staff members and parents to curb such a major problem. The aim of jointly working together is to instil self-discipline and self-control in learners and prepare them to be responsible citizens in the future.

A lack of discipline in schools is rated as one of the major concerns relating to disrupted teaching and learning. The concerns raised are mirrored in the often-dramatic coverage by the media of stories about unruly students, bullying and violence in classrooms and on playgrounds around the country. Many are left with the impression that schools are in a state of crisis and teachers are losing their battle to maintain order.

1.2 Background to the study

1.2.1 Before 1998

Before the introduction of alternatives to corporal punishment in 1998 it was common knowledge that disciplining learners was in the hands of the principal. It was normal practice that whenever the learners misbehaved in school, teachers would send them to the principal to be punished. The principal would punish boys by giving a few lashes on their buttocks. Girls were given cuts on their hands. The number of cuts or lashes in those days would depend on the severity of the case. Although this was arbitrary and it differed from school to school, a principal was legally allowed to administer this type of corporal punishment to make sure the learning ethos of the school was maintained. Parents were not directly involved in deciding the nature or severity of the punishment.

1.2.2 After the alternatives to corporal punishment

In line with a democratic culture and the protection of human rights a number of policies have been introduced, including the corporal punishment policy. The issue of physical and emotional abuse was raised when learners, parents and child rights activists shared information about abuse. The Department of Education, in keeping with global trends, has moved towards the abolishment of corporal punishment and introduced alternatives to corporal punishment in order to maintain discipline. This was done with the view to maintaining discipline and maintaining the learning ethos of the school, but, more importantly, to address the issue of children's rights and human dignity.

My study undertakes to explore challenges that rural primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal face in the implementation of the alternatives to corporal punishment. The new democratic, non-racial and non sexist government came into existence in 1994 in South Africa. The practices

in schools when punishing learners in South Africa violated the international human rights code.

The South African Education Department policy makers, in keeping up with its democratic principles, abolished the system of administering corporal punishment to learners in schools. The main reason for the move was to address the violation of children's rights.

Though corporal punishment was abolished, corporal punishment is still used in many South African schools as one of the most useful disciplinary procedures, especially in the former African schools. There were mixed feelings on the abolishment of corporal punishment in most of the rural African schools due to the fact that it was infringing on cultural beliefs. However, the use of corporal punishment was seen as a way of correcting misbehaviour; for example late-coming, absenteeism, vandalism and fighting among learners. It is true that in some cases corporal punishment was misused by some principals and educators to fulfil their personal intentions and to victimise some learners and it became a manipulative tool of victimising learners instead of correcting them. Consequently, it did little to shape the behaviour of the learners towards teaching and learning but worsened over time. Some learners were beaten up severely in such a way that they lost their fingers, eyes and others had to bear permanent physical and emotional scars. In the past, especially in African communities, administering of corporal punishment was seen as an effective way of disciplining children.

The policy relating to "Alternatives to corporal punishment" of 2001 has three levels: The type of punishment issued to learners is determined by the intensity of the misconduct. Misconduct can be categorized into three: (i) minor misconduct, (ii) average misconduct and (iii) serious misconduct. The policy states that parental involvement is at the core of the implementation of the alternatives to

corporal punishment. Despite the new policy being in place, to date much of the undesirable learners' behaviour are observed on a daily basis by educators and the communities in the rural primary schools. Examples of such undesirable behaviour are vandalism, absenteeism, late-coming, assaults and drug abuse. These anti-social behaviours impact negatively on the culture of teaching and learning.

1.3 Problem statement

The policy on "Alternatives to Corporal Punishment" (Department of Education, 2001, p.14) states that parents should be involved in the decision making about the disciplinary measures to be administered in order to correct learner misbehaviour. The problem in rural areas is that some parents are working far from homes in the cities and they do not live with their children. This makes parental involvement at the initial stage difficult to implement in rural areas. Transport problems and the problem of learners walking long distances to and from schools in the rural areas also make it even more difficult for the detention of learners to be implemented as a disciplinary procedure in these areas.

1.4 Focus of the study

The focus of my study is on the implementation of the alternatives to corporal punishment in the rural primary schools in districts within KwaZulu-Natal. In trying to implement these alternatives, educators are faced with challenges. Educators cannot call in parents because parents are not available to help them solve their learners' disciplinary problems. Some learners are living alone in the care of their elder sisters or brothers. Some are living with their grandparents who are also pensioners and are unable to get to the school to resolve the disciplinary problems of their grandchildren.

The alternative to corporal punishment policy was enacted after 2000 and all schools were expected to adhere to the new policy. It is surprising that ten years after that this policy has been put in place some schools in the KwaNgcolosi and eMolweni areas are still using corporal punishment as their means of disciplining their learners. My study would therefore looks into the reasons why this abolished practice is still in use in the above-mentioned areas. Furthermore, my study will document the various challenges of the principals, teachers and parents experienced in respect of the disciplining of learners.

1.5 The purpose of the study

The purpose of my study is to document the challenges facing rural primary schools in the implementation of the alternatives to corporal punishment policy.

1.6 Key critical research questions

1.1 How do rural primary schools implement the alternatives to corporal punishment policy?

1.2 What are the new experiences of principals, teachers and parents after the introduction of alternatives to corporal punishment policy?

1.3 How do rural primary schools manage the implementation of the alternatives to corporal punishment policy?

1.7 Rationale

I am presently the principal of a primary school. I found that the latest procedures for disciplining learners, such as detention, released after 2000 makes it difficult for all role-players to deal with discipline. They were faced with the sudden abolishment of physical punishment and had to implement the alternatives to corporal punishment for which they had very little training from the Department of Education. While

the new move in disciplining learners was a noble one in that it protected the rights, human dignity and integrity of learners, it created the wrong impression among learners. They suddenly believed that they had all the rights against all authority but failed to realize that these rights accompanied serious responsibilities. For example, whilst a learner might argue that he had a right to freedom of speech, he or she had to be responsible in respect of when and how the right to freedom of speech was acceptable.

After my discussion with many roleplayers such as principals, teachers and parents in the area, I argued that the new system of disciplining learners was fraught with problems. I strongly believe that the new policy gave parents the power to be involved in the correction of learner behaviour. However, at the same time it gave the wrong impression to them since they felt that their children were always right.

At the moment I have heard from principals' meetings with the departmental officials that the Department of Education is handling many corporal punishment cases where learners have lost their fingers due to teachers hitting learners with a ruler, scars on learners faces because teachers sometimes throw dusters at them, and more serious physical abuse where learners' buttocks indicated deep marks where teachers used a shambok or whip to discipline learners.

Therefore, I firmly believe that this study is worth researching because of the apparent tension between the policy on "Alternatives to corporal punishment" and actual practice. This area must be seriously re-addressed by policy makers; if not it will escalate to an uncontrollable level.

1.8 Theoretical and conceptual frameworks

This research is situated in an interpretivist research paradigm with its emphasis on experience and interpretation. This study is trying to explore the challenges and experiences in the implementation of the alternatives to corporal punishment policy. The most important aspect is to gain a better understanding and knowledge of effective ways of implementing the new policy so that a good culture of teaching and learning exists in rural primary schools. Knowledge is constructed not only by observable phenomena, but also by descriptions of people's intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning and self understanding. That is why interpretivist research is a communal process, informed by participating practitioners and scrutinised or endorsed by others. Phenomena and events are understood through mental processes of interpretation which are influenced by, and interact with, social context. The types of knowledge frameworks that drive society, also known as discourses, become key role players in the interpretive project. These "knowledge systems" are interrogated by the interpretive researcher who analyses texts to look for the way in which people make meaning in their lives. Thus the interpretive researcher looks for the frames that shape the meaning (Henning, 2004, p.20).

Elite theory suggests that many people are apathetic and ill-informed about public policy. Elites actually shape the masses' opinion on policy questions more than the masses shape elite opinion. Thus, public policy really turns out to be the preferences of the elites. Policies flow downward from elites to masses; they do not arise from mass demands. Elitism implies that public policy does not reflect the demands of the people so much as it does the interests, values, and preferences of elites. Therefore, change and innovations in public policy come about as a result of redefinitions by elites of their own values. Because of the general conservatism of elites – that is, their

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interest in preserving the system – change in public policy will be incremental rather than revolutionary. Public policies are frequently modified but seldom replaced. Changes in the nature of the political system occur when events threaten the system, and elites, acting on the basis of enlightened self-interest, institute reforms to preserve the system and their place in it. Elitism does not necessarily mean that public policy will be hostile toward mass welfare but only that the responsibility for mass welfare rests on the shoulders of elites, not masses.

Communication between elites and the masses flows downward. Therefore, popular elections and party competition do not enable the masses to govern. Elitism contends that the masses have at best only an indirect influence over the decision-making behaviour of elites. Elitism also asserts that elites share in a consensus about fundamental norms; underlying the social systems that elites agree on, are the basic rules of the game, as well as continuation of the social system itself. The stability of the system, and even its survival, depends on elite consensus on behalf of the fundamental values of the system, and only policy alternatives that fall within that shared consensus will be given serious consideration (Dye, 2005, pp. 22-24).

In applying and relating the elite theory to my study I consider the policy-makers or policy formulators who formulated the alternatives to corporal punishment policy as the elites. The masses in this case are educators and parents who are expected to implement this new policy. Learners are regarded as masses who are consumers of this alternative policy; the new policy is being implemented "on them". Policy-makers in some cases do not consider interests, needs, values and beliefs of people who are expected to implement the policy they are formulating. The result of ignoring the masses during policy formulation stages is evident in resistance from implementers and

consumers of policies; this applies to the alternative policy to corporal punishment as discussed in this study.

When the alternative to corporal punishment policy was formulated, the policy-makers did not make the necessary efforts to consult with the masses that were actually expected to implement the policy. Little consultation was carried out prior to the incorporation of the policy; it was imposed on educators and parents.

Changes such as new policies create new systems and environments which need to be explained to people who are expected to implement and consume it as early as possible; their involvement in validating and refining this change is needed. Participation, involvement and open full communication are the important factors when new policies are to be implemented successfully. With the elite theory, communication is generally a one-way process, that is from topdown. It was so with alternatives to corporal punishment policy.

Policy-makers should consider piloting new policies before the full implementation. To explore how the rural primary schools deal with the implementation of the alternatives to corporal punishment policy I will use the elite theory explained by Dye (2005, pp. 22-24).

1.9 The usefulness of the findings of this study
1.9.1 National, provincial, regional and district policy makers

Initially authorities must take note of the experiences of stakeholders before designing new policies and should enquire about how these new policies unfold at school level. Policy-makers would then make a more informed amendment to current discipline policies so that policies are suited to the current school environment.

1.9.2 Regional, District and Circuit managers

These managers should then conduct advocacy workshops for school principals and school governing bodies on alternative ways of dealing with bad learner behaviour.

1.9.3 Governing Bodies and parents

These members will be better able to understand their roles and responsibilities in supporting the school to instil good discipline.

1.9.4 Researchers

Researchers will be able to focus on the documentation of school experiences and to delve further in to this area of research.

