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The Career Experiences of Asian Women
Teachers: A Life-history Approach

By

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SYNOPSIS

This thesis explores the career perceptions and experiences of 20 experienced Asian women teachers who had commenced their careers in the last 25 years. By focusing on the accounts / stories of those Asian women teachers, I have attempted to answer the question: What is it like to be a black teacher in British schools? The stories were collected through a series of life-history interviews.

Early research on the educational experience of black people in Britain focused more or less exclusively on schooling and 'black underachievement'. All tended to locate the problem and its solutions, within black children, their families and cultures, hence isolating 'race' issues from those of gender and social class. The research also have tended to continue to focus on pupils in schools and on those who are seen to have failed within the system. Instead, this study examines the experiences of Asian women teachers who had largely succeeded in their education.

Despite the fact that my interviewees did not comprise a homogeneous group, there was uniformity regarding their perceptions of their career experiences and the way they related to their social environment. The Asian women teachers in this study encountered barriers at all stages in their careers and faced racism, albeit in different forms and guises. These teachers were perceived by white colleagues, parents and pupils as being the inferior 'Other'. In addition, apart from the overt, wounding type of racism, they were subjected to institutionalized racism, which denied them their dignity and made professional advancement very difficult. Many of these teachers often had to find alternative routes to promotion, in multicultural areas of teaching and not in mainstream section. They, sometimes, had to survive in hostile environments. But they all succeeded despite the system, rather than because of it. Success was often made at considerable personal cost, and with great determination and commitment.

The study concludes that the experiences of these teachers were racially affected. A number of generalised patterns regarding their career developments and on the articulations of racism in their working lives emerge from these biographies and are discussed in this thesis. However, despite the existence of structural racism in society, the Asian teachers in this study found different ways of managing and responding to it.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my thanks to all the teachers who participated in the research programme. I have learnt a great deal from you and have been encouraged and inspired by your enthusiasm, hope and determination. Although it would be inappropriate to name you here, I wish to acknowledge your contributions and express my greatest appreciation.

I gratefully acknowledge the unstinting help and guidance given by my original tutor, late Barry Troyna. He had helped me develop confidence in the early stages of this research and enabled me to retain my 'sanity'.

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Abbreviations

B. Ed	Bachelor of Education: a four year honours degree resulting in Qualified Teacher Status
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
DES	Department of Education and Science (to April 1992)
DFE	Department for Education (from April 1992)
ESL/E2L	English as a Second Language
ESN	Educationally Sub- Normal
GRIST	Grant Related In-Service Training
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
INSET	In-service Education and Training Continuing professional development for practising teachers
ILEA	Inner London Education Authority
LEA	Local Education Authority
LMS	Local Management of Schools
MGSS	Multicultural Group Support Service
NAME	National Anti-Racist Movement in Education
OPCS	Office of Population, Census & Surveys
PEP	Political and Economic Planning
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate of Education - one year course for graduates leading to Qualified Teacher Status

PSI	Policy Studies Institutes: an independent research body undertaking studies of economic, industrial and social policy and political institutions. Formerly (PEP)
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
Section 11	Section 11 refers to special funding arrangement made under Section 11 of the 1966 Local Government Act for the needs of ethnic minority children
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
UK	United Kingdom

A Note on Terminology

'Black'

Throughout this study the term 'black' is used to denote persons of Asian, African-Caribbean and other non-white origin as an umbrella-type label and no particular political or sociological inference should be drawn by the reader.

B Voucher System

The 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act introduced an employment voucher scheme. B vouchers were for those who possessed special skills, like teaching, medicine etc.

Teachers' Pay

Teachers' pay scales have changed a number of times in recent years. At the time of interviews teachers were paid according to a common pay scale and received 'incentive allowances' A, B, C, D, E in return for taking on particular responsibilities. These allowances corresponded with the former pay scales 1, 2, 3, 4 and senior teachers. Teachers are currently paid on a Common Pay Spine with additional incentive points for specific responsibilities.

