

THE EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON RURAL
SECONDARY SCHOOL FEMALE LEARNERS IN
NDWEDWE CIRCUIT, KZN

By

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DECLARATION

I, Thabisile Kim Ntuli hereby declare that this dissertation is my own both in conception and execution and has not been submitted previously for any degree to any university.

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ABSTRACT

Schools face a serious problem of sexual harassment inflicted on female learners by both male teachers and male learners. This study investigated the effects of sexual harassment on rural secondary school female learners. In order to understand the effects of sexual harassment on these learners, this study explored various kinds of sexual harassment they experienced in rural secondary schools.

This study adopted a qualitative design method through which data was collected, from the female learners. Data was collected through individual interviews and through focus groups within each of the four schools and focus groups across schools. Qualitative analysis of the participants responses was employed.

In the final analysis, the results of this study indicated that female learners experienced various kinds of acts of sexual harassment perpetrated against them by both male teachers and male learners. These acts involved verbal, non-verbal and physical sexual harassment. The analysis also clearly showed that female learners suffered the serious effects of sexual harassment.

The lessons learnt from this study will inform and assist the future endeavors of the Department of Education, School Governing Bodies, School Management Teams, teachers, parents, female and male learners in confronting sexual harassment at schools.

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment is seen as one form of gender-based violence (Connell, 1993). Women across the globe experience gender based violence. Article 1 of The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women defines violence against women as:

Any act of gender based violence that result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering including, threat such as acts of consignor arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or in private lives (Wolpe, Quinlan and Martinez, 1997).

Female learners as women 'in the making' are victims of the same violence that women suffer in broader society. Schools are often seen as the socialising agents of society. Hence, it follows that the conditions found in society are often reflected within the school context. The prevalence of sexual harassment in schools is therefore, linked to violence in society. In a society where violence is a social norm it is expected that violence in schools will escalate.

Research findings confirm this by indicating that there is a persistent problem of violence, including sexual harassment against women in society and girls in educational institutions (Gender Manual Consortium, 1999 and Morrell, 2001). This study focuses on the effects of sexual harassment on female learners in rural secondary schools.

Sexual harassment can be broadly defined as unwanted and unwelcome comments or behaviour, with sexual overtones, that have a negative

impact on the dignity of another person. Sexual harassment encompasses unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct, which violates or is intimidatory or physically abusive (KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government Sexual Harassment Policy 2004).

Halson (1991), argues that:

whilst women know consciously or unconsciously what it means to be vulnerable to sexual and/ or physical male intimidation and violence, women interpret their experiences in different ways and therefore know differently.

This suggests that the definition of sexual harassment can be interpreted in distinctive modes due to diverse social and cultural factors; what one female learner from a specific socio-cultural background experiences as sexual harassment might not necessarily be so to another.

The essential characteristic of sexual harassment is that it is unwelcome or unwanted by the victim. Therefore any act or behaviour experienced and described by the victim as humiliating, embarrassing, threatening rather than pleasurable, offending, denying autonomy and controlling constitutes sexual harassment.

Imminent to the kinds of sexual harassment female learners experience, Larkin, (1994) asserts that sexual harassment in the school begins, when male learners start using derogatory names against female learners, lifting their skirts, touching their bodies, kissing them by force and holding them down into mock intercourse.

Larkin also argues that male teachers who are viewed as 'the next form of defence after the family' are also perpetrators of sexual harassment

against female learners. Sexual harassment perpetrated by male teachers against female learners range from sexual suggestions whether verbal, non-verbal or physical to intercourse. Male teachers also sexually harass female learners by making sexist jokes and responding to their questions or contributions with sexual innuendoes or comments intended to belittle them. Some male teachers will promise good marks or use threats of failure to pressure female learners to have sexual relations with them. Therefore, the kinds of sexual harassment can be categorised into those unwanted or unwelcome verbal or non-verbal, physical and emotional acts of sexual violence.

Sexual harassment has direct impact and consequences on these learners' lives. On a daily basis in schools across the South African nation, girls of every race and economic class encounter sexual violence and harassment that impedes their realisation of the right to education (Human Rights Watch, 2001). According to the Human Rights Watch Report female learners who were victims of sexual violence found it hard to concentrate on their schoolwork. Some of these learners reported losing interest in school work altogether. Consequently their overall school performance became poor. Some were transferred to new schools and others simply left school.

1.2 POLICIES AND PRACTICE

For decades, the laws of apartheid South Africa have been oppressive to the majority of people in South Africa. However, women, especially black women, were oppressed more than any other minority group in South Africa. The newly elected government of South Africa has since come into democracy and passed laws, which prohibit violence against women. However, contrary to these policies, research has demonstrated

that women are still victims of oppression perpetrated by men in the form of gender-based violence: especially sexual harassment (Morrell, 2001). The following policies have greatly influenced this study internationally and locally. CEDAW¹ prohibits discrimination of any form against women by making impermissible 'any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women... on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms, political, social cultural, civil or any other field (CEDAW; 1992).

International law requires South Africa to ensure that women are able to enjoy basic human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with men. Through its ratification South Africa has assumed the obligation to pursue by all means appropriate policies to eliminate discrimination against women.

Act No 108 of 1996-Section 9 of The South African Constitutional Law enshrines to bodily and psychological integrity and the right to life. It also recognises the inherent dignity of all human beings and the right to have that dignity respected and protected. South African constitution prohibits unfair discrimination on the basis of sex or gender.

Section 10 of the South African Bill of Rights states that "*every human being has a right to dignity*", while section 12 of the Bill of Rights declares that "*every human being has a right to freedom and security*". Sexual harassment is a violation of the female learner's rights to a secure, safe and free learning environment (Department of Education 2002).

The Convention on the rights of the child, Article 29, states that:

¹ Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The purpose of education is to foster development of the child's personality, talent and mental and physical to their fullest potential to prepare him or her for responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding, peace tolerance, equality of sexes and friendship among all people.

The South African Schools Act (No 84 of 1996) as amended by Education Laws Act 50 of 2002 stipulates that "*learners have a right to a safe environment conducive to education and the school has the responsibility to have the potentials of learners fully developed*". Schools should therefore, be seen as places where female learners should focus on their studies without being concerned about issues of their personal security, discipline and safety. The prevalent and unchallenged sexual harassment of female learners in secondary schools impedes their ability to attain the educational objective set forth.

The Employment Equity Act of Educators of 1998, and subsequent amendments in the Education Laws Amendment Act of 2000, defines sexual harassment or sexual assault toward a learner as an act of misconduct. South African Council of Educators Act No 31 of 2000, Educator's Code of conduct, promotes gender equality and prohibits acts of sexual harassment between educators and learners. However, research has confirmed that female learners in secondary schools do not only face sexual harassment perpetrated by male learners, male teachers are also perpetrators of sexual harassment against these learners (Human Rights Watch 2001).

Educators are to acknowledge, uphold and promote basic human rights as embodied in the Constitution of South Africa. They must strive to enable learners to develop a set of values consistent with the

fundamentals in the South African Constitution. In instances where sexual harassment takes place in educational institutions such as schools and is not effectively halted, female learners do not enjoy the basic fundamental human rights on equal basis with their male counterparts.

The law requires school authorities to disclose any form of violence including sexual harassment perpetrated by educators to higher authorities. However, concealing sexual violence and delaying disciplinary action often disregard these laws. Research has shown that there has been widespread sexual violence against female learners perpetrated by male teachers (Human Rights Watch, 2001). However, in 2002 the Minister of Education in South Africa reported that only 12 male educators were removed from their positions and determined illegible to teach for having sex with female learners (Department of Education, 2002). This suggests that some instances of sexual harassment perpetrated by male teachers are not reported or if reported disciplinary actions are not taken and followed through. Human Rights Watch (2001) has confirmed this discrepancy between policy and practice.

From the perspective of all these laws schools are supposed to be safe havens where education and learning can flourish (Human Rights Watch 2001:1). Schools should be the sanctuaries where parents know that their children are safe. However, South African schools have become sites where various forms of violence including sexual harassment occur.

1.3 THE MOTIVATION AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Throughout this study, I have confined myself to the effects on sexual harassment of female secondary school learners in Ndwedwe rural schools. This is not to suggest that male learners are not sexually

harassed but I would like to argue that it is not nearly to the same extent. My work experience as a teacher in rural schools has taught me that female learners are more likely to be sexually harassed than male learners.

The motivation for this study has been two fold. Firstly, the study has been driven by personal experiences I had as a secondary school female learner in 1976 and secondly, incidents of female learners being sexually harassed at schools that I have witnessed as a teacher.

In 1976, I became a victim of sexual harassment perpetrated by both male learners and a male teacher in a secondary school in KwaMashu. Sexual harassment became a part of my school life. On a daily basis I experienced verbal, non-verbal or physical acts of sexual harassment. Such humiliating and degrading experiences occurred inside the classroom, in the school corridors as well as on school playgrounds.

The worst experience was when I became a victim of sexual harassment perpetrated by a male teacher, who demanded to have a sexual relationship with me. He would summon me during break, after school and even during teaching periods. Sometimes he would close the door behind him while cracking degrading jokes. Sometimes he would hold me by hand and touch my breasts. I suffered physical and emotional pain. There were instances where the teacher would make use of corporal punishment to reinforce his demands. I was afraid to report these incidents to my parents and the school authorities. I kept quiet about those experiences and lived my school life in fear and in pain.

His constant harassment resulted in my dwindling interest in schoolwork, especially in the subject taught by this teacher. "*Dodging*" his lessons in

an attempt to avoid him, led to a further decline in my scholastic performance. I became withdrawn.

Since I joined the teaching profession I have witnessed incidents of sexual harassment of female learners perpetrated by male learners and male teachers. I have taught in four rural secondary schools in Ndwedwe Circuit. In all these schools, I have received reports of cases of sexual harassment from victimised female learners. As a member of the school management team, I had to address cases of sexual harassment of female learners perpetrated by male teachers. I have witnessed instances where these learners encounter highly sexualised verbal degradation in the school environment. In some instances, sexual demands have been reinforced with threats of failing the subjects and corporal punishment. Some female learners have received money from male teachers in return for sexual favours. I have unfortunately learnt that schools are not safe and female learners are at a high risk of becoming victims of sexual harassment.

During my teaching career I have observed that some teachers and other adults in the community are generally reluctant to engage with the issue of sexual harassment. They often claim to be unaware of or deny the prevalence of sexual harassment against female learners in schools or minimise its extent or blame the victims. There has been a cloak of silence especially in cases where perpetrators were male teachers; due to fear of victimisation at all levels in schools. Some parents, whose daughters have been sexually harassed, have been silenced by male teachers who promise to pay 'ilobolo'² for their daughters.

²Ilobolo, in African culture traditionally was paid in form of cows by the groom to form a relationship with the bride's family. Nowadays ilobolo is mostly paid in the form of money.

A school where sexual harassment is concealed and left unchallenged lends itself to an environment where sexual harassment thrives. This happens at the cost of the female learners who are victims of such harassment. Rather than receiving redress from school officials, female learners who report cases of sexual harassment are in most cases further victimised and stigmatised by teachers and other learners. I have often felt guilty as a teacher and have regarded myself as an accomplice, for not taking effective steps to stop sexual harassment and to empower female learners in schools where I have taught. The interest I have now stems from the realisation of what social justice entails. I have realised that I have a voice that can speak on behalf of these female learners' silence.

As women of tomorrow and as part of the society, female learners become victims of all the same forms of violence experienced by older women. Sexual harassment is a part of the spectrum of violence and has an impact and consequence on women's and female learners' lives. As I searched in my mind for the many ways through which sexual harassment, is dis-empowering and the effects it has I realised that those instances of disempowerment reflected my normative assumptions of how the world should be. They reflected my position as a teacher, a mother and a woman.

Women predominate in rural areas, which are the poorest and most powerless sectors of society (Govender, 1993). Research has indicated that sexually victimised rural women and girls are largely underserved and understudied (Nord, 1997) and often overlooked. This suggests that sexual violence against women in rural areas might be a larger problem than has been recognised. Therefore, what is not known about sexual harassment of rural secondary school female learners far outweighs what is known.

This study explored the effects of sexual harassment on the female learners in rural secondary schools and gave them a platform to express their own interpretation of their experiences. Questions such as 'who is empowered?' and in whose interest is empowerment enacted' were considered.