1.10 Organization of chapters

A summary of each chapter is included since it will give the reader an insight into the rest of the study.

In chapter 2, The literature on the use of corporal punishment in educational institutions, especially in schools is reviewed. The reader, at the outset, will be familiar with the experiences of educational roleplayers on the use of corporal punishment. One important aspect that needed attention was that principals and teachers needed urgent support in shaping the behaviour of learners. The role of the school has changed drastically on the issue of discipline. The focus now is on the right of learners to learn in an undisrupted school environment. Another important aspect to note is that the safety of learners is of paramount importance and is now at risk.

In chapter 3, The methodology used is outlined. This study has been qualitative in nature. The main source of data collections were case studies. Interviews were conducted with principals, educators and parents. Interviews helped to obtain "close-up" information from the school setting which eventually gave depth, context and content information to three of the critical key questions.

In chapter 4, An in-depth analysis of how principals, HODs, teachers and parents reacted to the new policy "Alternatives to corporal punishment" of 2001 is presented. Startling information has been obtained reflecting mixed feelings of stakeholders with regard to the new policy.

Chapter 5 culminates with a summary, conclusion and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In 1994, South Africa experienced serious transitions as a democratic country. These transitions have brought many changes in the Department of Education, Department of Health and in the private sector. Within the Department of Education one of the major changes was about the banning of corporal punishment which falls under Section 10 (1) (2) of the South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996). To establish a democratic nation aware of human rights, corporal punishment was outlawed in South African schools. Administering of corporal punishment to learners is now regarded as a serious offence and can result in charges of assault.

The banning of corporal punishment has brought some challenges for both educators and parents. Implementation of new measures of disciplining learners is a major challenge as teachers and parents were not informed/trained on how to apply these measures. This is accompanied by a dramatic change in the way learners behave themselves. This was caused by the new ways of disciplining learners that they [learners] were not used to and did not take seriously.

It is important to focus on alternatives to corporal punishment policy and its objectives. The main objective was to correct learners' behaviours in a positive manner by not necessarily punishing them. In correcting the misconduct, the learners would have to engage in constructive learning. Edwards (2004) is of the view that the first goal of the various approaches to discipline in schools is to establish and maintain a conducive environment for learners and educators.

2.2 The different perspectives on punishment

The use of punishment in schools was traditionally the only form of correcting learner's behaviour. It is important to outline the conceptions of punishment from different scholars' perspectives to understand why this was in some cases justified.

Firstly, Cangelosi (2004) defines punishment as:

> *A stimulus presented after a response that decreases the probability of that response being repeated in the future.*

Secondly, Bean (1981) states that "punishment is the infliction of an ill suffered for an ill done". At its simplest this theory encapsulates the idea of 'an eye for an eye', and is seen by its critics as characteristic of a barbaric system.

Thirdly, Edwards (2004) defines punishment as "how society has dealt with infractions." This definition is supported by Soanes (2001) when she defines punishment as "the penalty imposed for an offence."

Fourthly, Parker-Jenkins (1999) argues that "punishment is the intentional infliction of pain by someone in authority on someone as a consequence of a breach of rules." This definition concurs with the following definition: "the infliction of pain which it is right that one should have to suffer for moral wrong doing" (Wilson, 1974).

Lastly, Jackson warns that:

> *The emphasis in the classroom punishment should be on education rather than suffering.*

Defining corporal punishment

Alternatives to corporal punishment document (2001, p.6), defines corporal punishment as:

> *Any deliberate act against a child that inflicts pain or physical discomfort to punish him/her. This includes, but is not limited to, spanking, slapping, pinching and paddling a child with a hand or with an object.*

All the above perspectives are currently unacceptable within the South African teaching and learning situation. The aspect of disciplining and the growth and development of learners' curricular, extra-curricular and extra mural activities must not involve any form of punishment as legislated. I therefore included a section on how discipline must be handled within the current context in South Africa.

2.3 Issues of discipline in South Africa

According to the Department of Education, the "Alternatives to Corporal Punishment" policy (2001), highlights that the new legislation is based on the principle that the growth of a culture of democracy and peace in society demands that its citizens are able to uphold the values of justice, equality, freedom and tolerance. Hence, the use of any form of punishment would be unacceptable in developing a humane and just society. Then, the use of corporal punishment would, by its very nature, be seen as anti-human and ultimately an abusive practice that entrenches the idea that violence provides a solution to every problem in the classroom or in society.

The removal of corporal punishment and the elimination of other dehumanising practices in our schools during this transition period are necessary steps towards the development of a culture of human rights in our country. I strongly believe that whilst individuals have rights to be protected and cared for, they must exercise their

behaviour and duties responsibly. At the same time individuals must not believe that since corporal punishment is outlawed, one can then behave and act irresponsibly.

I concur with Maree and Cherian (2004) when they argue that the use of corporal punishment sends out a bad signal that it is acceptable to express one's feelings of anger by hitting others in retaliation. I still believe that correcting an individual's behaviour must not be punitive but rather developmental in nature

Kruger (1997) argues that:

> Strict, authoritarian behaviour by a teacher who does not allow his pupils any freedom may lead to negative experiences on the part of the pupils.

This is true when I reflect on my practical teaching for more than 20 years. Some teachers in my school have been strict about their learners behaviour whilst in the classroom. The very same learners behaved badly out of the class. I have also noticed that those teachers who allowed a permissive environment with little or no order have lead to the collapse of the teaching and learning situation.

Teachers in many schools are grappling with managing learners' bad behaviour. Hence, teachers spend more time on disciplining their learners than on their actual teaching. The dilemma of the teacher is confirmed by Jackson (1991) when he argues that:

> Teachers have become hesitant and nervous about discipline; guilty and paranoid about punishment. Asking teachers if they believe that discipline is necessary, and the answer is 'yes'. Ask them how they go about disciplining, and they become evasive and insecure.

I strongly believe that there is no quick fix solution to solving discipline problems. Each teaching and learning situation is unique since learners come from different origins, background and have their own cultural belief systems. This is supported by Raffini (1980) when he states that many teachers complain that universal solutions do not work with their particular problems. Although they carefully follow the recommended procedure, the students do not respond in the way they are expected.

Wolfgang and Glickman (1980) highlight that only a third of the teachers in the profession believe they would make the same choice again. In other words, nearly two-thirds of our teachers are discouraged enough to wish they had not chosen to be teachers. A major reason given for such feelings is negative student attitudes and lack of discipline.

Whilst the new "Alternatives to Corporal Punishment" policy is known of by educationalists, there has not been any change in the way teachers discipline their learners. This is supported by Maree and Cherian (2004) who argue that some teachers have reverted to unlawful, unprofessional behaviour of using corporal punishment, clearly violating the constitutional rights of learners.

I think that this scenario exists because teachers themselves are not sufficiently equipped to deal with the implementation of the new "Alternatives to Corporal Punishment" policy. A meeting held by a principal to explain the new "Alternatives to Corporal Punishment" policy with all staff members is totally insufficient. This has been compounded by the lack of and poor support from the Department of Education. There must be ongoing support workshops from principals and department officials to assist teachers in maintaining discipline. It is a far cry now after 14 years into democracy that the Department of

Education is still looking more seriously at the issue of discipline in schools.

2.4 Legislation banning corporal punishment

In keeping with the principles of democracy, the transition of our country towards developing a just society and the global trends towards developing a human rights culture, South Africa has adopted a new, democratic constitution. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108, 1996 guarantees the right to dignity, equality, freedom and security for all citizens. This change in my opinion is in line with most other countries such as the USA, UK and Australia which passed legislation to outlaw corporal punishment. This can be substantiated by the following:

- *South Africa is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which compels it to pass laws and take social, educational and administrative measures to "protect the child from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse".*

- *The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child commits its member countries to the same measures and adds that they must take steps to ensure that a child "who is subjected to school or parental discipline shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the child".*

Jackson (1991) argues that punishment is a controversial issue. He believes that it demands the highest degree of professionalism and responsibility on the part of the teacher. It should be applied circumspectly, moderately and justly. The teacher should act on behalf of the parents in the interests of the child, who is being

prepared to take his or her rightful place in society. As members of society, children need to learn, even while still at school, that their freedom cannot be allowed to interfere with the rights and freedom of others. They have to learn that they will be held accountable for their actions, not only by the school, their parents and society, but also by God himself.

Walters, Cheyne & Banks (1972) state that although it is clear that punishment temporarily suppresses the behaviour that is being punished, there is a persistent trend that the effects of punishment are only temporary.

2.5 Corporal punishment is not the solution

Ongoing studies reveal that corporal punishment does not achieve the desired end – a culture of learning and discipline in the classroom. Instead, "violence begets violence".

The alternatives to corporal punishment policy (Department of Education, 2001, p.7) warn that children who are exposed to violence in their homes and at school tend to use violence to solve problems, both as children and as adults. Similarly, Edwards (2004) and Stenhouse (1967) both argue that children who are subjected to physical punishment tend to be more aggressive than their peers and likely to grow up and use violence on their own children.

2.6 Common problems about corporal punishment

Maree and Cherian (2004) reveal that learners are slapped, booted, whipped, pinched and hit with sticks and wooden chalkboard dusters. The reality is that although corporal punishment has been outlawed for a number of years within the South African context, learners are

still being subjected to cruel and sometimes violent attacks by their teachers, often for the most trivial transgressions.

While many teachers have avoided the use of corporal punishment, the Department of Education, has revealed new information. Bisetty (2003, p.1) confirms the new information as follows:

> *There have been numerous cases where teachers are now resorting to sarcasm, instilling fear and humiliation, forcing people to do degrading things like wearing their underwear on their heads or carrying tags with hurtful signs like "I am a stupid boy".*

The use of corporal punishment is still used as argued by Wa Maahlamela (2002, p.26):

> *Many teachers continue to beat students, say the department of education and many parents. The outlawed practice is popular with teachers in the rural areas, particularly in primary schools where children are unable to defend themselves or fight back. It is the most vulnerable part of society that is being abused in this manner.*

Furthermore, such unacceptable practises appear to be commonly practised in rural areas and especially in the primary schools. Interestingly, certain headmasters still use corporal punishment in spite of the serious consequences that they could face. They expressed the view that corporal punishment was not all bad (Maree and Cherian, 2004, p.74).

Motives for corporal punishment

According to Bauer, Dubanowski, Yamauchi and Honbo (1990, pp.290-293), Porteus et al (2001, pp.21-220), and Strauss (1994), the motives provided for administering corporal punishment include the

belief that corporal punishment enhances character development, is effective, quick and relatively easy to use. It also achieves temporary compliance, makes people feel powerful, contributes to rapid reduction or elimination of unwanted behavioural patterns and facilitates discrimination learning.

However, it is needed as a last resort and probably the only language that children understand, and as such behavioural problems increase in its absence (Maree and Cherian, 2004, p.76).

2.7 Educational psychological side effects of corporal punishment

Maree and Cherian (2004) argue that the use of corporal punishment has damaging effects. It not only perpetuates the cycle of child abuse, but also impacts negatively on academic achievement. The educational psychological side effects of corporal punishment are probably as harmful as the physical effects and include loss of self-esteem. It also causes an increase in anxiety and fear, damage to the functioning of the ego, creation or enhancement of feelings of loss, helplessness and humiliation, enhancement of feelings of aggression and destructive and self-destructive behaviours. It further causes a shortened attention span, attention-deficit disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and impaired academic achievement.