The Career Experiences of Asian Women teachers: A Life-history Approach

Preface

This thesis is based on research into career experiences and subjective views of a group of 20 Asian women teachers at various stages in their careers working within one LEA in the Midlands. Following Casey's (1993) example, I have used the terms Asian, black and minority ethnic interchangeably "to retain the self-naming employed by the teachers at the time of their interviews, not to adjust my usage to subsequent changes in the vocabulary of race" (p.171). There is an on-going debate around the use of the term black (Boyce-Davies, 1994; Modood, 1994; Brah, 1992). I am aware of the fact that black people are not a homogenous group and there are many differences between and within the groups. I accept that Asians and Afro-Caribbeans as well as British born black people will perceive their experiences differently. However, the inclusive term black has been adopted throughout to identify those who experience structural, institutional and individual discrimination because of their skin colour. I have used the term 'South Asian' to refer to only those teachers who defined their heritage and/or ethnic origins as from the South Asian sub-continent (Bangladesh, India and Pakistan) and include East African Asians.

The aim of the research was to give the teachers an opportunity to speak for themselves; to find out what it felt like to be a black teacher within the context of a society and an education system which was (and still is) structured not only by class and gender, but also by 'race'. The impact of 'individual, institutional and structural racism' on the lives of those teachers was examined, drawing on the accounts of the teachers themselves. The focus was to explore how structural factors were worked out in individual circumstances and how those who achieved 'career success' negotiated the barriers they encountered. Other influences, including family and communities were also explored.

In chapter one I examine the settlement pattern of black immigrants after the Second World War and the political responses to such large-scale immigration. I then review policy and practice in education, in particular ways in which the government had responded to the presence of black pupils. The phenomena of the educational provisions, multiculturalism, racism and their implications in black immigrants' lives are also discussed.

In chapter two I provide an insight into my own personal and professional experiences which provided the impetus for the research. I argue there that it is more important for the researcher to identify her/his own value position than to adopt an artificial distance.

In chapter three I examine the position of black teachers in the national context, concentrating mainly on black women teachers lives.

In chapter four I spell out the basic principles of life history study from a black feminist and life-historian's stance and their ethical and methodological implications.

In chapter five I focus on the application of research methods in the current study and how I carried out the research.

In chapter six I discuss the emergent themes- how black teachers in this study did not enjoy the same career progression or support as their white colleagues, with almost everyone believing they had experienced racial discrimination in their employment. Although racism was a theme running through most of the present sample of teachers' stories and many recounted incidents which had been particularly painful, most often it was taken as given, a routine experience and one of the realities of daily life. The black teachers in this study found different ways of managing or responding to racism. The response was likely to depend on individual diagnoses of problem.

The thesis has sought to demonstrate how my interviewees were much more than passive victims and how they were continuously seeking within

their professional lives to find creative methods of managing racism and responses to it.

In the final chapter, the main findings of the research are summarised and I draw together the various themes, which have emerged. The implications of the study are considered and I make recommendations for future practice.

Definition of Terms - The Expressions of Racism

In this thesis the term 'race' is used in inverted commas as a reminder that it is a category with no scientific or biological validity and to denote its status as a social construct. In order to understand why the Asian women teachers interpreted their negative interactions with dominant white groups as products of racism, it is important to understand the meaning of 'race' and the development of racism as it affects black people. It is also important to have an understanding of how racism operates and is experienced regardless of the motives or intentions of those accused of racism. It is therefore, appropriate that at this juncture I clarify my usage of these terms, 'race', 'racism', 'individual racism', 'institutional racism' and 'structural racism'.

'Race' and Racism

'Race' and racism are intertwined (Harvey, 1990). 'Race' and racism are essentially contested concepts, without any agreed meaning with which to identify their salience. 'Race' is best defined as 'an unstable and "decentered" complex social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle' (Omi and Winant, 1986, p. 68). Gillborn argues that 'race' is socially constructed as people use 'race' 'as a way of making sense of the world' and of organising their lives in terms of it (1995, p.4). In contemporary times 'race' is defined as a dynamic, 'social, historical and variable category' (McCarthy and Crichlow, 1993, p. XV) which is

constantly 'recreated and modified through human interaction' (Gillborn, 1995, p. 3; McCarthy and Crichlow, 1993; Essed, 1991). Racism involves unequal relations of power which disadvantage certain racialised groups of people, who, in the context of Britain in the second half of the twentieth century, are predominantly those seen as black. Lorde defines racism as 'the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance' (1984, p. 115). Carter and Williams (1987) define

'The core of racism is the assignment of characteristics in a deterministic way to a group or groups of persons. These characteristics are usually articulated around some cultural or biological feature such as skin colour or religion; they are regarded as inherent or unalterable precisely because they are seen as derived from one's 'race'. Race-ism then employs these race-ial characteristics to explain behaviour, feelings, attitudes, and ways of life' (p.176).