1.4 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The intention of this study was to examine the effects of sexual harassment on female learners in rural secondary schools in Ndwedwe³ Circuit-Ilembe District in KwaZulu-Natal. The study was an attempt to find answers to the critical question: what are the effects of sexual harassment on female learners in rural secondary schools? In order to understand the effects of sexual harassment in the context of this study, it was imperative to answer the sub question: what are the kinds of sexual harassment female learners in rural secondary schools experience?

The review of literature has demonstrated that the prevalence of sexual harassment is not a new phenomenon (Warwick, 1991). What seems to be new is the different understanding of the impact or effects of sexual harassment both in short and long term. A more profound awareness has been developed via the consciousness raising impact of feminisms, which does not only provide information about lived experiences of women in a variety of life contexts but also incorporates awareness and capacity building of the participants and encourage them to inform and support one another. Consequently, women are encouraged to make

³ Ndwedwe is a rural predominantly African area about 87 km from Durban. The majority of the population is unemployed and depends on government grants and farming.

public a range of experiences, which had been kept private or had been otherwise unacknowledged.

One of the principles of the Commission of Gender Equality prioritises the most disadvantaged women. The majority of women, including female learners in rural areas fall into this category due to socio-cultural, economic and political history of South Africa. Women are victims of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment perpetrated by male figures. Female learners in schools are also victims of sexual harassment perpetrated by both male learners and male teachers. They therefore should be given priority as part of the disadvantaged rural women. The prevalence of sexual harassment in schools warrants an examination of its effects in the lives of these female learners.

- It is hoped that this study will raise consciousness amongst secondary school female learners and the rural community at all levels. Such consciousness raising impact on the effects of sexual harassment on these learners in rural secondary schools might be instrumental in the process of change and contribute in an in depth understanding of the effects of sexual harassment. It is the ultimate goal of this study to raise awareness and empower the participants with the understanding of the concept of sexual harassment and what the effects are and what their human rights are in relation to this study.

Educators, including school management teams, school-governing bodies form part of the audience. This study intends to give the Department of Education a picture regarding the prevalence and the effects of sexual harassment despite its new policies. This study also intends to add to current knowledge in the context of the study. It is hoped that this study will serve as the springboard for further research in this field.

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Sexual harassment is a multidisciplinary topic in the sense that it is a psychological issue, a sociological phenomenon, a legal issue, a management issue and cutting across these disciplines a feminist issue. Unger (2001:36), Bahar (1996), Hartman (1997), Levette et al. (1997), Matlin (1993), Okin (1996), and Unger (2001) argue that sexual harassment is a feminist issue because it represents violence against women, coercion of women, and a focus on women sexuality and forcing women to be silent victims as it places women in a powerless position. This study was therefore informed by the feminist theories namely, African feminism and experiential feminism. These two feminist theories are expounded on, in Chapter Three, to illustrate features relevant to this study that assisted the researcher to analyse data collected from participants.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

The choice of a method is determined by the chosen topic and the kind of data to be collected (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995:95). This study intended to explore the gendered experiences of female learners in rural secondary schools in relation to sexual harassment. A study that addresses the lives and experiences of women lends itself to a feminist perspective (Hearn, 1993). Since this study was conducted within a feminist perspective, qualitative methodology was used. This permitted the participants to express their experiences fully in their own terms. Qualitative methodology best permitted the researcher to access data about lived experiences of girls in rural secondary schools in the context of this study. This data could be best captured in narratives in a qualitative research methodological sense.

1.7 THE OUTLINE OF DISSERTATION

1.7.1 Chapter One: Orientation to the study.

Chapter one dealt with an overview of the background of the problem that was investigated. The purpose of the study was explained. It also examined the policies, which informed the study and the relationship between theory and practice. It described personal motivation and rationale of the study and stated the significance of the study and highlighted the critical questions, explained the purpose of literature review and stated the theoretical framework and research methodology used. Finally, a brief outline of each chapter was discussed.

1.7.2 Chapter Two: Literature review.

Chapter two is a review of literature focusing on sexual harassment of women in a broader society and female learners in schools. References to the international and South African trends relating to sexual harassment were made. This chapter was organised around four sections. Firstly background, which illustrates that South African schools face a threat of gender-based violence with particular reference to sexual harassment and the contribution of historical and social factors in perpetuating sexual harassment. Secondly, the definition of sexual harassment as a form of gender-based violence, social and cultural factors contributing to the construct of males and females in a patriarchal society. Thirdly, the modes or kinds of sexual harassment are discussed. The last section deals the effects of sexual harassment.

1.7.3 Chapter Three: Theoretical framework.

Chapter three explains feminist theories namely, African feminism and experiential feminism, which informed this study. It also illustrates how the principles of these theories were relevant to sexual harassment of secondary school female learners in the context of the study.

1.7.4 Chapter Four: Research design and methodology.

In chapter four, research design, methodology and their implications for a feminist study are discussed. The location selection, sample selection, research tools and techniques used to gather data are elaborated on. The way in which data was organised with a view to answering the critical question: what are the effects of sexual harassment on rural secondary school female learners and the sub question: what kinds of sexual harassment do rural secondary school female learners experience are discussed. The data analysis process is also described.

1.7.5 Chapter Five: Data presentation and analysis.

In Chapter five the principles which informed the data process are discussed. Chapter Five is also a presentation of the data that was collected from the participants. Finally, it provides a detailed analysis of the interview data and its findings.

1.7.6 Chapter Six: Discussion interpretation and recommendations

Chapter six provides a summary of the arguments advanced in the previous chapters and conclusions. Recommendations based on the findings of this study are made.

1.8 CONCLUSION.

This chapter served as an orientation to the study. It gave the background of the research project, which investigated the effects of sexual harassment on rural secondary school female learners in Ndwedwe. Chapter Two will provide review of literature, both internationally and locally and in relation to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The principle function of Chapter Two is to explore literature with regards to gender-based violence, specifically the effects of sexual harassment on female learners in rural secondary schools. It also seeks to make sense of the meanings and the kinds of sexual harassment found in literature reviewed. For this purpose the literature reviewed in this chapter has been organised around the issues of the background that exacerbate sexual harassment, the definition of sexual harassment and the kinds of sexual harassment that are prevalent and their effects specifically on female learners.

2.2 HISTORICAL MILLIEU

South Africa reportedly has one of the highest rates of violence against women in the world (Naylor, 2002). A violent society, within which South African women find themselves on a daily basis, needs to be contextualised within the history of the country and the violence attributed to apartheid.

South Africa's political social and the economic conditions have all been shaped and marginalized by apartheid. South Africa has recently emerged from a history in which violence was routinely used by the state as a means of exerting power. Years of violent enforcement of apartheid era policies have fuelled a culture of violence. This violent legacy places a heavy burden on the education system in the country (Naylor, 2002).

“Many observers in South Africa believe that the recent years have seen a sharp rise in sexual violence in educational institutions” (Hallam, 1994). Every female learner on a school ground is a potential victim of sexual harassment. According to the Human Rights Watch (2001)

...Sexual violence permeates the whole of South African education system ...sexual assaults occur in prestigious predominantly white schools, in impoverished black township schools and even primary schools. Privilege often does not protect a girl against sexual harassment while poverty may render her more vulnerable.

2.3 SOCIAL BACKGROUND

South Africa is a country of communities, which are relatively patriarchal and paternalistic in nature. Research has demonstrated that such communities conventionally have a high tolerance rate of all forms of violence. Sexual harassment is one of the forms of violence, which women suffer (Bahar, 1996). Since patriarchy has constructed woman's body as a sexual body, violence against a woman's body is always violence against a woman's sexuality (Traiter-Espiritu, 1996:69).

Research demonstrates that women in South Africa predominate in the poorest and the most powerless sectors of our society (Human Rights Watch, 2001 and Govender, 1995:42). Patriarchal social relations and gender inequalities are particularly pervasive in these rural areas as compared to urban areas (Hebert, 1992). Menard and Ruback (2001) further argue *“rural areas have higher rates of sexual victimisation and low rates of reporting”* This is reflected in the many documented and undocumented incidents of sexual harassment in schools and the society at large.

Many female learners in South African schools have come to a social acceptance that sexual harassment simply must be endured if they are attending school (Human Rights Watch, 2001). Therefore, the South African education system, although engaged in meaningful reform measures, faces severe problems in overcoming a number of social ills, amongst them sexual harassment which is another form of gender-based violence.

2.4 CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

For the purposes of this study the term teachers is used interchangeably with educators. In the literature reviewed in this study, the terms girls or schoolgirls are used to refer to female learners and the terms boys or schoolboys are used to refer to male learners.

In South Africa, the term rural areas, refers to the sparsely populated and underdeveloped areas that are outside of the metropolitan areas. The majority of the people in these areas, practice farming and depend on natural resources (South African Land Policy, 1997). In general poverty levels are higher in rural areas as compared to urban areas (Nord, 1997).

2.5 DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Hearn (1996) defines sexual harassment as a form of violence, which involves unwelcome or unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and other verbal or physical conduct that is sexual in nature (Bahar, Gutek and Dones 2001, Hearn1996, Martlin, 1993, Strauss1992, Tattum, 993).

According to Hebert (1992:21) sexual harassment involves “*unsolicited and unreciprocated behaviour (sometimes of a sexual nature or with sexual overtones) towards people with lesser powerful positions or circumstances.*” Hebert further asserts that sexual harassment may include an explicit or implicit threat of discriminatory action, which can be of a non-sexual nature such as failing a subject or might involve displeasure for non-compliance.

According to Wolpe, Quinlan and Martinez (1997) sexual harassment occurs:

When a person subjects another person to an unsolicited act of physical intimacy, makes unsolicited demands or request whether directly or by implication or makes a remark with sexual connotations relating to the other person or engages in any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to the other person, and the person engaging in the conduct does so with the intention of offending, humiliating or intimidating the other person...

Sexual harassment refers to unwanted sexual advances whether or not accompanied by physical contact and unsolicited, sexualised, degrading verbal or non-verbal language (Human Rights Watch 2001).

This is recognised by the United Nations Declaration on Violence against Women, which defines violence against women’s bodies as:

...Any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

One of the difficulties in recognising sexual harassment against women is that it includes behaviours that are regarded as typical and or normal behaviours (Hilson, 1991). Some male behaviour can be seen as both sexual harassment and typical male behaviour depending on the context of the people involved and the way in which it is interpreted. This difficulty in identifying particular actions as either sexual harassment or typical male behaviour results in confusion. Often such behaviours are described as normal or not spoken about (Department of Education, 2002).

Levette and Kottler (1997), and Tattum (1993) argue that another difficulty in recognising sexual harassment is the lack of language to describe it. Language is a tool by which people describe their understanding of the world. Lack of language or namelessness is one of the ways in which discussions about sexual harassment are curtailed. If women are unable to describe or communicate the existence of such a problem then they are prevented from sharing their experiences with others. Thus, women are again made silent and left in isolation and vulnerable positions (Levette and Kottler 1997, Tattum 1993).

This want of language was strengthened by Mukasa (1999) in her study in a secondary school in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. Mukasa (1999) aimed to find out how sexual harassment was understood. She argued that the female learners' understandings of sexual harassment were narrow and excluded a range of abuse that they experienced. Furthermore, what informed their understandings of sexual harassment occurred outside of the school. She stresses that culture, gender, stereotypes, socialisation and the problem of sexual harassment are intertwined. Sexual harassment therefore, cannot be defined without taking into account the cultural and social factors.

2.5.1 Cultural factors contributing to the definition of sexual harassment.

In this study the social and cultural factors cannot be ignored. All cultures in one form or the other to a greater or lesser extent have legitimised the power of men over women and have generated the violence of the superior against the subordinate who is inferior. This perpetuates devaluation of womanhood (Govender, 1996).

The cultural contexts of individuals play an important role in guiding the development of their belief systems. According to Neuman (2000) because individuals participate in culture their understanding is negotiated in culture. It is therefore, impossible to understand humans at the individual level alone, because individuals participate in culture and their understanding arise through culture. Knowledge is therefore inexorably linked to culture and context; hence, meaning making is negotiated in culture.

The cultural conceptions of self and society are organised and operate on a day-to-day lives of individuals. Individuals perceive and describe themselves within cultural contexts. Scully (1991), argues that cultural factors contribute to the construct of males about females. Sweetman (1995) agrees with this view and further argues that the way in which gender identity is formed reflects the particular needs of the worldview of each society. Culture and gender are thus intertwined, interdependent and mutually defining. Sexual harassment is considered to be a consequence of a gender role socialisation process that promotes male dominance, the sexual objectification of women and the cultural approval of violence against women (Cleverland and Mc Manara, 1996:217).