Children are natural imitators and learn through modelling on their parents' behaviour. When their experience is that their parents try to solve problems by physical beating, they often model their behaviour on that of their parents, assuming that it is in order to abuse those who are smaller than themselves, and these children do not learn creative problem-solving skills (Hunt 1999, pp.1-3).

2.7.1 Correlation between corporal punishment and crime

Agnew (1983), and Cyran (1987; 1995), argue conclusively that the administration of corporal punishment correlates significantly positively with crime in later life. A significant correlation exists between severe punishment in early youth and lawbreaking. Severe punishment is the most important correlate of juvenile delinquency.

2.8 Arguments against the banning of corporal punishment

The views of the educators who were consulted before the "alternatives to corporal punishment policy" was legislated in 2001, are as follows:

- Children will neither show the respect nor develop the discipline to work hard unless they are beaten or threatened with being beaten. Educators feel that their power as educators has been taken away from them because they are not able to use corporal punishment.
- Corporal punishment is quick and easy. Other methods require time, patience and skill that educators often lack.
- Non-violent approaches to discipline will not have any effect on "hooligan" learners, particularly when there is gangsterism and violence in a school.
- Unless children are beaten, they will think they have "got away with" wrong doing and will repeat their misconduct.
- The banning of corporal punishment has led to a deterioration in the behaviour of learners and bringing back the cane is the only way to restore a culture of learning in schools.
- The only way "to deal" with difficult or disruptive learners with behavioural problems who don't respond to other disciplinary measures is to beat them.
- Corporal punishment is a part of their culture or religious beliefs.

- Since they themselves experienced no harmful effects from having been beaten as children, there is no reason why they should not use it too.

It is quite surprising that today's educators are thinking and behaving in this manner. I do not think this should be the case because alternatives to corporal punishment have been issued and need to be implemented by all educators.

2.9 Global issues regarding discipline

My review also covers literature on discipline in countries such as Britain, America and Australia. This was done to bring the rich perspectives and experiences of many countries on the issue of school discipline.

2.9.1 The global picture regarding discipline

Fields (2000) argues that concern for discipline is evident in many Western countries and increasingly in Asian countries as well (Spice, 1997). This concern is reinforced by surveys of public opinion, research on the problems faced by teachers in their day-to-day work, reported levels of teacher stress, and evidence of the growing number of disaffected and alienated youth in society at large. The annual Gallop Poll of community attitudes toward the public schools in the United States has consistently found discipline to be a major concern, in company with drugs, smoking, teenage pregnancy, fighting and gangs (Gallop, 1998). A similar national survey of teachers found that fifty-eight percent of correspondents reported their lessons were regularly disrupted by student misbehaviour (Langdon, 1997).

2.9.2 British perspective on discipline in schools

According to Parker-Jenkins (1999) assertive discipline is a theory based on a system which again has a commercial basis producing packaged material. The major thrust of this approach is towards creating rights in the classroom (Canter and Canter, 1976). There is a focus on establishing rules of behaviour, setting limits and recognising teachers' rights to uninterrupted lessons and parental support. This approach has been adopted by schools in Britain, and is based on a system of positive consequences to enforce the regulations (Martin, 1994). Similar ideas were expressed in guidelines produced by local authorities in Britain, such as Nottingham County Council's *Children's Behaviour in schools* (1994).

The awarding of rewards and privileges features as characteristic of many disciplinary policies and has a long tradition in schools. Derbyshire County Council (1993), for example, lists these rewards: merit systems and competitions; specific privileges and the recording of achievements in pupil profiles. Further afield, for example, the New South Wales Department of Education (1989) recommends award cards, notes to parents, merit certificates and awards for the whole class in recognition of good behaviour.

In Britain, the figures are very similar to the annual poll in the United States, with forty-eight percent of nursery school teachers, fifty percent of primary school teachers, and fifty-five percent of secondary school teachers having reported that they spend a large amount of time on matters of order and control of children (Merret & Taylor, 1994). In England and Wales, public anxiety about discipline in schools was so great that the government felt it necessary to conduct a major inquiry in schools (Department of Education & Science, 1989). The British government has acted to introduce tougher controls

to curb school violence and other forms of disruptive behaviour (Whitehead, 1997).

Concern about disruptive and anti-social behaviour in schools has also been fuelled by media coverage of incidents of gun-carrying students in United States schools. News revealed that there have been many 'thrill' and 'revenge' shootings by students as young as eleven years. An incident in middle class Littleton, Colorado, resulted in the death of fourteen students and a teacher (Weller, 1999).

2.9.3 American perspective

Edwards (2004) emphasises that children often bring problems to school that originate in other areas of their lives. Teachers must learn to recognize these problems and deal with them effectively rather than contributing to them. Sometimes school personnel or students' peers aggravate conditions by reacting in ways that exacerbate the situation. Children need to discern the nature of problems they bring to school but also need to recognise problems that are the result of how schools operate. Teachers can often be overwhelmed by the discipline problems which they have to deal with. They cause some of these problems themselves. However, many of the problems they face stem from the home, in society or from conditions and administrative procedures in the school.

Edwards (2004) explains that teachers must understand the causes of discipline problems to better deal with children at school. He highlights the causes of discipline problems as stemming from the role of the home, damage of self-concept, attention deprivation, love deprivation and excessive control.

(i) *Role of the home*

Various home experiences have an influence on children's behaviour. If parents spend little time at home, children may seek unsuitable social experiences elsewhere, experiences that sometimes have devastating consequences. Cangelosi (2004) supports this statement when he says that broken social bonds lead to chronically violent behaviours. Even when parents are at home, parent-child interactions may be laced with conflicts. Children from severely dysfunctional families in particular face enormous adjustment problems at school.

(ii) *Damage of self concept*

The development of self-concept in children begins long before they start attending school. Edwards (2004) states that in cases of single parents, such parents work to provide for the family. These "single parent" situations pose a problem for children in the neighbourhood where it is unsafe for them to be left alone. Under these circumstances, children commonly become preoccupied with things other than their schoolwork. They tend to devote less time and energy to schoolwork and focus on bad practices such as smoking and drinking. In these situations children grow up with no positive self concept and as a result perform poorly in schools.

(iii) *Attention deprivation*

Children who do not get enough attention at home often compensate by seeking attention from their teachers. Unfortunately, many children receive their parents' attention when they misbehave. If they do not disturb parents unduly, they are ignored. These conditions encourage unacceptable behaviour and discourage acceptable behaviour. Children from such homes discover that their behaviour is

a sure way to get the attention they crave. When children learn these behaviour patterns at home they tend to repeat them in school.

(iv) *Love deprivation*

Love deprivation is similar to attention deprivation. In fact, children usually consider attention to be an indication of how much they are loved. They feel unloved when parents are too preoccupied to give them sufficient attention. Some parents have the mistaken idea that the *quality* of time spent with their children can make up for the lack of *quantity* time to be spent with children.

(v) *Excessive control*

A history of excessive control at home may also create discipline problems in the school, particularly when the level of control has been extreme. Human beings need freedom; they want to control their own lives. They also want to control others (Glasser, 1984). This conflict is particularly challenging in the rearing and teaching of children. As children mature, they increasingly seek freedom from adult control. Conscientious parents ordinarily allow and even encourage children to assert their independence as their children demonstrate an ability to use it wisely.

2.9.4 Australian perspective on discipline in schools

The discipline problems most often reported by junior primary teachers as occurring almost on a daily basis in Australia were: hindering other pupils, idleness and work avoidance, talking out of turn, infringing class rules, not being punctual and making unnecessary noise. Verbal abuse and physical aggression to teachers was very rare. Looking at the nature of disciplinary problems in Australian primary schools, it appears that their system of

disciplining learners is effective. The policies of Australian schools relied on scriptures to ascertain appropriate measures for students. Discipline was supposedly not solely punishment but rather a training of the child's will and nature into a maturity of living and relating to the community around him or her. Discipline was claimed to be carried out in a loving attitude under the maxim of "Praise in public-Punish in private" (Fields, 2000). Walters, Cheyne and Banks (1972) argued that "punishment does not do what it is intended to do". Schools in Australia abandoned corporal punishment many years ago and implemented new ways of disciplining children. South Africa too will need to learn from such countries to implement alternative ways effectively.

2.10 Developing safe school programmes
2.10.1 The root of school violence

According to Cangelosi (2004) there is an emerging body of research-based literature that provides guidance to school personnel for developing strategies to reduce the incidence of violence at schools and effectively respond to violent activity when it does occur. To be in a position to develop such strategies, you need to examine the roots of school violence. He identifies the following four factors as the root of school violence: broken social bonds, stress and conflict, a culture of violence and unhealthy brains.

(i) *Social bonds*

When the social bond between child and adult was not nurtured, conscience was impaired and children did not internalise values. Historically, extended families or tribes provide social bonds. Today, having lost extended families, communities rely on a tiny nuclear family of one or two overstressed parents. Schools are now being asked to become new tribes, but are seldom prepared to play this role.

When families fail, however, the only alternative institution for re-education is prison (Cangelosi, 2004).

(ii) *Stress and conflict*

Cangelosi (2004) argues that when stress is severe and prolonged, some youth are overwhelmed, and respond in self-destructive and anti-social ways. They develop defensive behaviour patterns, display hostile biases towards adults, and bring a menacing interpersonal demeanour to school. For many, schools are major sources of stressors; students may fear peer rejection, bullies, and classroom failures. Not knowing how to secure self-esteem in positive ways, some seek status by acting out with hostility. Long (1990) developed a conflict cycle model to teach students, parents, and educators how to prevent stressful situations from escalating.

(iii) *Culture of violence*

Anti-crime laws cannot counter the pervasive, pro-violent messages of a culture of violence. The proliferation of weapons, daily news telecasts, television dramas, motion pictures, video games, sports and music lyrics are only some of the reflections of society's infatuation with violence. Brendtro and Long (1995) suggest that we may begin to inoculate children from the pro-violence message by leading them to analyse violence in media, focusing on consequences and the true meaning of sportsmanship.

(iv) *Unhealthy brains*

Teaching and learning should take place in a healthy and conducive atmosphere. Unhealthy brains caused by infiltration of drugs into schools lead to bad conduct and psychological disorders. The habit of

using drugs emanates from home, peer pressure and by adult exploitation.

The complex social setting of a classroom is not conducive to treating psychological disorders; however, strategies for preventing substance abuse problems from interfering with the school and classroom learning environment need to be incorporated into school-wide safety programmes and classroom management plans (Cangelosi, 2004).

2.10.2 Focus on prevention, not retribution

Educators should focus on preventing misbehaviours rather than depending on the use of punishment. It is important for educators to be able to identify potential misbehaviours beforehand so that they may be able to prevent the misbehaviours from happening. Educators should come into class fully prepared for the activities that will take place in order to prevent misbehaviours. "Students' out-of-turn talking disrupts a learning activity; their teacher should apply strategies for terminating their disruptive behaviours, re-engage the class in the learning activity, and teach the students to choose more appropriate times to do their talking" (Cangelosi, 2004).