Whereas according to Craft and Klein (1986)

'In its broadest sense, 'racism' is taken to mean hostile intercultural attitudes, wherever they occur, and encompasses prejudice and discrimination against any individual or group on the basis of religion, language, culture or colour,' (p.4).

Essed defines racism as

‘an ideology, structure and process in which inequalities inherent in the wider social structure are related in a deterministic way, to biological and cultural factors attributed to those who are seen as a different ‘race’ or ‘ethnic’ group’ (1991, p. 43).

These definitions point to the range and diversity of practices implicit in the concept of ‘racism’. Many theorists (for example, Pettman, 1992; Miles, 1989) have different perceptions of the ideological nature of racism. Some contend that racism is both an ideology and a social practice. Miles (1989, p. 42) maintains that outside the historical context in which racism was identified as an ideology, it has little or no meaning and rejects the notion that historically specific definitions of racism can be applied to the present time. Essed (1991) argues that although racism is historically specific it is not a ‘natural’ or a permanent feature of European history. There is no doubt that racism is never static and is in a constant state of fluidity. Social attitudes to ‘race’ vary according to time, place and context. The varying articulations of racism depend on the prevailing social, economic and political structures. This is evident in the fact that there has been a shift from the eighteenth century importance attached to skin colour to the twentieth century notion of cultural differences resulting in “natural” barriers. Hence it is more appropriate to

speak of racisms rather than racism and to acknowledge the complexities and multidimensionality involved in analysing issues in this field.

Racism is created and reproduced out of a complex set of conditions and circumstances (Gilroy, 1992). The 'new racism' is an example of this.

Barker refers to the 'new racism' as 'pseudo-biological culturalism' (1981, p. 23) and maintains that it is the 'most dangerous theorisation of racism currently available' (1982, p. 100). The 'new racism' is premised on the notion of cultural difference and cultural incompatibility. Proponents of the 'new racism' assert that it is not abnormal to prefer ones own 'race' and it is 'natural' to feel threatened by 'alien' cultures and 'alien' people.

Despite the discreditation of 'fixed, biological differences' between 'racial' groups, this particular notion continues to underpin the 'new racism' with culture often serving as a euphemism for 'race'. This can be seen in the way that ethnicity is also treated as 'fixed' and mutually exclusive. These presumed 'fixed' cultural 'differences' are accordingly paraded in the public arena as constituting 'real' grounds for cultural incompatibility.

Racism of this kind by virtue of its appeal to 'common-sense' makes it 'acceptable' and 'prevents people from recognising what they have in common' with each other (Carter et al, 1992, quoted by Gillborn, 1995, p. 3). In Britain exponents of the 'new racism' portray the dominant majority as forming a unified white nation State who participate in a shared British culture, history and identity, and who have 'common' sense of 'belonging' (Gilroy, 1992). They argue that there is a need to protect the British

nation and the national culture (language, values, moral and social order) from those who are presumed to pose a threat to its existence.

According to the 'new racism'

'it is in our biology, our instincts to defend our way of life, traditions and customs against outsiders – not because they are inferior, but because they are part of different cultures' (Barker, 1981, p. 24).

Non-white cultures are regarded as the means by which the British nation and ultimately the British identity will be eroded. Black people, whether they are born in Britain or not, are not viewed as part of the nation state and as such their 'alien' cultures are thought to pose a threat to the survival of the 'British way of life' (Sarup, 1991). It is important to note that 'Britishness' is often equated and used interchangeably with 'Englishness' (Hall, 1992). Short argues that anything that is thought to endanger

'the national way of life, anything that disrupts what Enoch Powell in 1977 referred to as the homogenous 'we' (such as the relatively large immigrant population with an alien culture) will be disorientating and resented' (1994, p. 335).