“Many South African cultures still allow little room for advancement, empowerment, independent thinking, and individuality of women. Restrictions are placed on women by traditional norms” (The Gender Manual Consortium, 1999:52) There are many culturally legitimised practices, harmful to women. The unequal gender relations that exist characterise the culture of male dominance over women. It reflects that there are no challenges to gender inequality from within cultures. It is assumed in such cultures that to be a woman is to be passive, subservient and servile. Women themselves have been socialised to accept cultural norms concerning their own bodies and sexuality. (Trailler-Espirutu, 1996:71).

In addition, Stead (1985:10) asserts that traditionally women have been taught to accept their fate and express what they think is expected of them, to personalise the experience and to nurture and develop others as extensions of themselves. Women often strive to meet physical, aesthetic and sexual requirements imposed on them by customs. This has made them silent accomplices with male violence. In this sense such *“women become staunch defenders of traditional harmful practice”* (Trailler-Espirutu, 1996:71).

Male learners and male teachers expect female learners to bring these attributes to schools. Female learners are expected to show respect to male learners and male teachers at all times. It has been argued that, African culture traditionally gave men control of women (Robson, 1991). This notion condones those traditional and cultural practices, which dictate that men and boys are superior and controlling women; while women and girls are inferior and submissive. A Committee of Inquiry into Sexual Harassment 1991) has however dismissed this argument as:

A rationalization (as) in defence of those in favour of innate superiority of men and the corresponding inferiority of women have more to do with culture of being a man than with African culture or township culture.

It is important to note that there is nothing natural about male violence against women. Rather it can be shown to be the result of beliefs firmly lodged in cultural practices. Govender (1996:13) argues that, “we generally talk about safeguarding our cultural values in order to keep our identity in the face of invasion of other cultures whose interest is domination and exploitation”. It is strongly agreed with Govender in her argument that we should also talk about those values inherent in our own culture that form the basis for violence against women.

2.5.2 Social factors contributing to the definition of sexual harassment.

Hebert (1992:2) asserts, “*sexual harassment is a learned social behaviour within the context of a sexist and patriarchal environment*”. Sexual harassment is about power. It is a manifestation of the power differences between men and women and its misuse by men. In a patriarchal society women’s perceptions of the world are defined for them. Women are therefore, put in a position of powerlessness (Tattum 1993: 116).

Roles for men and women are defined through socialisation therefore; violence against women can be traced back to traditional masculine and feminine socialisation (O’Donhon and Gold 1997, Tattum1993). “*Social conditioning creates an artificial division between men and women*” (Tattum 1993: 175). Society often perceives the role function of males as different from that of females. Girl children are not treated in the same

manner as boy children by society. This gives men power over women and boy children power over girl children. In other words power over women exist because *“women did not define their roles in the social order. For a long time they have accepted passively”* the prescribed roles, even those, which are harmful to them (Kendirin, 1998:453).

There are visible testimonies that support the idea that stereotyping of female and male role functions starts early in a person’s life and continues to direct and influence progress throughout their lives (Gender Manual Consortium, 1999). Owing to this, women have incorporated these perceptions or feelings into many other situations. Gender stereotyping perpetuates ideas and beliefs about the position and worth of girl children in society. This existing stereotyping can lead to a feeling of inferiority amongst women in the society and female learners at school. This in turn could make them less assertive.

Violence against women can consequently be traced back to society and its assumptions regarding gender roles in the family (Bahar et. al 1996: 110). These societal attitudes or unwritten rules towards women and girl children also contribute to a higher incidence of violence against them in South Africa.

Throughout history *“women and men have been seen as opposite”* (Olan, 1996:31). Typical masculine and feminine traits fall into stereotyped categories. For example some typical female characteristics include being submissive, gentle, emotional, sensitive, attractive and caring. On the other hand typical male characteristics include being sexually interested, aggressive, strong, unemotional, ambitious and rational (Droute, 1999). Although these stereotypes may not be true they become embedded in society. *“Societal violence is often sexualised with devastating consequences for women who disproportionately bear the*

brunt of sexual violence”, (Committee of Enquiry into sexual harassment, 1991:39), not only in society but in schools as well.

Although feminist research has shown that there are women who do not feel powerless; it is argued that the majority of women in rural areas in South Africa are still victims of violence including sexual harassment. Female learners are victims in schools (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

2.6 MODES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Actions, which constitute sexual harassment, take many different forms ranging from verbal, non-verbal, physical and visual acts of sexual harassment.

2.6.1 Verbal sexual harassment

In general, verbal sexual harassment refers to any remarks with sexual overtones. Verbal sexual harassment would include repeated and unwanted verbal or sexually explicit derogatory statements or sexually discriminatory remarks and which are offensive and create a threatening or intimidating environment. Verbal sexual harassment can take many forms from leering, making direct or subtle sexual proposals, ridicule embarrassing remarks or jokes, unwelcome sexually suggestive comments about dress or appearance or body for example the size of a girl's parts of her body usually breasts, hips and bums. It also includes persistent pressure for social contacts such as dates and demands for sexual favours through verbal threats (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

2.6.2 Physical sexual harassment

This involves unwanted physical contact ranging from what could be perceived as less violent e.g. patting to violent sexual assaults (Human

Rights Watch 2001). This would include fondling or touching in an intimate way, brushing against girls and pinching of bra straps, kissing, undressing etc. (South African Police Service and Department of Education, 2002).

2.6.3 Visual sexual harassment

Visual sexual harassment includes unwanted sexually suggestive looks or gestures. It also involves exposing women or girl children to materials such as pictures or movies with sexual connotations. Therefore, male learners and male teachers teasing female learners with pornography manifest visual sexual harassment of these learners (Wolpe et al 1997).

2.7 THE EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Most people still believe that sexual harassment is not a serious problem, however, its serious effects to victims warrants serious reconsideration of such a view. Sexual harassment of female learners has serious effects and consequences on their lives. This section reviews effects of sexual harassment on female learners in schools as documented in literature internationally and locally.

It is clear that in South Africa today, constitutional democracy education is seen as a basic universal tool in the fight against oppression, exploitation and poverty (Department of Education, 2002). Contrary to this Human Rights Watch (2001) has found that schools are the breeding grounds for potentially damaging gendered practices, which remain with the girls well into adulthood. By failing to clamp down on sexual harassment schools send messages to children that violence is a normal feature of life. Sexually harassed female learners are subjected to its oppression, as it occurs against their will.

Sexual harassment is an exploitation of female learners in the sense that they are perceived as powerless. Male teachers and male learners have been placed in the position of power. As perpetrators they exploit female learners powerlessness by sexually harassing them. In some instances in schools “*girls, have been subjected to sexual harassment through promises of assistance in exchange for sexual acts*” (Department of Education 2002). In such situations girls may believe that they had no control of the situation or other option than to comply, for example; a male teacher may require sex in exchange for favours or privileges or in exchange for passing a grade or admission to class (Committee of Inquiry into sexual harassment, 1991). This suggests that female learners are first seen as sexual beings and secondly as students. A school is a place for learning and growing. Sexual harassment stops this process as schools fail to develop affected female learners to their fullest potential.

Sexual harassment against female learners within the school system has been identified as being a serious problem in educational institutions across the country (Human Rights Watch 2001). This is not a problem in its own rights but it has very serious implications for these learners who want to pursue their studies. Sexual harassment erects a discriminatory barrier for young female learners seeking education.

Sexual violence is a violation of a right to education, as it has a destabilising effect on the education of female children. Human Rights Watch Report (2001) indicates that “*sexual harassment leads to girls’ abandonment of their studies*”. According to this report teachers expressed concern that female learners who were victims of sexual harassment either in the hands of male teachers or male learners were not performing to their full potential. Cases of increased absenteeism

from school, which directly contributed to decline of good results, have also been reported as the effect of sexual harassment female learners suffer.

This contravention of a right to education is not in line with the alleviation of poverty especially in rural areas, which is the primary goal of the democratic system of education in South Africa. Schools therefore fail to develop female learners to their full potential. The Human Rights Watch (2001) and Gender Manual Consortium (1999) have confirmed that some female learners ^{lose} lose interest in schoolwork, which lead to poor academic performance and eventually leave school for sometime or even quit attending school entirely. Usually male teachers and male learners who are perpetrators remain at school while it is female learners who leave. Therefore, they fail to pursue their studies and leave school without skills necessary for employment. This disempowers them and directly contributes to poverty. Sexual harassment of female learners prevalent in many South African schools therefore, undermines the ability of these schools to achieve their developmental and educational objectives.

Victims of sexual harassment are traumatised (Cleveland and Mc Manara, 1996). The trauma victims experience often results in emotional and physical stress and stress related illnesses (Bahar et al 1996, Levette and Kottler, 1997, and Martlin, 1993). *“Sexual harassment hurts girls psychologically causing ailments including depression, tension and frustration”* (Hebert, 1992:82-86).

Human Rights Watch, 2001 also indicated that parents, social workers and therapists working with the victims reported that some female learners showed change in their behaviour. They became disruptive and anxious after experiences of sexual harassment. They endured

emotional suffering and felt powerless and helpless. The emotional and psychological pain female learners endured after being sexually harassed makes it hard for them to concentrate on their schoolwork. This could lead to the loss of interest not only in the subject taught by a perpetrator but in other subjects and activities outside the classroom such as sports.

Depending on its form sexual harassment results in humiliation and violation of human integrity. Female learners who were victims were reported to have developed low self-esteem and isolated themselves after being sexually harassed (Hallam, 1994).

According to Hebert (1992) female victims of sexual harassment in South Africa largely remain silent from fear of consequences; like further victimisation and often feel guilty and ashamed. Some female learners in South African schools are silent victims due to fear of further victimisation especially in instances where perpetrators are male teachers. These female learners are afraid to report to their parents and teachers, as they are afraid of being victimised by teachers or being blamed by parents for seducing the male teacher.

Female learners often regard sexual harassment as inevitable and feel powerless to complain. Research has shown that harassing behaviour if ignored or not reported, is likely to continue and become worse than go away. *“Sexual harassment exploits the trust of both sexually harassed girls and their parents”* (Hallam, 1994). They do not only lose trust in male learners and male teachers who sexually harassed them. Men in general and school authorities to whom female learners are reluctant to report their experiences of sexual harassment are viewed as untrustworthy. Sexual violence against female learners causes extreme victimisation both immediately and often well into adulthood

(Timmerman, 2003). Many of them suffer the effects of sexual violence in silence having learned the submission as a survival skill.

Some female learners are transferred to new schools unwillingly due to circumstances. Fear of further victimisation has been reported as a cause, which compels girls and parents of victims to request for transfers to new schools (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

According to South African country reports on Human Rights Practices (2003), the level of sexual violence in schools increases the risk for female learners to health problems such as unintended pregnancy and its complications, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STI). Transmission of these infections will persist, despite common STI/HIV prevention approaches emphasising abstinence as long as sexual harassment prevails.

Sexual harassment is not just a minor inconvenience to female learners. It changes their lives. The experience of alienation, which some *“girls experience immediately after sexual harassment, could last into adulthood”* (Department of Education, 2002). Above all, attitudes have to be changed. There has been a collective mindset of respect for all people, especially against seeing women as submissive and obliged to be available for gratuitous sex. Schools are ideal institutions in which to begin to change attitudes but there has to be commitment on the part of all role players to a concerted programme of action.

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided the literature review for this research. The literature review focussed on the major aspects: the kinds of sexual harassment women in general and female learners experience, the

effects female learners suffer as a result of sexual harassment in schools. The aim of this chapter was to provide relevant information to this study from the existing literature. Some of the issues discussed will be confirmed or rejected by the primary findings in chapter five.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a theoretical framework, namely feminism and the principles which influenced this study. From a feminist perspective it also shows how the values and beliefs of society have influenced how women in general are perceived and treated, and how redress in women's lives could be achieved. Finally, the two feminist theories namely African feminism and experiential feminism are discussed to illustrate features relevant to this study.

Research has shown that historically, women's experiences have systematically been ignored, trivialised or distorted. A more profound awareness has been recently developed via consciousness raising impact of feminism. Consequently women have been encouraged to make public, a range of experiences which have been kept private or whose impact had been otherwise unacknowledged (Hearn, 1996).