2.10.3 Violence-prevention strategies

By meeting children's needs for consistent, loving, safe environments, communities need to begin repairing broken social bonds. Cangelosi (2004) emphasises that communities must develop comprehensive family support centres and redesign schools to restore the sense of tribe. Programmes where all children learn self-discipline should begin in the primary grades and continue through secondary school. Charney (1993) proposes a curriculum for ethical literacy in which teachers create cultures of non-violence and teach self discipline by playing off naturally-occurring conflicts and problems. School-wide

conflict resolution programmes teach children to manage conflict and address problems through negotiation and peer mediation. Hostile school climates have been transformed into gentler, safer communities via programmes for developing conflict resolution skills (Sandy & Cochran, 2000).

2.10.4 Conflict management and resolution in curricula

The elimination of violence does not mean the elimination of conflict. Some conflicts can have positive outcomes (Johnson & Johnson, 1991, 1992). Conflict can increase achievement, motivation to learn, high-level reasoning, long-term retention, healthy social and cognitive development, and the fun students have in school.

Conflicts can also enrich relationships, clarify personal identity, increase ego strength, promote resilience in the face of adversity, and clarify how one needs to change. Schrumpf, Crawford, & Usadel (1991) developed a programme in which students are trained to serve as panel members (i.e. mediators) so that they learn to be unbiased, respectful, and empathetic listeners who lead the disputants through the stages of mediation sessions.

2.10.5 Interdisciplinary co-operation and collaboration

Walker, Colvin & Ramsey (1995) highlighted the point that effective schools, as a rule, establish organisational structures in which all concerned parties (internal and external) have the opportunity to become involved with the planning, development, implementation and revision of school-wide plans. These parties include staff, students, parents, and community agency personnel as appropriate.

Perhaps one of the most significant current trends for effective management practices in public schools is the increase in co-

operation and collaboration between school staff and the staff of various social service agencies (for example, mental health services, disability advocacy organisations, courts, parent support agencies, juvenile or youth service systems, and children's protective services). This trend is evident and clearly more necessary in dealing with the needs and challenges of chronologically-troubled students who are increasingly populating schools; that is, those manifesting anti-social behaviour patterns and related disorders (Epstein, Foley & Cullinan, 1992).

2.11 Solutions to the problem of violence in schools

According to Maree & Cherian (2004) the following suggestions were made by different researchers to reduce the spiral of violence in schools:

- Educating and supporting parents: parents need to be trained and empowered in identifying developing symptoms of misbehaviour at an early stage. In so doing this can decrease the number of problems that are experienced by educators in schools.

- Educating and supporting teachers: support structures should be put into place; educators need support from parents and other departmental officials to help educators to deal with disciplinary problems at schools. Training strategies are of great importance so that teachers will be able to identify the cause of discipline problems. They need to be empowered with skills to be able to deal with discipline problems.

- Changing the school environment: learners should be motivated by being in a safe and protected school environment and should appreciate being at school; learners thus develop a positive attitude towards school. Learners should take the school as their second home where they will display the same respect as they should at home. Learners should be organized into teams

and compete constructively with each other to create an enjoyable and lively school environment.

- Facilitating the role of consultants and psychologists: The role of consultants and psychologists is very important in schools because learners who have major psychological problems will be identified by trained persons and dealt with accordingly in a professional manner. When problems are identified at an early stage they can be corrected.

2.12 Conclusion

It should be kept in mind that, although it is much easier to control by authority than to identify and work through deeper-lying reasons for undesirable behaviour, discipline will in any event go wrong if the causes and motives for undesirable behaviour are not dealt with appropriately (Maree and Cherian, 2004, p.77). It has been found that many ways of disciplining learners currently are not aimed at building self-confidence, do not take learners' basic needs into account and do not suggest an attempt at improving the underlying problem of an inadequate configuration of relationships (Porteus et al 2001).

To conclude the literature review on the issue of corporal punishment and implementing "Alternatives to Corporal Punishment", the assumption clearly is that any form of abuse i.e. physical, emotional or otherwise is unacceptable. Every individual has inherent dignity and a right to have his or her dignity respected and protected. All teachers must acknowledge that learners are unique, have their own individuality and specific needs. Therefore, teachers must guide and encourage each learner to realise his or her potential without the use of corporal punishment. Educators must strive to enable learners to develop a set of values consistent with the fundamental rights contained in the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996). Teachers must not give up their struggle to manage discipline

problems in schools. Hence, the purpose of this study is to document the challenges facing rural primary schools in the implementation of the alternatives to corporal punishment policy.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the design of my research. I used the qualitative method of collecting data and the case study approach in my research. This approach is appropriate because it gives an opportunity for a problem to be investigated in some depth within limited time. It also makes it possible to probe and make a comprehensive analysis of the various issues that are being investigated.

3.2 Sampling

There are seven primary schools in KwaNgcolosi and eMolweni areas. Through purposive sampling I chose three primary schools because through casual communication with the teachers, it appeared that their schools had a problem of discipline. In each school, one principal, one head of department (HOD), one school governing body (SGB) member (parent), and a grade seven educator were interviewed in each of the three schools.

The sample of nine educators and three parents was purposively chosen on the grounds that principals, HODs, educators and parents play a significant role in disciplining the learners in terms of the alternatives to corporal punishment policy of 2001.

3.3 The qualitative approach

The qualitative approach helped me as a researcher to make meaning from the data by seeing the bigger picture and converting the "raw" empirical information into what is known in qualitative research as a

"thick description". A thick description gives an account of the phenomenon (a) that is coherent (b) and that gives more than facts and empirical content, but (c) that also interprets the information in the light of other empirical information in the same study, as well as from the basis of a theoretical framework that locates the study (Henning, 2004, p.6). Qualitative research encompasses both a philosophy of knowing and a number of approaches to collecting and analyzing information. As a philosophy of knowing, qualitative research focuses on understanding from the perspective of whoever or whatever is being studied. Rather than trying to establish "objective" descriptions and relationships, as quantitative research does, qualitative studies are based on the assumption that reality is subjective and dependant on context. There are "multiple realities" that need to be described in detail to result in a complete and deep understanding of the phenomena being investigated (McMillan & Wergin, 2002, p.119).

According to Welman (2005), the term "case study" pertains to the fact that a limited number of analyses are studied intensively. The units of analysis include individuals, groups and institutions. The term "case study" does not refer to a specific technique that is applied. In case studies we are directed towards understanding the uniqueness and the idiosyncrasy of a particular case in all its complexity. Three aspects deserve special mention as far as conducting case studies is concerned: Firstly, the case should be defined or demarcated. Secondly, whichever technique is used to collect data, the concern is not merely to describe what is being observed, but to research, in an inductive fashion, for recurring patterns and consistent regularities. Thirdly, triangulation is frequently used to discern these patterns. Because the number of cases is limited, the very purpose of case studies is to intensively examine those cases that are indeed available.

3.4 Data collection instrument

3.4.1 The choice of research instrument

I tried to ascertain what data collection methods would best suit my research study. I found that the use of semi-structured interviews were the most suitable instrument to answer my three key critical questions. An interview is an instrument of research methodology and is considered to be a way of learning about people's thoughts, feelings and experiences. Cohen et al (2000, p.167) describe the interview as an opportunity for participants to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situation from their own viewpoint. The research interview is thus defined as a conversation initiated by the interviewer for obtaining relevant research information. In this study interviews are semi-structured. The schedules consisted of key points to be covered during the interviews. The added advantages are that the interviewer is able to answer questions by the interviewee concerning both the purpose of the interview and any misunderstandings experienced by the interviewee (Cohen et al 2000, p.269). Verbal and non-verbal behaviour can be noted in face to face interviews. Interviews result in a much wider response rate than questionnaires, especially for topics that concern personal qualities. Tuchman in Cohen (2000, p.268) describes an interview as providing access to what is inside a person's head; it makes it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge of information), what a person likes or dislikes (values and preferences) and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs).

3.4.2 Designing an interview schedule

While designing the interview schedule I thought about three main types of questions which I then included in the semi-structured interview. Firstly, the idea of asking factual questions about the implementation of the "Alternatives to corporal punishment" was a

useful one. This question gave a clear indication of whether or not educators carried out the policy or not. Furthermore, educators had to fully explain the extent of their involvement with discipline.

Secondly, the idea of including a question about their experiences allowed teachers to speak about their actual experiences of policy implementation and the difficulties encountered in respect of disciplining learners.

Thirdly, the open-ended question allowed for the contents to be recorded and expanded for further probing on matters arising from observation.

3.5 Gaining access to respondents for interviews

I made several calls to my respondents in order to confirm my appointments. At the beginning Heads of Departments and educators showed a negative attitude towards me as a researcher. I then explained to them the need for such research and the importance of the findings for the provision of support to teachers. The interviewees agreed and I had no problem thereafter.

Schools under study were named before the actual fieldwork of data collection was undertaken. In naming the schools' alphabetical order was used. The intention was that the actual interviews were going to start at school A, followed by school B, and lastly school C. Due to unforeseen circumstances school A rescheduled the set date. This situation meant the interviews started at school B. This rescheduling of schools did not affect the actual interviews; it only affected the sequence.

3.6 The Interviews
3.6.1 School B

My interviews started at school B. School B is in KwaNgcolosi which is a rural area that is about twenty kilometres away from Hillcrest. As I have mentioned above, KwaNgcolosi is a rural area and the adults in communities from this area work far from their homes in towns and cities like Durban and Pinetown. This school is close to the Umngeni River and Inanda Dam. Some of the community members make their living from planting as they have access to water from the river and the dam. They normally sell part of their harvests to tourists who visit the area to fish from the river and the dam.

School B has three blocks of buildings and attached to one of the blocks that is next to the security gate is a principal's office. In one of the blocks is a computer-room. (A classroom was converted for the purpose of accommodating a computer-room.) At the sides of the blocks of buildings there are water tanks that supply water for the whole school. The enrolment at this school is about 380 learners. There are ten educators including the principal. A separate building for boys' and girls' toilets is situated at the far of the school premises. A pit toilet system is used and there is no water for a flush toilet system at this school. Learners' toilets are separate from educators' toilets. The school is not properly fenced but it does have a fence and a security gate. There is no security guard at the gate to control visitors' access to the school.

As there was no staff-room, school hall or boardroom at this school we used a classroom for the interviews. I did not experience any difficulties with gaining access to this school since I am known to the principal and the members of staff. I arranged with the principal to negotiate for my interviews with the other participants who were members of staff and also with a parent. I did not experience problems

in getting willing participants. Interviews were conducted on a Wednesday afternoon after lunch. I moved into the classroom that was set up for interview proceedings and found that everything was ready and in order.

3.6.1.1 Interview: principal School B

An interview with the principal of School B was conducted in the classroom that was arranged for this purpose. It started from 13h00 and ended at 13h30. The main focus of the interview was on the understanding of alternative ways to discipline, the challenges faced by principals in the implementation of alternatives to corporal punishment, the support principals get from the Department of Education to discipline learners and the causes of a lack of discipline in schools. I explained to the principal that the interviews were going to be tape-recorded and I asked for the principal's permission to do so. A few questions were posed for clarity purposes and to fill in some missing information. Everything went well and there were no interruptions or problems experienced.