But Lawrence (1982) accuses the British of suffering from 'collective amnesia' (p. 74) as they ignore the imperialist past and historical struggles, hence viewing 'race' as an imported problem for which they are in no way responsible (Ibid, p. 70). It is noticeable however, that white immigrant groups who have settled in Britain over the years (and those more recently) are not viewed as having 'alien' cultures or perceived as being a threat to the nation's existence. It is evident as Sarup (1991) argues that, Powellism constructed 'the black presence as 'Other', a problem or threat, against which a homogenous white national 'we' could be unified' (p. 91). This is the frame of reference through which majority ethnic groups make sense of their own identities and the identities of those designated 'Other'.

It is also useful to distinguish between 'racism' and 'racial discrimination'. 'Racism' may be taken to refer to beliefs and attitudes. 'Racial discrimination' refers to intentional and unintentional behaviour and institutional processes which have a discriminatory effect.

"In my view racism, which should be distinguished from racial discrimination, should be restricted to discourses which group human populations into 'races' on the basis of some biological signifier ... with each 'race' being regarded as having essential characteristics or a certain essential character ... and where

inferiorization of some 'races' may or may not be present"

(Rattansi, 1992, p. 36).

This definition of racism recognises that

"most discourses, and especially individuals, are likely to express a complex combination of strong and weak racism and ethnocentrism (and nationalism), and that these may change in emphasis in different historical, institutional and interpersonal contexts. It has a theoretical structure which allows for the possibility of a variety of 'racisms', depending upon how various elements of 'race', ethnicity and nationality are combined, how they are articulated with gender and class, and how they are related to theories in the natural and social sciences and notions in popular culture and common sense" (Ibid, p. 36).

On one level racial discrimination / oppression has to do with the individual psyche as Ribbens (1993) noted 'Society is located inside our heads, that is, in our socially located and structured understanding of "myself", "my life", "me-as-a-person" and so forth' (p. 88). On another level racial oppression is a major social issue concerning the political and economic institutions of society. The nature of racism in educational contexts can take the forms of stereotyping, denial of opportunity to certain racial groups, harassment, physical assaults, racist jokes which

the tellers would claim are meant in a harmless way but which nonetheless are an expression of power and indirect discrimination. For analytical purposes I have grouped racism into three categories - individual or subjective racism, institutional racism and structural racism; but I am aware that each interacts with and reinforces each other.

Individual or Subjective racism

Individual racism comprises those personal attitudes and behaviours which individuals use to prejudge racial groups negatively. Troyna and Carrington (1990) in describing the resilience of racial attitudes to change in Britain, highlight how the subtlety of individual racism leads to the perception of "tolerance" (p. 60). Individual racism is bound up with the personal prejudices and actions of particular people but without institutional backing, these rest at the level of prejudice. The attitudes of individuals, as betrayed by the ideology of common-sense racism, nourish institutional and structural racism through political and bureaucratic processes.

Institutional racism

Originating in the Black Power Movement's struggles in the US in the 1960s, the term institutional racism now has been adapted by many social scientists to describe the operation of social institutions, which

result in certain racial groups being disadvantaged. The most common feature of definitions of institutional racism is the production of racial inequalities by normal bureaucratic and professional processes and where the subjective consciousness of the individual officials, professionals and politicians involved is considered irrelevant. In other words institutional racism is in evidence where a public or private agency is presiding over long-established racial inequalities, the reasonable assumption being that the agency must in some way be held responsible for such an outcome, no matter how limited its resources and well-meaning its staff. Troyna (1993a) has suggested that the notion of institutional racism has become oversimplified. It has been used to delineate one particular aspect of inequality, which is then said to derive from the routine institutional mechanisms operated by people who may or may not be racially prejudiced. According to Jewson and Mason (1992, cited in Donald et. al) those who draw up institutional policies often fail to engage with the complex nature of individuals and with the structural and ideological aspects of institutions. Individual racism and institutional racism are not mutually exclusive. It is through individuals that the routine processes and procedures of institutions are carried out. Miles (1989) argues that this generalised understanding of institutional racism ignores class and gender divisions, and the differential access to power within both the dominant and subordinate groups. According to Williams (1985) one needs to consider other factors such as social class and the way in which these interact with 'race' to reflect a system of