Feminist researchers argue that for far too long the lives and experiences of women have been ignored or misinterpreted (Guy-Sheftall, 2003). Feminism attempts to destabilise or disrupt the mainstream or 'male stream' research. This approach is a paradigm shift from the traditional existing social theories, which reflect only the situation of men and renders women invisible or marginal.

Feminist research has become most appropriate in this study, as it does not only provide information about women's lived experiences in a variety of life contexts but also incorporates capacity building of the

participants and encourages them to inform and support one another (Unger, 2001).

Feminist research also rejects outdated and traditional techniques that treat the participants as objects with little or no regard for participants as individuals. It has provided an alternative framework for researchers who have felt uncomfortable with treating the participants as research objects (Dawson, 2002).

Writing about the characteristics of feminist social research Neuman (2002) argues that feminist research incorporates the researcher's personal feelings and experiences into the research process. It also recognises the emotional and mutual dependence dimensions in human experience.

Literature reviewed, has indicated that sexual harassment is a feminist issue because it represents violence against women, coercion of women, a focus on women's sexuality and forcing women to be silent victims as it places women in a powerless position (Bahar et. al: 1996, Hartman, 1997, Levette and Kottler, 1997, Martlin, 1993, Okin, 1996, Unger, 2001). From a feminist perspective, sexual harassment like all other forms of gendered violence arises from and enforces the subordinate position of women in the society.

This study was shaped and informed by two interconnected feminist theories namely, African feminism and experiential feminism. These two theories are discussed in the following sections to illustrate features relevant to this study that assisted the researcher to analyse data that was collected from the participants.

3.2 AFRICAN FEMINISM.

African feminism particularly addresses issues affecting women, both young and old, in society. Writing of the richness and complexity of African feminism, Guy-Sheftall, 2003 asserts that *African feminism recognises a common struggle with African men for the removal of yokes of foreign domination and exploitation*. She further argues that African feminism is not antagonistic to men but challenges them to be *aware of certain salient aspects of women subjugation, which differ from the generalised oppression of all African peoples*.

African feminism acknowledges its affinities with international feminism, but delineates a specific African feminism with certain specific needs and goals arising out of concrete realities of women's lives in African societies (Guy-Sheftall, 2003). African feminism was therefore relevant for the purposes of this study as it addressed sexual harassment of African female learners (in Ndwedwe, South Africa).

Mangena (2003) argues that Black women have been silent for far too long and women must assume their own African voices and speak out for themselves. A Black African female researcher conducted this study with Black African rural secondary school female learners to break the cloak of silence and contribute in affording these learners, who are future women, an opportunity to speak out about their experiences of sexual harassment.

African feminism recognises that there are certain inequalities and limitations that exist in traditional societies and criticize patriarchal manifestations in African societies. This means above all African feminism weighs precisely which traditional institutions are agreeable and positive towards women and which severely disadvantage women

(Arndt, 2002). Salo, (2001:60) further states that African feminism “*is about challenging the status quo, or about describing the ways in which the contemporary patriarchies in Africa constrain and prevent them from realizing their potential beyond their traditional roles*”. Sexual harassment perpetrated by male learners and male teachers against female learners in South African rural schools is an indication of such inequalities, which have limitations in the lives of the victims.

According to Arndt (2002:34) “*African feminism gets to the bottom of gender relations within an African context and the problems of African women illuminating their causes and consequences and criticises them*”. African feminism aims at upsetting the existing matrix of domination and overcoming it, thus, transforming gender relationships and conceptions in African societies, and improving the situation of women. It is an attempt to enable women to recognise that they are oppressed and have a right to feel violated if what they have experienced is a violation of their human right (Salo, 2001)

The focus of African feminism on “*women speaking out*” for themselves, recognition of gender inequalities in the societies and its explicit purpose to confront a whole range of behaviours that women accept as normal but, by which they feel humiliated and oppressed, or at the very least uncomfortable and the domination of women makes this theory relevant to this study.

Feminists argue that in a social order dominated by men, the process of changing sexual oppression must involve focus on women. Therefore, this study has focused on only female learners. The use of the African feminist theory for the purposes of this study does not deny the fact that there are male learners and male teachers who suffer the effects of

sexual harassment and those who may struggle to overcome this system of domination.

African feminism aims at discussing gender roles in the context of culture, socio-economic exclusion and exploitation (Kuumba, 2003). Sexual harassment cannot be seen in isolation as a gender issue only. African feminism locates sexual harassment in the context of culture and socio economic conditions.

Furthermore, African feminism does not stop at criticism of patriarchal structures but also attempts to identify both traditionally established and completely new scopes and alternatives for women which would assist them to overcome their oppression (Arndt, 2002).

African feminism does not only view men as accomplices but also as products of patriarchal patterns of thought. It assumes men's capabilities to transform (Arndt, 2002). This implies that men are potential allies in the fight against forms of discrimination. African feminism signals a refusal of oppression and commitment to struggling for women's liberation from all forms of oppression "*internal, external, psychological and emotional, socio-economic, political and philosophical*" (Salo, 2001:58).

3.3 Experiential Feminism

Experiential feminism acknowledges that, "*experience gives access to truth. It is assumed that we come to know the world through experience*" (Weedon 1998). Feminist experiential perspective challenges the "positivist empiricist notion of single external reality" (Unger 2001:21). Knowledge is viewed as contingent upon the standpoint of the knower and as a dependence upon the specificities of her experience. This

reclaims women's experiences as a central point and aims to listen to women speaking in their own voices expressing their own meanings and concerns about their lives. The feminist experiential feminism perspective was relevant as this study focused on secondary school female learners with the aim of giving them an opportunity to express their understanding of sexual harassment in their own life contexts. The meaning of experience involves personal, psychological and emotional investments on the part of individual role as a social agent. The participants are not perceived as research objects but as "experts on their own lives and authorities on their own experiences" (Unger: 21). To explore the kinds and the effects of sexual harassment on female learners in this study, *their experiences* became the central point. The researcher had to listen to their own voices, expressing their own meanings and concerns to access truth in their experiences of the kinds and the effects of sexual harassment.

The main advantages of experiential feminism are the richness and the complexity of its data, and it's prioritising of women's own particular concerns as opposed to theories, which, favour the male monopoly of truth. Feminist experiential approach therefore offers a different version of the world and a different kind of truth. The application of the principles of experiential feminism in this study empowered the female learners to name and understand their own experiences of sexual harassment as opposed to other people telling about their experiences.

3.4 CONCLUSION

Feminist theories are considered as appropriate for purposes of this study as it is believed that it afforded the participants; rural secondary school female learners the "*platform*" to interrogate sexual harassment

and human rights issues in terms of their own personal experiences, shaped by themselves and their subjectivities.

This chapter has examined the principles of feminism in general. It also explored specifically the principles of African feminism and experiential feminism and their relevance to this study. In the next chapter, Chapter Four, research design and methodology are discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Dawson (2002) states that methodology is the philosophy or the general principle, which will guide research. Within the framework of feminist theories, which acknowledge that for far too long the lives and experiences of women have been ignored and misinterpreted and put emphasis on participative qualitative enquiry, this chapter identifies appropriate research methods and sampling techniques and explains how these relevant strategies were employed to collect data for the purposes of this study.

Before embarking on the process of data collection the principles of qualitative enquiry, which influenced and guided the study are discussed in the following section.

4.2 WHY QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

In research, the choice of the method employed is determined by the topic chosen and by the kind of data to be collected (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995:95). This study intended to explore the engendered experiences of female learners in rural secondary schools in relation to sexual harassment. The primary aim of this study was to examine the kinds and the effects of sexual harassment on rural secondary school female learners. The objectives were to attain their understanding of sexual harassment and to develop the understanding from their perspective. Operating within a feminist perspective, qualitative methodology was preferred as it permitted the participants to express

their experiences fully in their own terms. Qualitative methodology best permitted the researcher to access data about the lived experiences of these female learners in rural secondary schools.

Qualitative research methodologies seek to learn about the social world in ways, which do not rigidly structure the direction of inquiry (Oakley; 2004). Qualitative research methodology was employed because it allowed the researcher to make use of several strategies to understand experiences rural secondary school female learners have about sexual harassment and their effects.

Qualitative research is a naturalistic inquiry. It allows the use of non-interfering data collection strategies to discover the natural flow of events and processes and how the participants interpret them (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). A good qualitative strategy is inductive in the sense that a researcher attempts to understand the situation without imposing the pre-existing expectations on the setting. The ultimate aim is to obtain an insight and understanding into the participant's life world (Berg, 2001). An important assumption of the qualitative paradigm is, understanding a situation from the perspective of the participants in the situation. The qualitative approach is subjective in the sense that the focus is on the experiential state of actors and their perception of the situation. The participants are therefore, conceptualised as active agents in constructing and making sense of the realities that they encounter.

The task of a qualitative researcher is providing the framework within which the participants can respond in terms of their own meanings. Categories or dimensions of analysis emerge as a qualitative researcher comes to make sense of and organise patterns that exist in the empirical world, within which it is studied (Patitu, 2000).

4.3. THE RESEARCH SITE

4.3.1. Location Selection

While sexual harassment prevails universally, irrespective of social, economic or cultural factors, for the purpose of this study the effects of sexual harassment on female learners were explored particularly in rural secondary schools. Working within public rural secondary schools setting was ideal for this study because research has shown that the majority of women in rural areas are still victims of sexual violence. Female learners in rural secondary schools are also victims of sexual violence which women in the rural communities experience.

The research was conducted in four secondary schools i.e. one school from each of the four wards which formed Ndwedwe Circuit. The distance from each school ranged from 8kilometres to 12kilometres. The average of the total enrolment was 550 learners. In all the schools it was observed that the male learners enrolment was higher than that of the female learners, especially in grades 11 and 12.

Factors as suggested by Spradley and others (1984), in selecting the research site were taken into consideration. Simplicity in the research setting allowed the studying of a simple situation. The accessibility and permissibility of the site was also important. The issues of time and mobility were considered in the selection of these four schools. The whole research process was conducted at these four schools as they provided a natural environment that the participants were familiar with and permitted the researcher to play an unobstructive role.

4.3.2 ENTERING THE RESEARCH SITE

It was important to negotiate gaining access into the research sites with the various authorities both within the schools and Department of Education. Permission to conduct research in selected schools had to be obtained from the Department of Education through the District Manager, as well as from each of the principals of the four schools.

Gaining access did not prove to the researcher as easy a task as envisaged. Initially, it was thought it would be easy to gain access to the schools as the researcher had taught in Ndwedwe for twenty-two years and knew the principals as her colleagues. However, difficulty in gaining access in schools was caused by the nature and the sensitivity of the matter that was investigated.

Literature reviewed indicates that there are documented cases where male teachers have been identified as perpetrators of sexual harassment against female learners. It was therefore, necessary to discuss fully the aims and the significance of the study before it was conducted and clearly explain the role of the researcher and what was to be achieved with the results of the research. An agreement was reached with the principals that interviews were to be conducted after school hours so as to have enough time and not to interfere with the school programs.

4.4 SAMPLING

The sample comprised of twelve secondary school female learners, of different ages and grades. Three female learners from each of the four schools in Ndwedwe Circuit participated in the research. Samples were selected after the participants were workshopped on the issues of sexual harassment and the human rights. This permitted the researcher to employ purposive sampling strategy. The initial group of five participants

from three different schools selected themselves into the sample. At this stage the researcher used the volunteer purposive sampling strategy. To reach the intended number of twelve participants a snowballing strategy was employed. All the participants were selected because of the particular features i.e. they were willing to participate and have been sexually harassed at school. It was important to request for permission from the parents of all the participants before the collection of data. Therefore all the participants were given consent letters for parents' approval.

4.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

To gain a better insight into what rural secondary school female learners view as sexual harassment and the effects thereof, a research design that would capture their articulations was constructed.

While all research methods have its strengths and restrictions it was determined that individual interviews and focus group interviews best suited the research study. Patitu (2000) argues that in face-to-face interviews the researcher has the ability of analysing both verbal and non- verbal responses. The non- verbal behaviours can help as an indicator for the need to further clarify questions. In face-to-face meetings, an investigation is able encourage the participants and to help them probe more deeply into a problem particularly an emotionally laden one.