3.6.1.2 Interview: HOD School B

An interview with the HOD of School B also took place in the classroom. The interview with the HOD lasted for about twenty minutes (from 13h35 to 13h55). The main focus of the interview with the HOD was the same as that of the principal. I explained everything to her and I asked for permission to tape-record the interview proceedings. There were no problems or difficulties that I experienced and everything went very well. I asked a few questions for the sake of clarity and for additional information.

3.6.1.3 Interview: parent School B

An interview with a parent was conducted in the same classroom. It started at 14h00 and ended at 14h20. The main focus of the interview with the parent was on the ways educators use to discipline learners at school, the problems they face when educators discipline learners, the support they give to educators to discipline learners and the problems created by learners who do not live with their parents. Before the interview started I explained to the parent that the interview was going to be tape-recorded and I asked for permission to do so. Questions for clarity and for more information were posed during the proceedings with the parent. No problems or interruptions were experienced during the interview proceedings. Everything went smoothly.

3.6.1.4 Interview: educator School B

An interview with the educator also took place in the classroom. It lasted for fifteen minutes (from 14h25 to 14h40). The focus of the interview with the educator was on the support they got from the school management team (SMT) regarding disciplining learners, their experiences of disciplinary actions against learners, the impact of disobedient learners and the support from parents to discipline learners. I explained to the educator that the interview was going to be tape-recorded and also asked for permission to do so. Probing questions were asked of the educator for clarity purposes and to gain further information which was lacking.

3.6.2 School A

Second interviews were conducted at school A. School A is in eMolweni, a rural area outside Pinetown. This school is about fifteen kilometres away from Pinetown and about forty kilometres away from

Durban. As it is the case with the communities in KwaNgcolosi, the adults from the communities from eMolweni work far away from their homes in towns and cities such as Pinetown and Durban. The communities from this area consist mostly of unemployed people. Most of the people from this area depend on government grants for their survival.

School A consists of four blocks of buildings and is properly fenced. There is a security gate but there is no security guard controlling and recording the details of people who are visiting the school. The enrolment at school A is about 550 learners. At this school they have a flush toilet system for learners and educators. Attached to one of the school's blocks are the principal's, deputy principal's and HODs' offices.

I did not experience any difficulties with gaining access to this school since I am known to the principal and the members of staff. I arranged with the principal to negotiate for my interviews with the other participants who are members of staff and also with a parent. I did not experience problems in getting willing participants. A deputy principal's office was used for the interviews.

3.6.2.1 Interview: principal School A

The interview with the principal of school A was conducted in the deputy principal's office. It started at 13h00 and ended at 13h20. The main focus of the interview with the principal was the same as the interview with the principal in School B. The same interview proceedings as in School B were followed. The interview was tape-recorded and permission to record asked for before recording was done. There were no problems or interruptions and everything went well during the interview with the principal.

3.6.2.2 Interview-HOD School A

An interview with an HOD of School A was also conducted in the deputy principal's office. It started at 13h25 and ended at 13h45. The main focus of the interview with the HOD was the same as in School B. The same interview proceedings as in School B were followed. The interview was tape-recorded to capture interview discussions. The purpose of recording was explained and permission to do so was asked. Probing questions were posed during the interview for clarity purposes and to gain some additional information. There were no problems or interruptions during the interview.

3.6.2.3 Interview: educator School A

An interview with the educator of School A also took place in the deputy principal's office. It started at 13h50 and ended at 14h20. The main focus of the interview with the educator was the same as that of the educator in School B. The same interview proceedings of the educator in School B were followed with the educator in School A. The interviews were tape-recorded to capture the interview discussions. Follow-up questions were sometimes asked during the interview for clarity. There were no problems or interruptions during the interview.

3.6.2.4 Interview: parent School A

An interview with the parent of School A was also conducted in the same office. It started at 14h30 and ended at 14h45; it lasted for fifteen minutes. The main focus of the interview with a parent of School A was the same as that of the parent of School B. The same interview proceedings as in School B were followed. The interview was recorded to capture interview discussions. Before recording the interview permission was asked from the parent. Everything was in order and there were no problems that were experienced.

3.6.3 School C

The third and last interviews were conducted at school C. School C is in KwaNgcolosi, a rural area about twenty kilometres outside Hillcrest. The communities from this area consist mostly of unemployed people who depend on government grants for survival. This school is along the main road and consists of six blocks of buildings. The conditions at school C are much better when compared to the conditions of the other two schools. At this school they have a security fence and a security guard at the gate who controls access of people into the school. He makes a record of all the people who visit the school. The administration block is next to the gate. Inside the administration block is a principal's office, a deputy principal's office, HODs' offices and an administration clerk's desk. They have a flush toilet system for both educators and learners.

In one of the buildings there is a school library, a computer room and a school hall. The enrolment at this school is about 800 learners. I did not experience any difficulties with gaining access to this school since I am known to the principal and the members of staff. I arranged with the principal to negotiate for my interviews with the other participants who are members of staff and also with a parent. I did not experience problems in getting willing participants.

3.6.3.1 Interview: principal School C

An interview with the principal of School C was conducted in the principal's office. It started at 13h15 and ended at 13h55. The main focus of the interview with the principal of School C was the same as that of the interview with the principal in School B and School A. The same interview proceedings as in School B were followed. The interview was tape-recorded and permission to record asked for before

recording was done. There were no problems or interruptions and everything went well during the interview with the principal.

3.6.3.2 Interview: HOD School C

The interview with the HOD of School C also took place in the principal's office. It started at 14h00 and ended at 14h20. The main focus of the interview with the HOD was the same as in School B. The same interview proceedings as in School B were followed. The interview was tape-recorded to capture interview discussions. The purpose of recording was explained and permission to do so was asked. Probing questions were posed during the interview for clarity purposes and to gain some added information. There were no problems or interruptions during the interview.

3.6.3.3 Interview: educator School C

The interview with an educator of School C was also conducted in the principal's office. It started at 14h30 and ended at 14h50. The main focus of the interview with the educator was the same as that of the educator in School B. The same interview proceedings with the educator in School B were followed with the educator in School C. The interviews were tape-recorded to capture the interview discussions. Follow-up questions were sometimes asked during the interview for clarity. There were no problems or interruptions during the interview.

3.6.3.4 Interview: parent School C

An interview with a parent of School C was conducted in the same office. It started at 14h55 and ended at 14h20. The main focus of the interview with a parent of School C was the same as that of the parent of School B. The same interview proceedings as in School B were followed. The interview was recorded to capture interview discussions.

Before recording the interview permission was asked from the parent. Everything went well in School C and was in order except for a tape-recorder that I did not notice it had stopped recording during my interview with the principal. I explained the problem to him after noticing that it has stopped and I asked him to start all over again. He agreed and we started all over again and there was no problem when I was doing it for a second time. I finished the interviews on Friday as I had planned to conduct interviews at only three schools.

3.7 Ethical considerations
3.7.1 The University

To address the issue of ethical considerations I applied for ethical clearance from the university. In my ethical clearance application I indicated that the study was based at three primary schools in the KwaNgcolosi and eMolweni areas. I indicated that the respondents were allowed to withdraw at any time if they were not happy. I also indicated that the research project was for the purpose of my degree only.

3.7.2 Access to the field

I wrote a letter to KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education to ask permission to conduct the study in three schools in the KwaNgcolosi and eMolweni areas. After the Department of Education granted me permission, I wrote a letter to the school principals to ask for permission to conduct the study with educators and parents in their schools. I telephoned to make appointments with the principals of the three schools after school hours. I made sure that I explained my entire research study. The issue of confidentiality was discussed fully. I assured all principals that the identity of the school and the respondents would remain anonymous. I will respect the rights, interests, values and beliefs of all the participants. I will make every

effort to respect and ensure the confidentiality of every participant in my study. The results of this study will be discussed with all the participants in order to report back and check on their concerns.

3.8 Conclusion

My chapter three outlines the methodology used in my research work. My focus was on the target population, sampling, the data collection instrument and data analysis and ethical issues. I believe that the use of interviews was appropriate for my study. For triangulation I used three (3) different schools and also interviewed people from different levels, namely educators, principals, HODs and parents. I am confident that the responses from the interviews provided sufficient answers to all three key critical questions.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In the schools in KwaNgcolosi and eMolweni rural areas under the authority of the Pinetown District and Molweni Ward a lack of discipline prevailed. Out of seven primary schools three primary schools participated in the study. The choice of three primary schools was informed by a high rate of a lack of discipline in these areas. I established this problem while talking to principals of these schools. Parents, whose learners went to these schools, had complained about a lack of learners' discipline.

Three rural primary schools were involved in the study. For confidentiality purpose the first, second and third schools are named School A, School B and School C respectively. In each school the informants comprised a principal, a head of department, an educator and a parent. The total number of participants was 12. Choice of the three schools that took part in the study was informed by the problem of a lack of discipline amongst learners while alternatives to the corporal punishment policy were being tried. A lack of discipline had forced these schools to use corporal punishment in some situations, although it had already been abolished.

In data collection, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. The interviews were used because they created the space to probe respondents further for clarity. More questions were asked to clarify and to confirm that which participants had mentioned. An advantage of using interviews, according to Babbie & Mouton (2005), is that respondents are unlikely to turn down a researcher after making appointments. Interviews are also useful as

the researcher is in a position to read the informant's facial expressions and other body language that negate, emphasise or affirm the statement made by the respondents.

4.2 Research questions

To investigate the challenges in the implementation of the alternatives to corporal punishment in the rural primary schools in the KwaNgcolosi and eMolweni areas the following research questions were asked:

1. How do rural primary schools implement the alternatives to corporal punishment policy?
2. What are the new experiences of principals, teachers and parents after the introduction of alternatives to corporal punishment policy?
3. How do the rural primary schools manage the implementation of the alternatives to corporal punishment policy?

4.3 Respondents

The participants involved in the study ranged from principals, HODs, educators to parents. These participants played significant roles in carrying out many school policies particularly in the implementation of Alternatives to Corporal Punishment Policy.

These participants can be grouped in three categories:

1. Principals and Heads of Departments (HOD): These form part of the school management team (SMT) and one of their many responsibilities is to make sure that there is good discipline within the school. With regard to alternatives to corporal punishment policy they were expected to ensure that this policy is implemented effectively at school.
2. Educators: All educators are a component that ought to implement the disciplinary measures (as per disciplinary policy)

both inside and outside the classroom on a daily basis. It is important to understand how educators dealt with matters of discipline in their classrooms.

3. Parents: Parents are a part of the school governance system and for this reason they play an important role in the formulation of school policies. To add to the above, alternatives to corporal punishment was a policy to be applied to their children. Hence, they had a role in influencing policy as parents sometimes dictate to educators how they should treat their learners.