power relations which is already embedded in institutions. Although individual institutions may present themselves as neutral, rational, bureaucratic organisational systems, each reflects a range of class, 'race' and gender relationships and encompasses a variety of ideologies based on 'common-sense' representations and explanations of power relationships which are prevalent throughout society. At the same time, each is part of a network of other institutions and ideas, which together make up the interlocking system out of which that society is constructed. In this way the actions and ideologies of the state also heavily influence them.

In Britain the concept of institutional racism has been used to attack existing theories which blame victims for their own racial oppression. It has also influenced the nature of interventionist social and educational policies geared towards eradicating those practices, which allegedly generate and perpetuate racial inequalities. We need to look at institutional racism not as a single causal explanation for racial inequality but as a framework for analysing the way in which our current social structures have been formed.

Recently in the Stephen Lawrence murder inquiry report, Sir William Macpherson defines institutional racism as "The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or

detected in processes, attitudes or behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people” (The Independent, 25 February, 1999, p. 1). And this concept of institutional racism needs to be used alongside the concepts of subjective racism and structural racism.

Structural racism

Structural racism refers ‘to differential relations of power and structurally-induced conflict between groups perceived as racially different in society’ (Troyna and Hatcher, cited in Gill et al, 1992, p. 197). It is entirely possible for structural discrimination to exist without the active collaboration of racist attitudes as structural arrangements and processes are based on the primary relationship of power and subordination. As Brah and Minhas (1985) argue ‘contemporary racism now needs to be seen as a structural feature of the social system rather than a phenomenon merely of individual prejudice’ (p.15). ‘It could be argued, therefore, that racism is a structural phenomenon’ (Blair, 1992, p.10).

Race’ thinking is not an individual phenomenon. It ‘is woven into the very fabric of our society’ (Brazier, 1985, quoted by Bianchi-Cooke, 1994, p. 62) and is regenerated politically in the ideological messages that people

receive (Harvey, 1993; Essed, 1991). The policies and attitudes adopted by the government since the 1980s (which I will discuss in the next chapter) towards education and immigration would seem to support Gilroy's contention that racism is 'determining rather than determinate, at the centre rather than in the margins' of British politics (1992, p. 52). It would also seem to confirm that the 'specific forms racism takes are determined by the economic, political, social and organizational conditions of society' (Essed, 1991, p. 11-12). Although it is 'cultural difference' and not 'race' which is used to define 'Britishness/Englishness' and to justify deracialized government policies, the 'new racism' is thought to represent a re-working of old racist ideas (Gillborn 1995; Short, 1994). Unfortunately in a so-called tolerant society, the dominant group as being racist perceives only racism of the extreme right wing type and is often blind to the subtle nuances of racism (Essed, 1991). This mode of thinking serves to normalise the everyday instances of racism experienced by minority groups. But Essed maintains that in order to identify racism it is vital that hitherto acceptable practices are scrutinised and where meanings lack clarity, they must be analysed (1991, p. 10). The perception of a society claiming to be a 'tolerant' one because of legislation against discrimination convinces such a society that its minorities do not have any valid claims to being discriminated against. Because of the perceived 'non-existence' of racism in that society, technically one cannot prove that one has been discriminated against, as one is bound to be accused of over-sensitivity. Education is

an important site for the production and reproduction of racism and, therefore, for its contestation. It is also important to remember that in reality, subjective, institutional and structural processes often operate together, and resistance to an example of one kind usually involves challenging all three forms. For the purpose of my study therefore, racism is used to refer to

‘a variety of attitudes, practices and types of behaviour, which may not necessarily be either overt or intentional, but which serve to discriminate against or to marginalise people judged to be of ‘another race’ (O.U. Course, ED356, ‘Race, Education and Society’, 1993, p. 5).

It is through this definition the experiences of Asian women teachers are discussed in this study.