These interviews were divided into three phases. The first phase of the data collection involved individual interviews. The second phase involved focus group interviews within the school and the third phase involved focus group across the schools. The individual and focus group interviews were employed with a view that the restrictions of one tool

would often become the strengths of another. This also enabled the researcher to triangulate. Denzin (1989; 101-103) proposes that the greater the triangulation in the research design the greater the confidence the researcher may have in the findings.

Before embarking on the individual and focus group interviews, all the female learners enrolled in four schools participated in workshops in their respective schools. A single workshop per school was accomplished in accordance with the time schedule stipulated by the school officials.

The workshops allowed a relationship to be built between the researcher and the participants. A relationship was imperative for the best use of the feminist theories that underpinned the research. It intended to project the researcher in a manner that would evoke the least resistance to the participants through the workshop. During these workshops conversations did not differ fundamentally from everyday communication. It was realised that this ground-building phase would form the bases for a sound relationship of mutual trust.

The selected sample to participate in the research was chosen after the workshops. This provided an opportunity to employ various strategies in selecting the participants. However, it is important to note that five out of twelve participants from three different schools selected themselves into the sample at the end of the workshops.

The workshops were held with the aim of empowering the female learners with knowledge of basic human rights as enshrined in the constitution of South Africa. Posters on Human Rights were shown to the participants. The knowledge that was shared with the participants was intended to conscientise them about issues of sexual harassment,

inform them of the assistance available and motivate them to confront issues of sexual harassment in schools and the society at large.

To facilitate discussions around the issues of sexual harassment the participants were divided into groups ranging from nine to twelve, depending on the size of the group. The participants discussed the meaning of sexual harassment and kinds of sexual harassment they experienced at their schools and what they could do to stop or confront issues of sexual harassment at school and in their society at large. Groups had to provide a report. At the end of each group's presentation the participants commented and asked questions. The role of the researcher in this process was to facilitate the discussions and to provide information as necessary in the knowledge gaps.

The workshops culminated in an explanation of the purpose of the workshop in relation to the study, and the significance thereof. The participants were ensured that the information discussed with the researcher and their participation in the study would be treated as confidential. For sampling purposes the female learners who were willing to participate in the study were asked to meet the researcher or leave behind their names with their life orientation teachers.

The researcher did not remain unchallenged at this phase of the study. Initially the female learners, especially the younger ones were reluctant to participate in-group discussions. In their report back sessions it was observed that other acts generally defined as sexual harassment were not seen as sexual harassment. For example, some female learners viewed whistling as showing a sense of appreciation and as part of their culture. Although in a very superficial manner this phase gave the researcher a general picture of female learners' ideas and thoughts about the concept of sexual harassment as a human rights issue in their

schools. At a minimum, they learnt that sexual harassment is gender-based violence, a violation of human rights and can be confronted and challenged.

Although these workshops were time consuming the researcher placed strong value on them as they helped the female learners see false illusions around them. These workshops also informed the female learners that they could improve their lives by understanding their human rights and that sexual harassment could be perpetrated at all levels of their school lives.

These workshops were also intended to uncover the myths of sexual harassment and culture, i.e. to demystify thoughts and ideas about sexual harassment; myths and illusions, which allow some groups in the society to hold power and exploit others (Nueman, 2000). The fundamental aim at this stage was to deepen the female learners' understanding of issues of sexual harassment and their human rights, as it was believed that this deeper understanding could lead to further empowerment.

4.6. OBTAINING THE DATA

4.6.1 Individual interviews

“Honesty is an important quality of an interview” (Shurink; 1988:143). With this view in mind, the aims and the objectives of the study and the envisaged purpose of the results were clearly stated at the beginning of each interview. Together with each participant the practical aspect of research planning was discussed. This involved the place of the interview, the time that could be devoted to the interview and the use of a tape recorder and its purpose.

The relationship between the participants and the researcher developed into a partnership when they reached an agreement on the objectives of the study and the way these objectives could be achieved. It was at this stage that the impression created to the participants was that they had something important to communicate to the researcher and the worthiness of the researcher of this communication. Reassurance of the participants that their identities and any information they provided would in all circumstances be treated as confidential was affirmed. It was also agreed that the participants were all going to use pseudonyms. Nueman (2000) argues that if the participants realise that they are respected and the information they provide is treated with confidentiality, they become secure and open up to allow the relationship of trust to develop.

The trust developed with the initial sample of five female learners accorded an opportunity to employ a snowballing technique to recruit other seven participants. An agreement that all transcriptions and notes based on the interviews as well as the final reports would be made available to the participants for comments before release was reached.

The collection of data at this phase was through the individual semi-structured interviews. The aim during these interviews was to provide a framework for the participants to speak freely in their own terms about a set of concerns brought to the interaction as well as any other related topics they might introduce. This kind of research approach is appropriate where people talk about their lived-world. On this question of the efficacy of interviews, Cohen, Marion and Morrison (2001) say:

“Interviews enable the participants to discuss their interpretations of the world they live in and express how they regard the situation from their own point of view”.

Although an idea of the basic issues to be covered in the interviews was set up, free narration by the participants was encouraged. Such narration was guided by key questions, as suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1992), to ensure that the interviews and data collected were to contribute to the research objectives. The questions asked served as a guide to ensure that all relevant sub topics were covered during the interviews.

In all the interviews the researcher categorically stated that she expected to learn from the participants' thoughts, emotions and experiences. The interviews began with biographical questions and thereafter, questions that related to the participants responses to elicit a deeper understanding were asked. These interviews were a learning experience as each interview presented its uniqueness. The researcher had to employ the principle of individualization in interviewing which is based on acceptance of the individuality of every subject with regard to religion, personality, and social background as suggested by Best and Khan (1993). The researcher had to encounter the participants at their individual levels and accept them in their life's world.

Cohen and others (1999) assert that semi-structured interviews allow flexibility and freedom to ask modified follow up questions that would be suitable to responses which in turn would give a thorough insight into the study. Therefore, throughout the interviews the sentiments underlying the female learners' accounts of their experiences was probed in an attempt to acquire an in-depth understanding of the meaning, kinds and the effects of sexual harassment. Questions were also posed to clarify the meaning of their responses. This form of interviewing allowed the participants to explain the phenomenon of sexual harassment from their own experiences.

Taking into account Oakley's (2004) argument, from a feminist point of view, that researchers ought to tell interviews about their own experiences so that the encounter becomes a mutually cooperative event, the researcher shared her personal experiences of sexual harassment when she was a female secondary school learner and as a woman with the participants at the end of the individual interviews. Oakley (2004), further argues that the level of trust and commitment that this is then likely to generate will result in more authentic information than otherwise and there is a likelihood of a false front being presented to the researcher. It was intended to develop more trust to prepare for individual follow up sessions, where necessary and focus groups.

It was crucial not only to ask questions in such a way that the participants were encouraged to answer and elaborate further in their own terms but also to provide them with enough time and space to do so. Hence, the length of the interviews ranged from 45-70 minutes depending on the time the individuals needed to participate. All interviews were tape-recorded to capture the female learners' actual words. This was done with their permission. The data collected was transcribed soon after the interviews.

4.6.2 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Focus group interviewing is a qualitative research technique for collecting data from a small number of participants who are interviewed in groups rather than individually. The rationale for conducting focus group interviews is that the informal group, the nature of questions and the interaction amongst the participants stimulates in-depth discussion of the topic to an extent that would be difficult in a more formal interview situation (Ferreira and Puth; 1988). The real value in using this technique

is that the researcher is exposed to the participants' own thoughts and means of self-expression.

This technique was adopted based on the strengths as discussed by Berg (2001) and Morgan (1997). Focus group interviews encourage a great variety of communication from the participants and also encourage open conversation about embarrassing subjects. It facilitates further the expression of ideas and experiences that might be left under-developed in an individual interview. Moreover, through detailed attention to interaction between different members of the group a researcher can explore differences between group participants. Participants reflect upon each other's ideas, and this ensures that data is interconnected. Focus group interviews also allow the use of conflict between participants to clarify why people believe what they do.

These focus group sessions were also employed to explore and develop insight into the meaning of existing data. The combination of individual and focus group interview methods were desirable in this study to overcome different weaknesses inherent in both methods.

Focus group interviews were divided into two phases, namely, focus group within the school and focus group across the school. Focus groups within the school comprised of the total of four female learners from each of the four schools. The focus groups across the school comprised of the total of four, that is, one female learner from each of the four schools. One of the primary schools was selected as the venue for this phase of interviews due to its easy accessibility and minimised travelling time and costs for the participants.

A brief account of the study, explaining the scope of the interview and the topics to be covered set in motion the interviews. Each of the

participants was asked to give a broad view of their experiences of sexual harassment. This assisted in ensuring that each participant would speak at least once and assisted the participants to become acquainted with one another. The researcher's role was non-directive, participating only enough to start the conversation and prevent it from wandering too far from the topic of the investigation. The rationale for encouraging spontaneous discussion among the female learners was that the discussion might reveal important information that would not have emerged in response to direct questioning. The approach employed was based on the notion that people allowed to be spontaneous in a non-evaluative and a non-threatening environment will reveal much more about themselves that they would otherwise hide (Morgan1997).

In order to balance participation and in an attempt to stimulate all participants, questions were asked and further comments were solicited from the participants who seemed hesitant about expressing their opinions. Intra-group stimulation resulted in lively dialogue among the participants and activated memories, feelings, and experiences. The key element was the involvement of the participants where their disclosures were encouraged in a nurturing environment. Given an environment that is tolerant, friendly and permissive the participants gradually became free to share personal experiences. The contribution of one participant spurred the others to offer additional information. The groups' discussions were tape-recorded. The length of the focus group interviews ranged from 60minutes–80minutes depending on the needs of the individual group.

4.7 DATA ANALYSIS.

The final outcome was a large volume of information, which had to be reduced. According to Dawson (2002) the method you use to analyse

data depends on whether you have chosen to conduct qualitative or quantitative research. As the research was informed by qualitative research principles, the data collected was reduced in two ways. Commencing with physical reduction as suggested by Lindlof (1995); comprised of organizing the raw data into conceptual categories, prioritising data and making analysis using emerging themes, referred to as thematic analysis. This type of analysis is highly inductive, that is, the themes emerge from the data and are not imposed upon by the researcher (Dawson, 2002). Lindlof argues that thematic analysis renders information manageable.

In analysing the female learners' experiences the researcher wanted to understand a definition, kinds and the effects of sexual harassment derived from reading in respect to their definitions of acceptable and harmless and unacceptable or harmful behaviour. To analyse data thematic analysis was employed whereby raw data is analysed by themes. Themes or concepts were used as analytical tools for making conclusions. Data was interpreted and findings were explained in terms of the lived experiences of the secondary school female learners in the context of this study. Data was organised and analysed with a view to answering the critical question: what are the effects of sexual harassment to rural secondary school female learners and the sub question: what kinds of sexual harassment do rural secondary female learners experience?

4.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter dealt the methodology and explained reasons for the use of qualitative methodology and its relevance to this study. It also gave the location of the study, sampling strategies, the design and how data was obtained. Chapter five discusses in detail the process of data analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discussed the principles, which informed the process data analysis used in this study. The second section is the presentation and analysis of data. Data is presented in the form of selected female learners' texts with the aim of analysing it. This is done by giving themes and then extracts of female learners' interviews that support themes, which emerged from them. The data collected is described, analysed and interpreted. This chapter also served as the foundation for the concluding chapter, Chapter Six, which provides interpretation, recommendations and conclusions for the study.

5.2 DATA ANALYSIS

5.2.1 Principles which informed the data process

According to Dawson (2002) the method employed to analyse data depends on whether one has chosen to conduct qualitative or quantitative research. As this research was informed by qualitative research principles the data collected was reduced in two ways. It commenced with physical reduction as suggested by Lindlof (1995).

This reduction process comprised of organizing raw data into conceptual categories, prioritising data and making analysis using the emerging themes, referred to as thematic analysis. This type of analysis is highly inductive in that the themes emerge from the data and are not imposed upon by the researcher (Dawson 2002). Lindlof (1995) argues that thematic analysis renders information manageable. Coding was an

integral part of data analysis, which was guided by the research questions and led to new questions. Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of to the descriptive or inferential information completed during a study. Prior to coding the researcher embarked on preliminary reading to acquaint herself with the material that arose from the data. Secondary reading followed to gain more insight into the kinds and effects of sexual harassment secondary school female learners experience at school. O'Connell, Davidson and Layder (1994; 178) ascertained that *"coding data in terms of main themes or concepts that are the focus of the research, allows the researcher to condense data."* According to Lindlof (1995; 221) the main aim of qualitative coding is to tag segments of interest and look for ways to categorise action or talk that would lead towards inductive propositions.