4.4 Responses

This study focussed on the challenges found in the implementation of the alternatives to corporal punishment policy in three rural primary schools in KwaZulu–Natal. In trying to investigate and explore these challenges, the researcher felt it was important to highlight the processes of implementation and the factors that influence implementation. According to Fullan (1991, p.65) 'implementation consists of the process of putting into practice an idea, program, or set of activities and structures new to the people attempting or expected to change.'

The principals and the heads of departments of the three schools interviewed stated that they understood the alternative ways of disciplining learners at schools. A question was posed to the above educators and they were asked about the ways of disciplining the learners that they used in schools. They indicated that they used detention, manual work, verbal warnings, issuing of cards for demerits and the calling in of parents as the main measures to discipline learners. They highlighted the fact that they avoided measures like suspensions and expulsions as these would involve external consultations and long processes.

Another measure of disciplining the learners at school according to HOD (a) was issuing verbal warnings and demerit cards. This is highlighted in the following statement: *One type of punishment is giving misbehaving learners warnings or issuing them with cards which are [cards] followed by manual work.* According to HOD (c) he felt that since he was not trained on how to apply alternatives to corporal punishment he opted to discipline learners using detention and manual work as the main measures. When interviewed he stated: *There is nothing I can say to be honest that I went through training…Whatever I understand and use is something that I believe in.*

The principals and the heads of departments interviewed concluded that they understood the alternative ways of disciplining the learners. However, it was rather surprising to note that even though they claimed that they understood the alternative ways to discipline learners that were issued by the Department of Education, only two measures were used: detention and extra work [manual work]. It was only HOD (a), who went beyond these two alternatives and made mention of verbal warnings and card systems. In my opinion, since only two measures were mainly used in these three schools, this indicates that educators did not understand the different measures used to discipline learners. A lack of understanding can cause educators who are expected to implement the Alternatives to Corporal Punishment Policy to lack the basic strategies of implementing the policy. Lack of understanding can be reflected when educators avoid using other measures that might help to solve the problems of misbehaviour in schools. Even though the documents about this policy were issued to all schools, School Management Teams, educators and parents in some rural schools lacked the proper guidance on the effective implementation of alternative ways of disciplining the learners.

What problems or challenges do you encounter in the implementation of alternatives to corporal punishment?

Responding to this question, the principals and HODs indicated that there were problems they encountered in the implementation of the Alternatives to Corporal Punishment Policy. For example, all three principals indicated that the main challenge was that many learners did not regard alternative ways of disciplining learners such as detention and manual work as punishment. Learners would carry out their punishment laughingly and even make jokes about it. This is backed up by principal A when he says: *Learners take [manual work] as a joke...they seem to be enjoying it; you will find them singing and dancing as they serve punishment.* In schools detention and manual work are the main measures that are used to discipline learners. Other measures like suspension and expulsion are avoided. These sentiments echoed by principals concurred with HOD (b) and HOD (c).

The principals highlighted the fact that it was a very difficult task to apply alternative measures of disciplining learners in these schools since some of the learners did not take these alternative measures seriously. The three principals found it difficult to punish learners using detention and manual work; it was not easy to apply in rural communities where manual work was taken as a normal activity.

It is important to come up with measures to suit rural communities. The two main measures used in these three primary schools proved to be ineffective in correcting misbehaviour.

HOD (a), HOD (b) and HOD (c) were asked the same questions as the three principals. In responding to this question, HOD (a) highlighted non co-operation of parents in working with other stakeholders as a problem. For the effective implementation of the Alternatives to Corporal Punishment Policy it is vital that all stakeholders should co-operate and work together. When parents were invited to attend the

meetings where issues relating to a lack of learners' discipline were discussed they did not turn up.

Another measure of dealing with a lack of discipline in schools, second to the detention and manual work, is calling in a parent to be part of the solution to the problem. This is backed up by the following statement made by HOD (c): *It is hard to get parents to come to school...they say do whatever you want to do...parents' co-operation is very important and punishment needs to be decided by both educators and parents.*

All three principals and the three HODs felt that even though they understood the alternative ways to discipline learners they still needed support in the form of guidance, workshops and training from the Department of Education. They reported that they did not receive informative and sufficient support in the form of guidance and training. They indicated that they were only issued with an alternative to corporal punishment document. They argued that they needed guidance because whatever effort they made to implement the policy, were ineffective since they were failing to control the misconduct of learners in their schools. They mentioned that misbehaviour was getting worse on a daily basis in schools, even though they implemented these alternative measures [detention and manual work] to discipline misbehaving learners.

There is a general opinion that schools are organisations where a culture of respect and discipline should be practised. A lack of discipline and respect in learners is seen by members of the community as a failure of schools to live up to expectations. This negative image of schools forced some educators to instil a culture of respect and discipline by resorting to corporal punishment despite it being abolished.

What do you think is the cause of a lack of discipline in schools?

Principal A mentioned the home situation as a main source that contributed to ill-discipline in schools. Many parents view the school as a source of knowledge and as an institution that can develop new accepted morals. For misbehaviour parents often tell their children [learners] that they will report them to the school. Parents in this way abdicate their responsibilities.

This principal is adamant that the issue of ill-discipline stems from home. He believes that if there is no discipline at home the learners will behave badly at school as well. He strongly believes that there is a link between what is happening at home and what is happening at school. He added that if children behave well at home where parents inculcate good morals and values in them, learners will exhibit good behaviour at schools. This can be supported by the following statement: *If discipline lacks at home...parents send their children [learners] to school expecting that they will be disciplined by the educators.*

He also stated that children [learners] enjoy more rights in schools such as the right to be heard and a right to safety than other stakeholders [educators and parents]. In my opinion it is doubtful that children [learners] at primary school level understand their rights. For example, children [learners] have a right to education, and a responsibility involved is to be willing to learn. In schools in the rural areas one does not see this willingness to learn and this is shown in the way that learners behave. This is backed up by the statement made by principal A: *Children have more rights than everyone else...they have telephone numbers to call to report abuse.*

Principal B concurred with Principal A with regard to the issue of rights and responsibilities. He also argued that poor discipline is caused by a lack of support from the Department of Education to

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ensure that parents are trained to make their children behave responsibly. He believes that much can be done by the Department of Education to improve discipline through involving learners and parents together in workshops for common understanding of issues regarding good behaviour and also misbehaviour. All stakeholders, that is educators, learners and parents, must have a common understanding of how to implement Alternatives to Corporal Punishment; this is highlighted by the following: *The Department of Education [South African Government] imposed rights to school kids [learners] without training them...learners abuse their rights because they do not understand what are their responsibilities...workshopping them together can help solve the problem.* Some of the people in communities in rural areas are illiterate and they are not aware of their children's rights and responsibilities. Parents as community members are expected to help and guide their children on how to use their rights. Learners act irresponsibly and, for example, come late to school without valid reasons and expect that their excuses will be accepted.

In responding to the above question, Principal C mentioned that corporal punishment was mainly used within the African culture and in African schools in the rural areas to discipline children [learners]. This was an accepted form of practice which worked well for many years. Since the introduction of the alternatives to corporal punishment the discipline and respect in rural schools was affected. He stated that the learners did not take other punishment seriously. They saw it as a game. This can be supported by principal A when saying: *We were used to corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure and it is what most African children [learners] in rural schools understand....due to the laws or legal issues around corporal punishment children now feel free to do as they please....to them [alternative ways] are just part of a game.*

Principal C further mentioned that a lack of discipline is also perpetuated by the use of drugs in schools. He believes that the use of drugs by learners in rural schools contributes to a lack of discipline. This is noted in the following statement that he made: *Another issue is the use of drugs at schools; they misbehave because they have been using drugs and that is the main cause of a lack of discipline in schools.*

The above problem of learners using drugs in rural schools was also echoed by Parent A in the following statement: *Sometimes with boys you will find that he is not at home after school doing drugs...drugs make them come back late from school and they will claim that they were being detained at school.*

Principal A and principal B concurred that some of the learners who are not disciplined at home engage in bad behaviour like using drugs and also bringing drugs to school for other learners to use. Ill-disciplined children from such home environment normally bring behaviour problems to schools.

All three principals felt that poor discipline at schools was a result of a lack of discipline at home. The Department of Education's policy concerning "Alternatives to Corporal Punishment" (2001) to all stakeholders was issued without appropriate training; the move from the cultural practice of disciplining learners to the new approaches that is, Alternatives to Corporal Punishment, has not helped with thee infiltration of drugs. One of the principals had this to say:

This is our biggest challenge learners are bringing weapons and drugs to school. I can show you knives, bush-knives, spears and knobkerries; glue and alcohol is sometimes contained in juice bottles. We confiscate these things from learners almost every month. One girl was caught sipping alcohol from a juice bottle on school premises. In trying to resolve this problem, parents of the learners who are

involved in such behaviour are called to school. However, the only support parents offer is to give a right to educators to punish these children in whatever way that we as educators feel is effective and appropriate. Parents claim that they are sick and tired of the problems caused by their children at school since the banning of corporal punishment. They argued that they are always called to school to solve problems now that corporal punishment is no longer used in schools. Their main concern was that some of them sometimes have to take a day off from work which was not the case before the banning of corporal punishment because the form of punishment was known... Parents claim that they do not know what to do to support educators to solve the problem of misbehaviour in school because children have 'rights' that protect them. Carrying dangerous weapons like knives to school also puts other learners' lives and even educators' lives in danger. There is a problem of violence in schools these days which is perpetuated when drugs and weapons are brought to school.

HOD (a) believes that educators do not know what to do and what they can use instead of corporal punishment; as a result nothing is done to discipline learners. This scenario is reflected in the following statement: *The educators do not know what to do or what to use instead of corporal punishment....learners at the same time end up not being disciplined.* These sentiments made by HOD (a) were concurred with by HOD (c) that educators lack the understanding of how to discipline learners in schools. She further mentioned that the problem is that educators in rural schools do not know what they have to do in simple ways. Educators normally do what they think is right in disciplining learners. This is noted in the following statement: *Educators do not know exactly how to discipline learners in rural schools....everybody is thinking of his or her own way to discipline learners.*

HOD (b) mentioned that educators were told to use alternative ways to corporal punishment and they are aware of what to use instead of disciplining learners using corporal punishment. He added that banning corporal punishment was not the cause of a lack of discipline in rural schools. He argued that alternative ways were issued to educators in rural schools to use instead of corporal punishment. This is highlighted in the following statement: *I do not think that corporal punishment is the cause of a lack of discipline in learners in rural schools....alternative ways of disciplining learners were issued to educators in rural areas.*

The general opinion amongst the Heads of Departments (HODs) is that a lack of discipline in rural primary schools emanates from educators not knowing what to do to discipline learners and a lack of support for educators in the form of guidance and training workshops. HOD (b) indicated, the alternatives to corporal punishment were imposed on them [educators] by the Department of Education without any support, guidance, follow ups and evaluation on the processes of implementation of the policy and a lack of understanding on how to discipline learners using alternative ways to corporal punishment.