Chapter One

Contextualising the Research

Introduction

Inequality at work is a phenomena of the society we live in. Those entering the work force come up against a differentiated job structure with their position within that structure affected by socially determined criteria over which they have little or no control and which limit the job choices available to them. Social relations between black and white groups in Britain today are set against a background of colonialism and imperialism (Husband, 1982). There is specificity about the discrimination/disadvantage directed at black people, both in terms of scale and of continuing intensity. Lonsdale (1985) suggests that:

"Women,...immigrant or black workers are particularly vulnerable because of the positions they are ascribed in the ideological framework dominant in our society. This is one which accepts that certain groups are inferior or dependent by virtue of their physical attributes, their sex... their race" (p. 159).

So any discussion of Asian women teachers in British schools must start from structural perspectives which take into account the broader social/

historical contexts. It must be understood in the context of the complex social and historical processes, which account for the subordination of black groups in British society. So before looking specifically at Asian women teachers' experiences in British schools, I need to review the settlement pattern of South Asian communities in Britain and the political and educational response to the large-scale immigration that occurred after the Second World War. It is important to trace the development of anti-discrimination and immigration laws to understand fully what was actually happening politically. In my view an analysis of the impact of legislation, policy and practice on employment will be the proper starting point for a discussion of the career experiences of Asian women teachers. This chapter is divided into the following sections:

- **South Asian Communities in Britain: An Historical Overview**
- **Large-scale post-war Immigration - Political Response**
- **'Race' and Policy Discourse**
- **A Reappraisal of Current Trends- The Persistence of Racial Discrimination**
- **The Educational Response to the Black presence in British Schools**

South Asian Communities in Britain: A Historical Overview

South Asian presence in Britain prior to the Second World War was significant but numerically small. During the colonial period (1857 -1947)

many of the employees of the East India Company bought Indian male servants and female 'ayas' (maids) with them back to England. According to Visram (1986), once in Britain, these servants were left to fend for themselves and often worked and lived in squalid conditions, faced racism and were grossly exploited. Another group of Indians 'lascars'-seamen employed on the ships that carried goods between Britain and countries in the East - also faced a similar predicament. There were some middle-class Asians also - teachers, doctors, lawyers and businessmen. [A large number of indentured labourers were also transported from undivided India to countries as far afield as Mauritius, Fiji, the Caribbean, Ceylon, Malaya, Burma, South and East Africa (Ghai & Ghai, 1970; Tinker, 1977). The East African Asians who arrived in Britain during the 1970s are part of this chain of colonial migration.] As Visram observes 'One of the major legacies of the British control of India was the planting of peoples of Indian origin all over the British Empire, including Britain itself' (1986, p. 11). However, it is difficult to estimate the number of South Asian people in Britain prior to the Second World War. The only available figures prior to 1947 suggest that in 1932 there were 7128 Indians in Britain (Visram, 1986).

Large-scale Post-war Immigration- Political Response

The decolonisation and the partition of India in 1947 into India and Pakistan [a further division of the latter in 1972 led to the creation of Bangladesh] coincided with a period of economic boom in Britain. The economic boom

led to a labour shortage in certain sectors of the British economy and citizens from South Asia and the New Commonwealth came to Britain to sell their labour power. The 1948 Nationality Act bestowed British citizenship upon these workers and they came to Britain with full legal rights to settle here. But there was no commitment on the part of the British Government to the well being of this particular group of people. Exploitation of black labour suited white economic interests but in the concern for the economic needs of capitalism, the social and political implications were overlooked and peripheralised. As far as Sivanandan is concerned: 'It was their labour that was wanted not their presence' (1981, p. 4).

The reaction to this large-scale immigration was initially mixed. Welcomed by industry, feared and regarded with much suspicion and even superstition by society at large, the immigrants established themselves in communities throughout Britain. They came to occupy the lowest rungs of the British employment hierarchy and many of them, both for reasons of low pay and racism and racialism, were assigned bad housing, which had repercussions for the lifestyles of the first generation and the life chances of the second generation. The British sense of superiority established during the colonial period largely continued. As Cashmore and Troyna observed:

"Blacks and Asians in the UK... have collectively been described as an underclass, class fraction and sub-proletariat... they are part of the

working class... yet remain a splinter group of that class. That position is marked by their alleged race" (1990, p. 208).