Using coding to analyse also allowed for more processes to occur. Particular parts of transcripts were highlighted resulting in easier comparability to other transcripts. This involved fleshing out essential themes from one transcript, which was then used as a point of comparison to information in other transcripts. Integration of categories and their properties as stated by Lindlof, (224) was the most important part of this process as laying essential themes; concepts and ideas paved the way for analysing the text. Ordering the data in this way enabled a construction of forms of descriptions and explanations for the texts gathered, through interviews and feelings expressed by the female learners; through body language, which was recorded in terms of themes and concepts as suggested by O'Connell Davidson and Layder (1994:178).

Thereafter, the reduction process employed required reflective inferences. This is a creative process referred to as conceptual analyses (Dawson, 2002). It was important at this point, to consider not imposing

information external to the data collected. The concepts had to emerge from the fieldwork data and the theory that informed the study. At this point the concepts that emerged as per interpretation were not only to be understood but also explained. It is this interpretation that provided rich interpretations of the participants' transcripts.

5.3 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.3.1 Kinds of sexual harassment

From the interviews conducted a number of themes emerged which provided an insight into the kinds of sexual harassment female learners in rural secondary schools experienced. All twelve female learners interviewed had experienced acts involving unwelcome physical contact, verbal abuse and unwelcome gestures. All the interviewed female learners referred to these acts as sexual harassment although their responses to each kind differed.

5.3.1.1 Sexual harassment involving physical contact

The participants reported that they had encountered sexualised touching. To these female learners the unwanted acts of physical contact by either male learners or male teachers meant sexual harassment. The female learners also indicated that they experienced touching of different parts of their bodies like bums, breasts, thighs and hips, being kissed by force, pulling by hand, pushing and twisting of arms and hugging as all acts of sexual harassment. To them these acts were acts of violence, which involved sexual harassment perpetrated against them by male learners and male teachers. To answer the question: What actually happened to you that made you feel you were sexually harassed, the female learners said:

Zipho: *I don't want to be touched anyhow.*

Researcher: *What do you mean by being touched anyhow?*

Zipho: *I Nx...Nx, (shaking her head) don't want a person to touch my breasts and my bums and my private parts. (By a 'person' she referred to a teacher who sexually harassed her and 'Nx.. Nx' was used to express dislike and anger)*

Wele: *One boy in my class, as we were going out for break pushed me against the wall behind the door touched my hips and kissed me by force.*

Slindile: *Boys hug us as girls, touch us on our thighs, buttocks and breasts, kiss us by force and run away.*

Ayanda: *It was after netball practice when Sipho called me. I did not go to him and he pulled me by my hand and twisted my arm. This is harassment. It makes me feel bad.*

Pretty: *Boys here at school touch our bums, breasts and hips. One day a boy in my class pushed me against the wall and kissed me by force.*

Re: *...like Sphamandla in grade 12A...he likes to touch bums when we go there for English classes.*

Thando: *Sometimes when you walk around the corridor boys touch your buttocks. May be you are sitting in class and the boys*

touch your breasts. Some older boys touch our hips and tell us that we are growing.

Zakhona: *Mmm..they (referring to male learners) enjoy touching our bodies. They touch my hips breasts. Others even lift our skirt.*

The participants explicitly stated that they did not like or enjoy these acts, as is evident in Zipho's statement of not liking to be touched anyhow. Zipho also expressed disagreement and dislike through body language as she shook her head. The fact that Wele pointed out that male learners kissed female learners by 'force' shows that this was an unwanted or unwelcome act or experience to her. These female learners experienced acts of sexual harassment against their will as they were forced into these experiences.

5.3.1.2 Sexual harassment involving verbal abuse

The female learners also indicated that they experienced highly sexualised verbal degradation committed by both male teachers and male learners at school. Verbal abuse identified in the following participants' extracted texts included derogatory words such as 'sluts', 'bitch', sexually related nicknames and comments on body parts and sexist jokes.

Sanelisiwe: *Boys call us names we don't like. One grade 12 boy calls me "umapakisha" because I've got big hips...he even said he wished he could see my hips. Other boys now call me "umapakisha" and if I tell them that I don't like this name I just become a laughing stock. Boys do not seem to care about how I feel.*

In the above extract male learners gave Sanelisiwe a nickname, 'umapakisha' (meaning she is packer or she is packed with hips) that she did not appreciate. To Sanelisiwe this was an act of sexual harassment. The name 'umapakisha' is related to her big hips rather than her personality, strengths or talents. According to this response the male learners seemed to appreciate Sanelisiwe's parts of her body and the appreciation that they showed was in relation to sex. It was therefore concluded that the male learners saw Sanelisiwe as an object of sex rather than a human being in her own rights. This was evident in Sanelisiwe's response when she said, "*boys do not care about how I feel*".

The following extracted texts highlighted verbal abuse, involving derogatory language, and unwanted comments about female learners' body parts. The female learners experienced this verbal abuse as sexual harassment perpetrated by both male teachers and male learners at school.

Zipho: *A Biology teacher called me to the laboratory. I thought he wanted to discuss schoolwork...instead he asked me if I was a virgin. This was the most painful experience I have ever had at school...he told me that he could make me experience sexual intercourse. When I told him that I was going to tell my parents he called me a slut...a bitch...I cried.*

Zandile: *One of the boys has a tendency of commenting about my thighs and my eyes .He calls me a sexy bitch. He treats me like his sex object.*

Re: *If boys call you and you don't go to them they swear at you like a grade 12 boy called me isifebe (a prostitute) because I did not go to him when he called me...Boys in our class call me and other girls with children grannies, aunts, old ladies or mummies. Even if we make good suggestions in class boys say we think they are like our babies and grannies must keep quiet.*

Verbal abuse involving sexist's jokes was identified in the following extracted response.

Pretty: *Boys use derogatory and humiliating language like today I asked my desk mate to collect the English book from the teacher and one boy asked if I was menstruating and had messed myself up and the other boys laughed at me.*

Sanelisiwe: *Other male teachers instead of protecting us from boys make sexist jokes...*

Researcher: *What actually happened that you call a sexist joke?*

Sanelisiwe: *I was selling cakes and the teacher called me and told me that he did not want the queen cakes I was selling...he wanted the real cake, meaning he wanted to have sex with me.*

Researcher: *How did you know that he meant he wanted to have sex with you?*

Sanelisiwe: *I know boys at school call our private parts cakes. They even sing about it "sika lokhekhe" meaning cut our cakes and they mean having sex with us.*

Thando: *They use vulgar language as if they are joking and they laugh at us with their friends.*

Siphokazi: *Nothing hurts me like this boy when he ...and call me names in front of his friends...he makes me a joke. I become angry when they laugh because this is not a joke...*

The above extracted texts also suggested that the everyday language of male learners and male teachers in secondary schools has been exercised as the most important tool for perpetuating sexual harassment against female learners. Verbal harassment degraded them without affecting them physically. According to the above extracted responses, female learners viewed teachers as their line of defence and protection. However, male teachers failed to fulfil this need. Instead of protecting them against sexual harassment, male teachers were perpetrators themselves.

5.3.1.3 Sexual harassment involving unwelcome gestures

The female learners also mentioned unwelcome looks as a kind of sexual harassment they experienced at school.

Wele: *Sometimes boys come to look at us when we practice netball. We wear shorts and they look at our thighs 'with that look'.*

Researcher: *What do you actually mean by that look?*

Wele: *You know if someone looks at you innocently...sometimes they look at us and lick their lips...or show us their tongues. I don't like the way they look at me and what they do when they look at me.*

In literature reviewed, internationally and locally, sexual harassment is defined as involving unwanted acts that are sexual in nature. The above acts, physical, verbal or non-verbal were identified as sexual harassment. During the interviews the female learners through body language expressed in various ways that these acts were unwelcome and unwanted. Acts such as crying (Zipho) were non-verbal expressions recorded. Other participants shook their heads for example Amanda, while a few participants verbally expressed themselves.

5.3.2 EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

In uncovering the effects of sexual harassment inflicted upon rural secondary school female learners, themes of powerlessness, humiliation, loss of human dignity, guilt, and lack of interest in schoolwork, loss of trust in perpetrators and other male figures at school, fear of perpetrators and further victimisation, hurt and low self-esteem emerged from the interviews.

5.3.2.1 Powerlessness

All the female learners interviewed expressed powerlessness as one of the effects they experienced when they were sexually harassed at school either by male teachers or other male learners or both.

Researcher: *How does this make you feel?*

Wele: *I feel like I don't have power...I feel like I'm used in a way...I feel powerless because there is nothing I can do if a boy harasses me because I know he has power... I can't stop him. I*

know he has power. He overpowers me. There is nothing I can do about it but it hurts.

Researcher: *What do you do when boys harass you?*

Slindile: *There is nothing I can do. I sometimes report the matter to the teachers but it doesn't help...I don't know what else to do.*

Pretty: *I feel that they do this to us because we are girls .I am sure that they would not do this to other boys. Boys use their male power to dominate us in class and they know we don't have power.*

Thando: *The same older has' booked' me...he always tells me that he is waiting for me to grow... after a year or two I will be his girlfriend and threaten to hit me if I talk to other boys. It is like I belong to him. I can't stop him.*

The female learners stated there was nothing they could do. This indicated that they suffered sexual harassment because they were powerless. Male learners and male teachers have power over them and threatened them in various ways. Perpetrators with either threats or intimidation frequently silenced them as victims of sexual harassment. Male learners threatened to hit them and male teachers threatened to fail them.

Amanda, a seventeen year old, grade eleven female learner who was repeatedly sexually harassed by a male teacher at her school for two consecutive years responded in the following way when she shared her experiences about sexual harassment at school.

Amanda: *Ayi... Mam...he said he is going to find me. I don't know what he means. I don't know his aims. He hurts me and he threatens me and I can't stop him.*

Amanda continued to suffer the effects of sexual harassment, as according to her response she could not stop the male teacher from harassing her. This suggested that she was powerless and the situation was out of her control.

Closely related to powerlessness female learners indicated that they suffered the feeling of insecurity in the school environment. They did not feel safe to learn effectively and obtain their maximum potential in any subject or field they have chosen.

Wele: *Boys don't respect us. We are not free to move around here. During breaks boys sit in groups and we go pass them they whistle and call us names. When they like they pull and touch us anyhow.*

Researcher: *What do you mean when you say you do not feel free?*

Pretty: *I cant make a contribution in class...even make a suggestion that can be useful to the class even when I feel like making one I can't because I know boys wont listen.*

Thando: *I don't feel free in class. It is not nice to be with him in class. I don't feel free to learn I am really afraid of him.*

The above extracts highlighted that female learners did not feel free to express their ideas and make contributions in class and free to move

around the school premises. The male learners used power through sexual harassment to control the female learners' movement and space in the school environment and denied them freedom to express their ideas just because they are females. The female learners could not freely go past a group of male learners due to fear of sexual harassment. This is in contrast with the fact that any learner irrespective of sex should feel free to learn, express her or his ideas and feel comfortable walking around the school premises. The school is a place for learning and growing. Sexual harassment stops this process.

5.3.2.2 Humiliation and loss of human dignity.

Another theme, which emerged from the participants' texts, was that of humiliation and loss of human dignity. The female learners spoke of sexist jokes and other forms of sexual harassment to belittle them. It became clear in the analysis of their responses that female learners suffered humiliation and loss of human dignity because of sexual harassment perpetrated by their male schoolmates and male teachers. They expressed that they did not receive respect they richly deserve by virtue of being human beings. According to their responses the acts of sexual harassment perpetrated by male learners and male teachers manifested lack of respect for female learners at schools.

***Zipho:** Teachers look down upon us. They think girls are for sex...it hurts because it is not happening to me alone it happens to other girls especially in secondary schools. Some teachers think that because girls wear short dresses and skirts girls have to be touched anyhow. I don't want to be touched anyhow. (Zipho, a sixteen-year-old grade ten learner who was sexually harassed by a teacher)*

Researcher: *What do you mean by being touched anyhow?*

Zipho: *I don't want a person to touch my breasts, my bums and my private parts. He is not my boy friend. I want them to respect my body. I am also a human being. I also want teachers to respect me.*

Zandile: *It shows that boys look down upon us as girls.*

Researcher: *What really annoys you when boys touch you*

Thando: *It is humiliating because your body is yours. It does not belong to anybody so no one is supposed to touch my body. I don't like it .I feel I loose my dignity.*

Mati: *I loose my pride and my dignity as a girl. I don't like it. This hurts me.*

Siphokazi: *This makes me feel like I am a weak girl.*

Researcher: *What do you really mean when you say it makes you feel like a weak girl?*

Siphokazi: *I feel like I lack dignity.*

Humiliation also leads to stigmatisation and discrimination.