The similarity amongst principals and the HODs was that they all mentioned that they understood the main reasons for alternative ways to discipline the learners. However it was common among them that they experienced some difficulties and also encountered problems with the implementation of Alternatives to Corporal Punishment in their schools. The difficulty was the issue of implementation, because even though there was a policy, there was no proper guidance from the Department of Education. The SMT, together with the school governing body [SGB], normally decides on the manner of implementation. The implication with regards to the implementation of the alternative ways of disciplining the learners in the case of the three principals and the three HODs in these rural primary schools is

that some of the parents are not co-operative as they are question the abolishment of corporal punishment; they are against the new policy.

The educators interviewed were asked the following questions:
What support do you get from the school management in regard to disciplining learners?

Educators from the two schools clearly indicated that they received support from the SMT in disciplining learners, even though the SMT did not receive any support from the Department. Their support was for policies initiated by the school. These schools have disciplinary committees guided by the school management teams. These disciplinary committees are responsible for maintaining good discipline at school. Educator B made the following statement: *I deal with the learners and if I cannot handle a learner I send her/him to the disciplinary committee.* This is further supported by Educator C in the following statement: *A learner is taken to the committee which looks at the behaviour of that learner and interviews the learner. Maybe a learner has a problem. The committee monitors the behaviour of that learner and if the behaviour does not change the committee calls in parents. The parents need to be informed so the management helps with the informing and calling of parents.* In both these cases parental involvement is noticeable since they are also called to the disciplinary hearings.

Whilst the above two schools have disciplinary committees in place poor discipline still exists. This is supported by the following statement made by Educator B: *Some learners hide behind bushes and they end up not doing what they are told to do and we have to follow them and at the end you realise that it is not going anywhere.* This is further supported by the same educator in the following statement: *Other parents are siding with their children and they do not want their children to be disciplined at school. They are protecting their children even though they misbehave at school.*

Highlight your experiences of the disciplinary measures against learners in the school?

Educator A highlighted the fact that since the alternatives to corporal punishment were difficult to use in their school they sometimes resorted to using corporal punishment. Resorting to corporal punishment on the other hand was a problem because parents used it as a source of money. Parents claim big sums of money from them whenever they beat their children at school. This is substantiated by the following statement: *We have had cases where children were beaten by educators and the parents came to school. The parents came not to solve the problems but had another intentions; that is to say the educators must pay them some money because beating children is no longer allowed at schools.*

It is clear that punishments, particularly the alternatives to corporal punishment are not accepted by some learners. Since alternative ways to corporal punishment are the only legally allowed forms of punishment to be used in schools, some learners had developed a negative attitude towards punishment. One educator stated that: *Sometimes you find that the child [learner] pulls funny faces if you talk to him or her, just because you have punished him or her.*

The above statement was further supported by educator C and it is noted in the following statement that she made: *We usually punish the learners by telling them to clean the toilets. Other learners laugh at them as they clean the toilets and they get embarrassed. When you are in class they show you that they are angry with you. Some of these learners are getting into their teenage stages and they like to show off to their friends and this will get others disturbed from their lessons.*

Educators interviewed concluded that the alternatives to corporal punishment policy created more problems at schools than before; for example when educators are ordered to pay parents money. They

argued that all educators were trying to do was to bring back authority, respect and discipline to our institutions. They said they had seen schools as institutions that had started to teach hatred amongst learners since the introduction of the alternatives to corporal punishment.

Educator A highlighted a different scenario. Of the three educators interviewed, educator stated that there was no support from the school management. This educator indicated that in the past they used to refer misbehaving learners to the principal who used to discipline them himself. She pointed to the fact that now there were no standard procedures of disciplining the learners at this school and she mentioned that educators were using their own measures and own styles to discipline the learners; sometimes some educators used banned practices like corporal punishment.

The other two educators that were interviewed indicated that they did get support from school management to discipline the learners. They revealed that disciplinary committees were formed at their schools to support educators with disciplinary problems of their learners. They mentioned that it was the task of their disciplinary committees to call learners' parents to school to discuss the behaviour of their children who did not behave as expected. These educators indicated that parental involvement was sometimes a problem in rural primary schools where parents were not available to attend to their children's problems of misbehaviour. They mentioned that parents often worked in towns and cities and they did not live with their children so could monitor their behaviour which was sometimes behaviour not acceptable at schools. All three educators pointed out that some of the parents did not come to school when they were called by disciplinary committees. Often these parents told educators to use corporal punishment and they did not want to listen when they were told it was no longer allowed.

All three educators that were interviewed concurred regarding disobedient learners who cause problems, such as coming late and disrupting classes. They also agreed that disobedient learners had a bad influence on other learners in that they disobeyed instructions from educators. They pointed out that learners are copy cats who like to imitate negative peer behaviour in their classrooms. One of the three educators also indicated that disobedient learners end up dropping out of school and turn on educators who were against their misbehaviour. This educator highlighted the fact that some educators end up being attacked at schools as a results of disobedient learners who dropped out of schools and ganged up to take revenge on innocent educators. Last year alone two educators in the intermediate phase were attacked and the report from police was that a former learner was involved. These educators blamed a lack of discipline as a cause of learners dropping out. All of the educators interviewed highlighted early school dropouts as a cause of vandalism at schools in rural areas. Two of the educators interviewed attributed the attack on educators to disobedient learners who dropped out of schools because of bad behaviour. They argue that such learners leave school and become a threat to educators who are just doing their job of teaching those learners who are desperate and willing to learn.

In response to the questions posed, it was evident that educators were faced with a formidably difficult task. It is quite clear that they know and understand how they should correct misbehaviour. However, alternatives to corporal punishment in their respective schools seem to be ineffective. These methods fail to address the intended purpose of correcting misbehaviour. All nine educators mentioned that learners took alternatives to corporal punishment as a joke. They said that when the alternatives to corporal punishment, such as sweeping verandas, was given as punishment other learners who were onlookers joined in as this was done outside of school hours. This eventually created a cordial atmosphere. They also said that learners

from rural areas were used to manual labour at home as daily household chores so as punishment it was ineffective. Ultimately, this makes alternatives as an intervention strategy a futile exercise. Another measure cited by educators was that detention assisted the learners who misbehaved to stay behind thereby avoiding daily home chores like ploughing and fetching water from the river. In this way alternatives brought no resolution to correcting misbehaviour; instead, a new set of problems evolved.

One problem faced by rural schools was that learners enjoyed working in groups. One educator presented this scenario:

> *A learner was always late for school. As this was unacceptable behaviour at this school, the educator decided to punish the learner by making him spend 15 minutes of his lunch time picking up papers around the school premises and the other 15 minutes having his lunch. The learner was again disobedient and punished. But to the educator's surprise the learner's punishment turned into something that was 'fun and enjoyable' when other learners, who happened to be his friends, joined in and helped him pick up papers while singing.*

The punishment, it seems, had no impact.

The similarity in educators' responses was that they all understood the alternative ways to discipline their learners. It was the issue of implementation, the reason being that even though there was a policy there was no proper guidance from the Department of Education. Educators will normally implement what has been decided by the SMT together with the school governing body. The implication of abolishing corporal punishment is that since alternative ways of disciplining learners were not clear, it left educators in a situation where they

consequently had to face challenges and difficulties as highlighted above in controlling misbehaviour among their learners.

The current literature indicates that it is important for people who implement change to understand the whole process for it to be successful. The initiators of change should make a point of bringing in trainers to help implement change at the early stages of the intended change. The educators feel they fully comprehend alternatives to corporal punishment policy; it is, however, not surprising to learn that they are failing to implement the new policy. They appear powerless. Literature on the topic indicates that verbal and written support is sometimes insufficient for the people who are to implement change.

Parents interviewed were asked the following questions:

Are you satisfied with the way educators discipline children in school? Why?

Parent A seems to encourage educators to use corporal punishment. She highlighted the consequences of a lack of retribution. The parent of school A believed that punishment was no longer allowed at schools. She argued that since punishment was no longer allowed learners did whatever they liked because they knew they would not be punished. This is highlighted in the following statement: *I can say that we are not satisfied because if you take it from long time ago the punishment educators used is not the same as the one they use today. The government said children should not be punished but with us we used to be punished hard. We never did something we knew we were not supposed to do. Now that punishment is no longer allowed children do whatever they like because they know they will not get punished.*

I agree and feel that this is true. Having worked in schools for over twenty years, one gets the feeling that discipline and respect is influenced by how learners are disciplined.

The parent of school B argued that corporal punishment was needed in some cases to bring back authority, respect and discipline. She highlighted that discipline was lacking in schools since the introduction of alternatives to corporal punishment. This is substantiated in the following statement: *Yes, we are not satisfied our children play truants and they do not respect their educators. They take advantage that they are not their parents. It is better that educators punish them so that they will show respect and respect school rules. Sometimes the principal just scares them off with a stick or tells them to pick up papers.*

The parent of school C reported that she was satisfied since parents were invited to play a significant role in the effective implementation of the alternatives to corporal punishment policy in schools. She highlighted the fact that educators could not do much without support from the parents and stressed that educators and parents should co-operate with each other. This is noted in the following statement that she made: *Educators are committed in helping learners with problems and they get parents involved in solving problems that their children come across at school. They sent letters home with children to call parents to school whenever there were problems. Most of the time educators cannot do much without the involvement of parents. I will be satisfied if parents and educators should work hand in hand.*

Some parents concluded that poor discipline in schools stemmed from the implementation of ineffective alternatives to corporal punishment, a total banning of corporal punishment and poor involvement of parents. Parents saw alternatives to corporal punishment as ineffective and failing to serve the purpose of maintaining authority, respect and discipline at schools. A total ban on corporal punishment was also seen as a cause for concern and linked to poor discipline in schools. According to parents interviewed, parental involvement was a

major issue for the alternatives to corporal punishment policy to be implemented effectively and successfully in schools.

What kind of support would you like to give to educators to discipline learners?

When answering this question, Parent A mentioned that they were already giving support to educators to deal with ill-disciplined learners. Clear measures were adopted at the parents' meetings in consultation with educators. The disciplinary measures many educators enjoyed from parents included: parents supervising detention, parents signing disciplinary cards issued at school, parents supervising late coming. She argued that parents should be involved in solving behaviour problems of their children in schools. This is noted in the following statement: *We call parents' meetings and explain to them or discuss how we are going to help educators since there is a lack of discipline in schools. We need to give support to educators whenever there is a need. We need to help other parents as well who are failing to discipline their children.*

The parent of school B indicated that they taught their children respect at home. This is the support given to educators by parents in that this taught learners how to behave at school. She noted that it was very important that children should be taught respect by their parents. When respect was taught at home by parents it made things easier at school for the educators to do their teaching and learning job without being distracted. This is substantiated in the following statement: *We do tell our children at home that educators at school are the same as parents at home so they should treat them [educators] the same way that they treat us as parents. We do teach them respect and they know that educators should be respected as well as other older people.*

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In responding to the questions posed, all three parents stated that they encountered problems when children were punished at school using the alternative ways because some children sometimes lied saying they were serving detention so got home late. They mentioned that some of these children stayed behind to engage in bad behaviour like taking drugs. Drugs, they said were the cause of all the wrong things children did these days. They argued that children who were "doing drugs" were a big problem in schools and in their communities. In responding to the third question they all revealed that they attended parents' meetings called by the school governing bodies. The school governing body encouraged parents to attend parents' meetings. They mentioned that parents' meetings were very important because that was where issues like the problems of discipline were discussed. They felt that if all parents could be involved in supporting educators things could change for the better. One parent had this to say:

> *It is very difficult for the children who do not live with their parents. I personally have adopted four children who are without parents. They are still very young but they understand that they are not part of my family as much as my children. These children are very sensitive and feel as if they are abused whenever they have done something wrong and as a result are being punished.*

Judging from the above responses by the parents, it is clear that they are willing to render support to educators to implement school policies, by teaching good behaviour at home. However, they do not understand why corporal punishment is no longer used in schools as the only method of correcting misbehaviour. They believed that the reason why misbehaviour in some schools was escalating at an alarming rate was due to the banning of corporal punishment. Parents interviewed believed that corporal punishment was the only effective method of correcting misbehaviour. However, they argued that in

some schools only a small percentage of educators misused the practice of corporal punishment. They said that a large percentage of educators 'victimised' learners by using this practice to the benefit of the schools and it was very effective in correcting learners' misbehaviour. At the end a call was made by the parents interviewed to reinstate corporal punishment.