Then came a period of economic recession. By the early 1960s, the declining economic condition and inner city racial tension began to fuel a more sinister response to immigration. The 'necessary evil' of immigration became the easy excuse for all the inadequacies of inner-city housing and the fledging welfare state. According to Colin Brown "the collapse of the demand for labour ... has also provided extra fuel for racialism and discrimination among whites" (1984, p. 317).

The reaction of the Conservative government was the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962, which qualified the right of free entry to the UK for migrants from the New Commonwealth. The succeeding Labour government extended the Act, using the argument that, 'without integration, limitation is inexcusable; without limitation, integration is impossible' (Roy Hattersley, quoted in Foot, 1965).

By the late 1960s the migrants had been simultaneously racialised and signified as the cause of economic and social problems for 'our own people' (Miles, 1984b, 1988a), and the 'numbers' issue was being hotly debated. In 1965, the White paper Immigration from the Commonwealth recommended even closer control of immigration: 'The very presence of black communities is presented as a potential threat to the way of life and culture of white

citizens' (Ibid, p.126). The 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act removed the right of entry of British East African Asians. In 1968 Powell made his infamous 'rivers of blood' speech to Conservative Party members in Birmingham. It has been argued that Powell's speech set the terms for all future debates on immigration and 'his version of the reality of race relations has now been firmly appropriated as the basis for intervention on this issue by many leading politicians' (Troyna, 1984, p. 204). So during the late 1960s and early 1970s Enoch Powell racialized political discourse to such an extent that both Labour and Conservative governments took additional steps to limit immigration as a conscious attempt to placate the perceived fears to which Powell appealed (Solomos, 1989: Ch. 3; Troyna, 1984).

The 1971 Immigration Act took away the right of black Commonwealth immigrants to settle, and thus represented an important step in the institutionalisation of racist immigration controls. The British Nationality Act of 1981, which was intended to re-define British citizenship, introduced three classes of citizenship but its main effect had been to reinforce the earlier restrictions placed on immigration. The Act was effectively a further immigration law. One consequence of the Act is that UK citizenship is no longer automatically gained by birth in Britain.

Thus the immigration legislation of the 60s and 70s has been the process by which black people in Britain have had their status redefined. These immigration laws provided the legal **framework** for racial oppression and

increased the scope of legal discrimination. Black immigrants arriving here were coming from societies already experienced in resistance to colonialism and brought this experience with them. Once they arrived here they experienced discrimination as racism was not only a part of all institutions - legal, educational, health, housing systems, - but was also present in social conventions and in the assumptions and attitudes of many people. Colin Brown states:

"Black people come from the former colonies into this country to a position of ready-made disadvantage. ... the patterns of disadvantage were bound to reproduce themselves rather than gradually disappear" (1984, p. 316).

Certainly appeasing white fears and anxieties have been a political concern throughout the second half of the twentieth century. "The West Indian or Asian does not, by being born in England become an Englishman" (Powell, quoted in Smithies and Fiddick, 1969, reprinted in Solomos, 1991, pp. 23-4). As Paul Gilroy (1987) points out, ideas of 'the enemy within', 'the unarmed invasion', 'alien encampments', 'swamping', 'alien territory' and 'new commonwealth occupation' have all been used to describe the black presence. These ideas have over the years been promoted and perpetuated through a series of immigration acts (discussed above) which have targeted black people for exclusion and through which black people have been

portrayed as an 'alien threat' (Solomos, 1989). Margaret Thatcher expressed sympathy for those white British people who

"are really rather afraid that this country might be swamped by people with a different culture. ... if there is a fear that it might be swamped, people are going to react and be rather hostile to those coming in" (Margaret Thatcher, January, 1978, cited in Miles and Phizacklea, 1984, p. 5).