Re: *I don't like a person to touch me because it makes me loose my dignity. It humiliates me". It makes people think that I'm a girls who has to be touched anyhow as if I don't care about it.*

Slindile: *It is a defamation of character. It makes me feel really small. Other people at school look at us as 'those bad girls', girls who are touched by boys anyhow.*

The above response leads to the deduction that female learners suffered stigmatisation and discrimination as a result of sexual harassment at school. The school community instead of protecting and supporting victims of sexual harassment discriminate against them as Slindile explained in the above extract; "...other people at school look at us as those bad girls...who are touched by boys anyhow".

5.3.2.3 Guilt feeling among sexually harassed female learners

The feeling of guilt emerged as one of the frustrations female learners experienced as a consequence of sexual harassment in their secondary schooling.

Amanda: *Sometimes I think of reporting him but I think he will lose his job. I am afraid to go to the principal's office and report him.*

Analysis of the above suggests that the female learners suffered guilt, and were struggling to find ways of dealing with sexual harassment. Amanda wanted to report the male teacher who sexually harassed her to the school authorities however; the feeling of guilt in the event the teacher lost his job prevented her from doing so. She decided to quietly endure the torments and effects of sexual harassment. Being quiet about what the teacher was doing to her became a coping strategy although she suffered extreme emotional trauma.

Mati: ...sometimes I think there is something wrong with me ... I'm new in this school. Ayi... a teacher in a school I come from harassed me even in this school a boy harassed me and... this teacher now.

Mati's response suggested that female learners did not only suffer guilt but blame as well. The female learners blamed themselves for the sexual harassment they suffered at school. In addition to self-blame, they also suffered the blame put on them by others at school. This was identified in Amanda's response:

Amanda: What makes me sick is when my classmates say I love him...(Biology teacher) I want to get good marks in Biology ...why don't I stop him if I don't love him. This made me cry.

Amanda suffered the blame put on her by classmates, for being sexually harassed by a Biology male teacher. Instead of getting the support from her classmates Amanda was accused for failure to stop the teacher from harassing her. The teacher used his position of power and authority and took advantage of Amanda. However, classmates who thought that Amanda wanted to obtain high marks in Biology put the blame on her. This suggested that the female learners suffered guilt for the 'crimes' they had not committed. The male teacher who perpetuated violence, in the form of sexual harassment was free from guilt and the blame was shifted to the innocent and desperate victim.

5.3.2.4 Female learners lose interest in schooling

The following are the some of the responses of the four female learners from three different schools, two of whom were sexually harassed by their male teachers and two by their male schoolmates.

Amanda: *I don't like him. He is wrong I don't like his subject. I wish I could change Biology...but I can't now. I'm in grade eleven. Sometimes when he teaches in class he touches me. Look...ma'am... ayi... (Shaking her head) a teacher disturbs me. I hate it because I know what it means. Sometimes he writes messages on his cell phone and put it on my desk. When he does this I fail to learn the whole day.*

Zipho: *I wish I could leave this school and go to another school. I really don't enjoy my stay here.*

Wele: *I want to finish grade 12 and leave...it's only two years to go.*

Zakhona: *I'm also new here, (sighs)...my mother brought me to this school because a teacher wanted me to fall in love him... I thought it was going to be better here ...but boys are the same everywhere.*

Mandisa: *I don't like it because I have come to learn here. What they do is a drawback ...when I try to concentrate in class...I can't... I think about that Mali (A boy in her class) keeps on touching my bums and my breasts and kiss me by force.*

Thando: *Sometimes I think it is best for me to leave and go to another school because this boy is old and he troubles me. He usually tells me that I am going to love him whether I like it or not.*

The school is supposed to be a place where effective teaching and learning takes place. It is supposed to develop learners, irrespective of their gender to their full potential. This can only occur in an environment

conducive to effective learning and teaching. The analysis of the above selected texts indicated that sexual harassment of female learners became a barrier to their learning. Every child has a right to education. The female learners in Ndwedwe Secondary Schools had access to schools, however they became deprived learners at schools as both male learners and male teachers sexually harassed them. Some female learners reported to have lost concentration in class, as acts of sexual harassment did not only occur outside the classroom, but also occurred even inside the class during teaching and learning periods. Some lost interest in their schoolwork. This resulted in poor academic performance. Some female learners suffered to such an extent that they were persuaded to move to other schools. This unfortunately did not guarantee that they would be free from sexual harassment, as this was evident in Zakhona's response when she said "*I thought it was going to be better here...but boys are the same everywhere*". This also deprived the female learners' access to schools of their own choices.

5.3.2.5 Loss of trust in male figures

The female learners through the following extracted texts expressed loss of trust in male figures. This loss of trust is the result of sexual harassment.

Amanda Ayi... *Mam... ...he said he is going to find me I don't know what he means. I don't know his aim.... I don't trust him any more. I don't trust him.*

Zipho: *I don't trust male teachers. I don't trust them.*

Sanelisiwe: *As for me, I don't trust boys ... the way they harass us girls.*

They reported loss of trust in the male figures at school. For any child to learn effectively in any learning situation there has to be mutual trust between a child and a person who teaches him or her. Teachers at school are the only adults whom both male and female learners need to trust. These learners are entrusted in teachers' care. Sexual harassment by both male learners and male teachers at school exploits the trust of both female learners and their parents. Related to the theme of loss of trust the sub theme, inability to form relationships with other male teachers and male learners was identified. This also had a bearing on effective learning of female learners as suggested in the following extracted responses:

Zipho: *I... don't trust them even those who have not said and done these things...I don't ask them to help me with schoolwork outside the class...if they can't help me in class ...I rather fail a test.*

Wele: *I don't trust boys you know. Sometimes I wonder if I will get married because it is like boys and men are rough and do not respect women.*

5.3.2.6 Fear of both perpetrators and males generally

The analysis of the female learners responses identified fear as one of the effects, which they suffered, as a result of sexual harassment in secondary schools. This theme became evident in the following extracts:

Sanelisiwe: *The problem is that we are afraid of the boys. They threaten to hit us if we tell them that we are going to report them to the teachers or if we confront them about what they do.*

Zakhona: *Actually... I 'm afraid of him. He is dangerous.*

Researcher: *What do you mean if you say he is dangerous?*

Zakhona: *I don't love him. He calls me and if I don't go to him he pulls me by my hand. He says he is going to "stock" (hit) me if I don't fall in love with him I' m afraid.*

Wele: *We cant stop them...I'm afraid of the boys. They sexually harass us and promise to hit us if we confront them.*

Thando: *I don't feel free I'm afraid of this boy. Firstly this boy is old, secondly he promised to hit me if he finds me talking to other boys. He is not even my boyfriend. He has just booked me as his future girl friend.*

Sexual harassment of female learners in schools created a climate of fear. Their life at school became difficult and threatening as perpetrators pressured female learners to have sexual relations with them. The analysis showed that some female learners are reluctant to report violence for fear of retaliation from perpetrators. The school therefore, becomes a danger zone, a place where female learners need to worry more about dealing with their fears, than with their studies at school to reach their full potential. They also live in the fear of failing subjects that are taught by perpetrators.

Amanda: *Sometimes I try to work hard in Biology but I'm afraid I going to fail Biology.*

Researcher: *What makes you feel you are going to fail Biology?*

Amanda: *Ayi...sh...he (the teacher) said I'm going to fail Biology because I'm rude...I don't want to fall in love with him.*

The analysis of the above extracted response indicated that male teachers abused their authority and reinforced sexual demands with threats of failing the subjects. This did not motivate the female learners but caused them to live in fear.

Closely linked to fear is vulnerability to subsequent victimisation. The participants also expressed that sexual harassment by one male learner leads to further victimisation or abuse and exploitation by other male learners or male teachers. This became evident in the following response.

Slindile: *One boy does this and the other boys touch you.*

5.3.2.7 Hurt feelings experienced by female learners.

All participants interviewed expressed that any form of sexual harassment they experienced evoked the feeling of hurt. Emotions of hurt were always accompanied by anger in their responses, either expressed verbally or non-verbally.

Zipho: *It hurts because this is not happening to me as an individual. It happens to other girls especially in secondary schools. This makes me angry...*

Amanda: *...I was not in full school uniform...so he punished me and others but gave me two more strokes. He called me during*

break and told me that the other two strokes were for that I refused to fall in love with him.... it hurt me so badly I... cried.

Siphokazi: *...nothing hurts me like this boy when he touches me and calls me names in front of his friends...I become angry when they laugh because this is not a joke. It hurts.*

Zandile: *It is painful. I came here to learn ...not to be treated like this ...I don't like it its painful.*

Amanda: *Sexual harassment is bad. I really don't understand why boys and teachers do it. I wish they knew how it hurt us as girls.*

Fiko: *It is true it hurts but I think they know that sexual harassment hurt us. They do it because they enjoy hurting and using us. That is why they laugh about it.*

Wele: *It makes me feel angry with the boys especially with teachers because they are adults. This is very painful.*

These extracts suggested that the girls as victims of sexual harassment suffered 'hurt', emotionally and physically, as an effect of sexual harassment. Emotionally the female learners' lives at school became miserable, as they were hurt by the experiences of sexual harassment. They were also hurt by how other fellow students viewed their 'hurting' experience of sexual harassment. This is evident in Siphokazi's response "...I become angry when they (other boys) laugh because this is not a joke it hurts". The mere fact that male learners laugh about this suggested that they did consider or understand the seriousness of the effects of sexual harassment inflicted on the female learners. This hurt the victims. Female learners as victims of sexual harassment have to live

and associate themselves with perpetrators (male learners and male teachers) with the feeling of anger in them. The type of relationship that was developed between the female learners and the perpetrators was therefore not a healthy one conducive for effective teaching and learning.

The participants also reported that they suffered physical 'hurt' as an effect of sexual harassment. Male teachers were reported to have used corporal punishment as a tool to force female learners to have sexual relationships with them as identified in Amanda's response, "...the other two (strokes, by a teacher) were for that I refused to fall in love with him...it hurt so badly I cried". The fact that Amanda cried in this instance is an indication of how deeply she was hurt. Amanda suffered the emotional traumatic effects and physical pain, which stems from sexual harassment.

5.3.2.8 Low self esteem

In their responses some female learners revealed that they were confused about themselves. They also displayed negative thoughts about themselves. This was evident in the following extracted responses:

Matie: *Sometimes I think there is something wrong with me...*

Slindile: *May be I am not fit to be a class leader because boys don't care about what I say. This really makes me feel small and not important. Sometimes they laugh at me and hit me if I try to defend myself other girls whom they sexually harass. Others shout at me an say...who do you think you are?*

In the above response Slindile pointed out that she felt small and not important as a result of sexual harassment perpetrated by boys in her

class. She even described herself as not fit to be a class leader. This suggested that the victim had developed low self-esteem and did not appreciate the leadership qualities she might possess.

Some female learners alluded to the fact that they lost confidence in sharing their ideas with their classmates. This was clearly stated by Re and Pretty in the following extracts:

***Re:** This affects my schoolwork and myself as a person. It makes me feel small. Sometimes I loose confidence to stand in front of the class because boys tease me just because I'm a girl and I have a child.*

***Pretty:** I can't make a contribution in class...*

The loss of self-confidence the victims experienced as an effect of sexual harassment deprived them of their right to learn effectively in the sense that the victims could make contributions freely during lessons as indicated in the extract above.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided extracted data which demonstrated the prevalence of sexual harassment of female learners perpetrated by both male teachers and male learners in rural secondary schools. The themes that emerged from their voices and the analyses thereof were a clear indication of how female learners in rural secondary schools struggle to survive the consequences of gender-based violence in the form of sexual harassment. This is viewed as a serious challenge to the Department of Education, schools and society at large. In Chapter Six detailed recommendations based on the findings of this study are discussed

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION INTERPRETATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This research study has investigated the effects of sexual harassment experienced by female learners in rural secondary schools. In order to understand the effects of sexual harassment it became necessary to also explore the kinds of sexual harassment female learners experience. The investigation was centred on twelve female learners of different grades and ages, selected from four secondary schools in Ndwedwe circuit.