4.5 Conclusion

Discipline problems experienced in school may originate in the family or in society at large, but many problems are aggravated and sometimes caused by school policies and procedures as well as by teachers and other school personnel. To reduce the total number of discipline problems, teachers need to make learning more relevant and meaningful, foster independent thinking, show greater acceptance of diversity, encourage co-operative learning, avoid control and discontinue the use of corporal punishment to discipline learners (Edwards, 2004).

If principals and school management teams (SMTs) can support and encourage staff, pupils and their parents, then despite the tremendous problems, the potential exists to implement the alternative measures successfully. Indeed, change will happen, and the Department of Education, as policy formulators, must play its part.

There is a consensus that schools are organisations where the culture of respect and discipline should be practised. A lack of discipline is seen by members of the community as a failure of schools to live up to the expectations. Since principals in the rural areas are having a common problem with regard to the implementation of the alternative measures, there is a need for specialised expertise in dealing with discipline in rural schools.

Chapter five will discuss the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the study, it draws conclusions from the findings and gives recommendations in response to the findings. Chapter one set the scene for the study. It described the background to the study, the research questions and the formation of the study. Chapter two reviewed the related literature. The important areas reviewed include challenges brought in by new policies in the implementation of learners' discipline, literature on managing educational change and theories on issues of discipline. Chapter three described the research methodology used. This study used a case study method. Semi-structured interviews were used in this study as a data-collecting instrument and the advantages and importance of semi-structured interviews were also highlighted. Chapter four presented and analysed the data collected.

5.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of my study was to document the challenges facing rural primary schools in the implementation of the alternatives to corporal punishment.

5.3 Key critical research questions

5.3.1 How do rural primary schools implement the alternatives to corporal punishment policy?

5.3.2 What are the new experiences of principals, teachers and parents after the introduction of alternatives to corporal punishment policy?

5.3.3 How do the rural primary schools manage the implementation of the alternatives to corporal punishment policy?

5.4 Summary of the study
5.4.1 Principals and heads of departments (HODs)

Principals and heads of departments reported that they understood the alternative ways to disciplining the learners. Even though the documents around the alternative to corporal punishment policy were issued to all schools, School Management Teams in some rural schools lack the proper guidance for effective implementation. Principals and HODs highlighted the fact that learners took the alternative ways to corporal punishment as a joke. They noted that schools in rural areas lacked authority, respect and discipline since the introduction of the alternative ways to corporal punishment. They reported that corporal punishment was known in some schools in the rural areas as the only effective way to restore discipline, according to African culture.

All the principals concluded that poor discipline stemmed from home, the Department of Education's poor advocacy of the policy concerning alternatives to corporal punishment to all stakeholders, the move from the cultural practice of disciplining learners to the new approaches: that is, alternatives to corporal punishment and the problem of drugs in schools.

Heads of Departments (HODs) concluded that poor discipline emanated from not knowing what to do to discipline learners, lack of support in the form of training and workshops; as one HOD indicated, alternatives to corporal punishment were imposed on them without

any support and guidance. In addition to this, there were no follow-ups and evaluations on the processes of implementation by the Department of Education.

5.4.2 Educators

Educators interviewed concluded that the alternatives to corporal punishment policy created more problems at schools than before. For example, parents sometimes demanded educators pay them money for illegally punishing their children using corporal punishment. Educators argued that they were trying to bring back authority, discipline and respect in schools. Since they did not always know what to do, they sometimes resorted to corporal punishment to restore discipline that was lacking in schools since the introduction of the alternatives to corporal punishment.

Educators mentioned that schools hade turned into institutions that taught hatred; some of the learners developed negative attitudes and hated their educators because they had disciplined them in their classrooms in front of other learners. Some educators reported that they did not get support from the school management teams (SMTs) regarding discipline. One educator pointed out that there were no standard procedures of disciplining learners in her school and educators were using their own styles to discipline the learners. Other educators, as mentioned above, resorted to measures like corporal punishment to bring back discipline in their schools.

5.4.3 Parents

Parents concluded that poor discipline in schools stemmed from the implementation of ineffective measures like alternatives to corporal punishment, a complete banning of corporal punishment and poor parental involvement. Parents looked at alternatives to corporal

punishment as ineffective and in some cases it appeared to have failed to serve the purpose of maintaining discipline in schools. A complete banning of corporal punishment was of concern to all parents with the issue of poor discipline in schools. According to parents interviewed, poor parental involvement was a major issue for alternatives to corporal punishment policy to be implemented effectively and successfully in schools. Parents pointed out that in the past when corporal punishment was being used things were different because children used to behave in an acceptable manner.

One of the parents mentioned that the principal in their school sometimes turned to a stick to control misbehaviour among the learners. Parents stated that they encountered problems when children were punished at school using the alternative ways because some children sometimes lied about detention when they got home late. They mentioned that some of these children stayed behind to engage in bad behaviour like taking drugs. Drugs, they said, were the cause of deviant behaviour these days. They argued that children who were involved with drugs were a big problem in schools and in communities.

5.5 Recommendations and conclusions

I recommend that principals and HODs in rural schools have special disciplinary files in place and should document what they have done with regards to disciplining the learners in their schools. Once or twice a month they should show these files to their respective superintendents of education management (SEMs) to check whether they followed the right procedures with regards to disciplining the learners using the alternatives to corporal punishment policy in their schools.

The SMT ought to challenge learners who misbehave by publishing their names and their misconduct in the schools through the media. Using radio phone-in programmes to expose learners who misbehave in their respective schools can minimise the problem of misbehaviour in schools. Exposing learners who misbehave in schools can help as community members will become involved. The whole community will know who are causing problems in schools and more people will intervene and come with possible solutions to behaviour problems in rural schools. Community intervention will help to promote the culture of good discipline and respect in schools.

Principals of schools must think of introducing 'Christmas parties' where learners who have displayed good behaviour will be acknowledged. Well-behaved learners must be encouraged by awarding them study bursaries or school uniform vouchers in the presence of the whole community in their areas. When the whole community is involved in promoting the culture of good behaviour and good discipline in schools at social gatherings it will show that the communities value good discipline among learners.

Educators need to think about inviting learners and their parents to informal gatherings. Getting together in a relaxed atmosphere might somehow ease some tensions that develop unnecessarily. Learners may reveal causes that relate to their behaviour problems when they are relaxed and happy and when they do not feel threatened or under pressure.

Educators must invite people from the community like church leaders, councillors, police personnel and social workers to schools to speak to the learners about good behaviour and good values. Educators sometimes need to visit and attend local Sunday schools for the learners to see the importance of attending youth social structures that promote positive social and community values.

Educators are torch bearers and are role models to learners who look upon them as leaders and admire what they do.

Educators must also set aside time to be available to meet with parents after school hours to discuss learners' behaviour. Making arrangements to meet with parents after school hours is important since many parents work and are not available during school hours. Such meetings with parents after school hours can improve parents' involvement and participation in resolving behaviour problems. Over and above this it can show some dedication from the side of the educators to their work with matters concerning good behaviour of learners in their respective schools.

Parents need to be supported and given guidance when there is a need to take their children for assessment with psychologists and other professionals. Parents need to take their children to psychologists and other specialists to trace the causes of misbehaviour in their children when such a need arises. Sometimes schools need to involve other professionals and specialists in trying to solve behaviour problems among learners.

There is a need for a great link between home and the school environments. Schools must in the future think of giving incentives to parents to encourage parental participation and involvement in schools in decision-making and in solving problems. Examples of incentives can be in the form of a decrease in school fees as an acknowledgement of good involvement or participation of a parent in school matters. Schools must organise and provide workshops for parents that provide information regarding strategies for better parenting. Some parents may benefit from information regarding better parenting since they fail to provide proper guidance to their children regarding good behaviour.

Schools must liaise with other schools in the area that are successful with the implementation of alternatives to the corporal punishment policy. Since it is not all schools that experience problems with the implementation of the alternatives to corporal punishment, schools that experience problems can seek support from schools that are managing. Principals must feel free to call into their schools the superintendents for education management (SEMs) to provide support and workshops to educators regularly. Regular meetings with SEMs can help with early identification of problems and the provisioning of solutions to problems regarding the process of implementation of alternatives to corporal punishment.

Schools need to change the mindsets of educators to prove that learner self-esteem was neglected during the years when corporal punishment was allowed in schools. Educators need to realise and appreciate the fact that it has been acknowledged that victimising learners is against the law. It has been said before that learner' rights were violated before 1998 when corporal punishment was still allowed and in use. Educators should move away from the idea of looking at corporal punishment as the only effective way of disciplining the learners at schools especially in rural areas. Some educators see the alternatives to corporal punishment policy as failing in rural schools because they do not want to do away with the use of corporal punishment. They see corporal punishment as easy, quick to use and effective in correcting misbehaviour.

I recommend that the following be installed at the school gates to monitor learners as they enter and leave the schools on regular bases: gate scanners and CCTV cameras. Social workers need to be employed and deployed to schools to provide guidance and support to educators with regard to learners' behaviour problems. They can also provide support and guidance to learners who are living without parents or guardians. It has been reported that some learners are living alone

without the care or guidance of parents or guardians. Child-headed families are common these days since many people are dying everyday due to HIV and AIDS. It has become a great concern that a growing number of learners are living alone in rural areas.

5.6 Limitations of the study

The design limitations of the study were that there was focus placed on three schools out of seven schools in the above-mentioned areas. Though I knew and understood that learners' misbehaviour was generally the same in and around these areas, I was only able to collect data from these three schools and could not make generalisations for the whole province based on the data collected from these three schools. For triangulation purposes I used three different schools to conduct interviews with educators and parents from the same levels i.e. primary school level.

The study only focussed on three schools in two areas. The challenge was that further research must be carried out in more schools in more than two areas so that more extensive comparisons can be made.

5.7 Conclusion

The focus of the study was on the implementation of alternatives to corporal punishment policy in rural primary schools. The study used interviews to collect data from three rural primary schools. Lastly recommendations and conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study.

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