This study was influenced by the principles of qualitative research. Individual and focus group interviews formed the tools that demonstrated what the female learners interviewed, viewed as sexual harassment, and the effects that they suffered as victims of sexual harassment. Female learners who participated in this study were victims of sexual harassment perpetrated by both male teachers and male learners at school.

The purpose of this chapter is to give discussion and interpretation on the study. Based on the findings of this study, this chapter also gives conclusions and recommendations which might be used to confront and decrease sexual harassment of female learners in schools.

6.2. DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

The various forms of violence that female learners encounter in schools have reflected the high levels of violence found in the patriarchal South African society. African feminism, which influenced this study, recognises that some inequalities and limitations exist in traditional and patriarchal societies. This

study has revealed the prevalence of sexual harassment experienced by female learners in rural secondary schools. This is a manifestation of inequalities that exist between male learners and female learners in Ndwedwe rural secondary schools.

It has uncovered different kinds of sexual harassment as experienced by female secondary school learners. These include verbal and non-verbal harassment, as well as unwarranted and unwelcome physical experiences with sexual connotations. In their descriptions, the female learners made reference to repeated unwanted sexually suggestive words, acts and gestures. There were requests for sex or a relationship from male learners and male teachers; demands for sex as a condition for positive subject assessment and a reinforcement of sexual demands with threats of physical or corporal punishment.

Furthermore, this study has uncovered how sexual harassment, as one form of gender-based violence affected the female learners in rural secondary schools. It became evident from the participants descriptions that the effects of sexual harassment has had a negative impact on each individual interviewed. In the theoretical framework chapter, African feminism referred to limitations experienced by women in society as a consequence of gender based violence. This study also revealed that the effects of sexual harassment posed some limitations on female learners. It was uncovered that they developed lack of interest in schoolwork, which led to poor academic performance. All the twelve female learners interviewed voiced that they felt powerless, humiliated, hurt, threatened, guilty and afraid. Some also indicated a loss of trust towards male teachers and male learners in general.

This study also revealed that the secondary school female learners were reluctant to report the incidents of sexual harassment to school managers due to fear of further victimization especially in instances where perpetrators were

male teachers. Some alluded to the fact that when they reported instances of sexual harassment either perpetrated by male teachers or male learners no serious steps to address the matter were taken against the perpetrators. They therefore, decided to keep quiet about the matter and live school life threatened and in pain. These findings are consistent with the findings of other studies such as the Human Rights Watch Report (2001).

Literature reviewed earlier in the study referred to labelling as an effect that female learners as victims of sexual harassment suffered. However in all literature reviewed for the purpose of this study, no mention of defamation of character and stigmatisation as experienced by the two participants was made. Out of twelve participants, two alluded to stigmatisation, which cause defamation of character as an effect of sexual harassment. The two female learners mentioned that they experienced defamation of character in the sense that they were viewed as 'girls' with bad behaviour or promiscuous behaviour after being sexually harassed by their male schoolmates.

In response to the direct questions asked about the matter investigated, nine participants did not respond to the question by telling about their experiences, which according to experiential feminism that informed this study should be central point. Instead they told about what happened to other female learners in their schools. Hence participants had to be redirected to gain their personal experiences and how they interpreted them. Only three of the participants were bold enough to tell specifically about their experiences from the beginning of interviews without wandering into the experiences of others. This indicated the sensitivity of the matter that was investigated.

6.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Since 1994 the South African Government and the Department of Education have introduced excellent policies to protect the school communities against

gender based violence, including sexual harassment. However, the prevalence of sexual harassment in schools indicates a gap between policy and practice. Despite the existing policies to address sexual harassment, male learners and male teachers who are perpetrators and other teachers including the management teams at schools do not take it seriously.

It was evident in this research that some victims were reluctant to report acts of sexual harassment to the management team members because there were no serious steps taken against the perpetrators of sexual harassment. There is therefore, a need for the Department of Education to realize ways of ensuring that the policies are implemented. It is also suggested that the Department of Education as well as teacher Unions conduct more workshops on sexual harassment focusing on the effects of sexual harassment to the victims. Such workshops might raise consciousness to the school managers at all levels, and make them realize the major role they have to play in confronting sexual harassment, and encourage them to ensure that policies to fight and prevent sexual harassment are implemented.

The school as an agent of change also has a major role to play in the implementation of these policies to prevent sexual harassment. Schools need to introduce intervention programmes to prevent sexual harassment. Schools can also reduce sexual harassment by developing positive gender images among male and female learners. This would be in line with African feminism which does not regard males only as perpetrators of gender based violence against women but assumes men's ability to change and become allies in the struggle against all forms of female oppression and discrimination. There is also a need for teachers to realise their role and reflect on their individual attitudes and practices. School based workshops and seminars on sexual harassment can sensitise teachers and learners about how these violent acts occur and how these acts seriously affect the victims.

According to this study the female learners felt a loss of power and were rendered relatively powerless because the schools could not or did not act in their best interests. The schools could not support them by challenging ideologies which put them in powerless positions and allow male domination. African feminism as used in this study aims at upsetting this existing male domination and overcome it. African feminists hope that this would transform gender relationships and conceptions in African societies thus improving the situation of women. It is on the basis of this principle and the findings of in this study that it is recommended that schools should challenge these ideologies through its curricular and co-curricular activities. Schools should design their curriculum such that it does not promote gender inequalities, a contributing factor to gender based violence. Schools should, therefore promote gender equality through its curricula and co curricular activities.

This study revealed that the effects of sexual harassment of female learners in rural secondary schools left them traumatized. Some felt guilty and demotivated. Schools should, therefore have readily available counselling sessions to provide support to the victims of sexual harassment and help them in deal with its effects. There is a need to instil internal strengths and control of the situation or their experiences and help the female learners as victims of sexual harassment focus on their academic work in order to achieve their goals. The services of a school counsellor become essential and important in assisting them break the chain of silence about acts of sexual harassment. Furthermore the female learners would have a suitably qualified and professional person to report to.

The school governing bodies can also play a meaningful role to confront issues of sexual harassment of their female children at school. This could be achieved through working in close collaboration with the local clinics, social workers, police, and other relevant service providers. These service providers can

workshop parents on gender-based violence including sexual harassment from different perspectives.

If there is to be any meaningful change at school level there is a need for continuous public educational programmes such as workshops, seminars, media write-ups and campaigns to change society's stereotypes and attitudes on gender-based violence including sexual harassment.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the effects of sexual harassment to rural secondary school female learners in Ndwedwe. To accomplish this it also explored the kinds of sexual harassment these girls experience in the school context.

Male teachers and male learners were identified as perpetrators. However, it acknowledges that male teachers and male learners are potential allies in the fight against male domination and have the capacity to change their beliefs and attitudes if schools could implement relevant strategies. This study is therefore an appeal to all stakeholders in education to be actively involved in designing and implementing intervention programmes to address sexual harassment and its effects.

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APPENDIX A

For Attention: Mr. Zwane J.
Ndwedwe Circuit Office
Ndwedwe
4342
31 March 2004

Reference:Ntuli T.K.
Tel.032-5322337
Persal number:60919735

Sir

RE: Research For Master of Education

I have registered for Master of Education Degree with the University of KwaZulu-Natal. My research topic focuses on the effects of sexual harassment on female learners at rural secondary schools. At present, I am permanently employed by the Department of Education as an educator in your circuit.

For the success of this study I need the assistance of female learners who have been victims of sexual harassment at four secondary schools i.e. one school from each ward in your circuit. I hereby request for permission to access these schools. My supervisor is Dr. S. Singh from the Department of Educational Studies at the University of KwaZulu Natal.

I would appreciate if your office will be able to give me an opportunity to conduct this study.

Yours sincerely
Ntuli T.K.

PROVINCE OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
ETHEKWINI REGION
NDWEDWE CIRCUIT
department of education
and culture

ISIFUNDAZWE
SAKWAZULU-NATAL

umnyango wezemfundo
namasiko

PROVINCE OF
KWAZULU NATAL
ETHEKWINI REGION
NDWEDWE CIRCUIT
department van
onderwys en kultuur

address: ikheli: adres:	private bag: P/bag X532 isikhwama seposi: Ndwedwe privaatsak: 4342	telephone: (032) 533 1015 ucingo: (032) 533 4017 telefoon:
enquiries: imibuzo: navrae:	reference: inkomba verwysing:	Date: 2005-05-12 Usuku: Datum:

T.K. NTULI
P/BAG X509
NDWEDWE
4342

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN FOUR SCHOOLS IN NDWEDWE CIRCUIT

This letter serves to give you permission to conduct research in Ndwedwe Circuit. You can therefore collect data from four Secondary schools, talking to the female learners.

This office wishes you good luck with your research.


CIRCUIT MANAGER: J.B. ZWANE

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM TO PARENTS

RESEARCH TOPIC: The effects of sexual harassment on rural secondary school female learners.

RESEARCHER: Ntuli T.K.
School of Educational Studies
University of KwaZulu-Natal

SUPERVISOR: Dr Suchitra Singh

I understand that:

1. The participation of my daughter in this is voluntary.
2. As a parent I reserve the right to withdraw her from the study at anytime.
3. My daughter is not obliged to respond to the question of the study.
4. Interviews will be conducted in a safe place within the school, and tape-recorded for the purpose of transcripts.
5. Confidentiality in this study is guaranteed.

I do/do not give consent for my daughter to participate in the study.

.....
Signature

.....
Date

.....
Contact Number

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Introduction

This interview guide is intended to collect information on the topic: The effects of sexual harassment on rural secondary school female learners. The information collected will be specifically used for academic purposes and will be kept with the highest degree of confidentiality. A report will preserve anonymity. Post interview sessions will be conducted to give you an opportunity to review your responses and make deletions and inclusions.

The areas of interest in the guide include:

1. Personal experiences of sexual harassment female learners have.
2. Kinds of sexual harassment female learners experience at school.
3. Perpetrators of sexual harassment against female learners at school.
4. The effects female learners experience as result of sexual harassment.

Pre planned questions.

1. What actually happened to you that you refer to as sexual harassment?
2. How do these experiences of acts of sexual harassment make you feel?
3. How do you deal with perpetrators of sexual harassment here at school?
4. What challenges have you come across in dealing with sexual harassment here at school?
5. How has sexual harassment affected you in your school life and in general?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS-GROUP INTERVIEWS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

Introduction

This interview guide is intended to collect information on the topic: The effects of sexual harassment on rural secondary school female learners. The information collected will be specifically used for academic purposes and will be kept with the highest degree of confidentiality. A report will preserve anonymity.

The areas of interest in the guide include:

1. Personal experiences of sexual harassment female learners have.
2. Kinds of sexual harassment female learners experience at school.
3. Perpetrators of sexual harassment against female learners in school.
4. The effects female learners experience as result of sexual harassment.

Pre planned questions.

1. What exactly happened to you that you feel was sexual harassment?
2. How do these experiences make you feel when other female learners in your school experience them?
3. How do these experiences of acts of sexual harassment make you feel as a victim?
4. How do you deal with perpetrators of sexual harassment in your school?
5. What challenges have you come across in dealing with sexual harassment in your school?
6. How has sexual harassment affected you in your school life and in general?
7. What else would you like to share with the group about sexual harassment?

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS-GROUP INTERVIEWS ACROSS THE SCHOOLS

Introduction

This interview guide is intended to collect information on the topic: The effects of sexual harassment on rural secondary school female learners. The information collected will be specifically used for academic purposes and will be kept with the highest degree of confidentiality. A report will preserve anonymity.

The areas of interest in the guide include:

1. Personal experiences of sexual harassment female learners have.
2. Kinds of sexual harassment female learners experience at school.
3. Perpetrators of sexual harassment against female learners at school.
4. The effects female learners experience as result of sexual harassment.

Pre planned questions.

1. What exactly happened to you that you feel was sexual harassment?
2. How do these experiences make you feel when other female learners in your school experience them?
3. How do these experiences of acts of sexual harassment make you feel as a victim?
4. How do you deal with perpetrators of sexual harassment at your school?
5. What challenges have you come across in dealing with sexual harassment at your school?
6. How has sexual harassment affected you in your school life and in general?
7. What else would you like to share with the group about sexual harassment?