But according to the December 1991 issue of OPCS' Census Monitor only about 2.5 million Britons or 4.5 percent of the population belonged to one black minority or another. So the notion of being 'swamped by people with a different culture' was totally unfounded.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the locus of the race issue shifted from matters to do with immigration statistics towards a more subtle debate concerning ethno-cultural identity, nationhood and promoting 'the British way of life'. According to Paul Boateng (1989), one of the country's first black MPs, 'talk of "Britishness" often carries deeply racist connotations'. In his first speech on 'race' equality as Prime Minister, John Major argued for 'more effective integration in the United Kingdom socially, culturally and economically' (September, 1991: quoted in Runnymede Trust, 1991, p. 5). In a speech on European union, Major (1993) further argued that 'the best of Britain', its 'distinctive and unique' character would remain. Sensationalist

statements by politicians such as Powell and Churchill continue to shape the popular imagination into accepting an 'us' and 'them' which is clearly divided by colour.

"We must not ignore or sweep under the carpet the impact on our society and the British way of life of the new arrival in our midst ... of three to four million immigrants from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean"
(M.P. Winston Churchill, quoted by Short, 1994, p. 337).

So even in 1990s England black groups are described as non-British and this has implications for the everyday lives of black citizens.

'Race' and policy discourse

There was considerable debate in official circles during the time of both the Labour administration of 1945-51 and the subsequent Conservative administration about the consequences of black immigration on the 'racial character' of the British. I have already discussed above how several racist immigration policies were put into operation to discourage black immigration (Carter, Harris & Joshi, 1987). The immigration laws, with their racist assumptions that black immigrants are less desirable than white immigrants, legitimised other expressions of racial prejudice. By the 1960s the black communities had become well aware of the racism embedded in the national culture and institutionalised in the practices of many public and private

agencies. The problem lay in British society but the solution was to blame the victim. The racist immigration policy was left untouched, but the Government introduced the Race Relations Act of 1965, which made it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin in 'places of public resort'. The Community Relations Commission (later absorbed into the Commission for Racial Equality, CRE) was created by the 1965 Act but it lacked any real power. Research in the period following 1965 established that substantial discrimination in employment, housing and the provision of goods and services was practised against minorities in Britain. A Race Relations Act of 1968 attempted to redress these problems by enlarging the scope of anti-discrimination legislation to include employment, housing and the provision of goods and services but the centre left the local authorities to take responsibility for 'race' issues.

By the early 1970s it had become increasingly apparent that further measures were needed to combat direct and indirect discrimination in society. The 1975 White Paper on Racial Discrimination declared "It is inconceivable that Britain in the last quarter of the Twentieth Century should confess herself unable to secure for a small minority of around a million and a half coloured citizens their full and equal rights as individual men and women" (Para 12). The third Race Relations Act (1976) extended the definition of discrimination to include indirect forms 'where unjustifiable practices and procedures which apply to everyone have the effect of putting people of a particular racial group at a disadvantage' (Race Relations Act,

1976, para. 1). The Act urged the local authorities to 'eliminate unlawful racial discrimination... and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups' (Section 71 quoted in Young, 1990, p. 26). The CRE was given greater powers and responsibility for ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the Act but in practice, it did very little to fight racial discrimination. The contradictions in government policy expressed in immigration legislation and in the race equality laws designed to challenge discrimination, were, as Parekh (1991) observed, 'always evident even to the meanest intelligence'. The politics of each of the Race Relations Acts were conceived in terms of giving the impression something was being done and had been shrouded by what Young (1985) had described as a 'culture of inexplicitness' (p. 286). And despite these Acts, discrimination, especially at work, remained widespread. 'In trying to banish racism to the gates, it had confirmed it within the city walls. ... Britain has moved from institutional racism to domestic neo-colonialism' (Sivanandan, 1976, pp. 358-364).

A Reappraisal of Current Trends - The Persistence of Racial Discrimination

It is more than thirty years since the Race Relations Act of 1968 first made it illegal for employers in this country to discriminate between job applicants on grounds of racial origin, yet all the available evidence points to the persistence of entrenched patterns of discrimination. As the primary aim of

this research is to look into the career experiences (including employment and promotion) of South Asian women teachers, it is important to review the findings from some other studies to substantiate the claim of racial discrimination in employment.

The most comprehensive available account of the social and economic position of black people in Britain in 1970s and 1980s is to be found in the third PSI Survey (1984) by Colin Brown. In its concluding chapter Brown states:

"Britain's well-established black population is still occupying the precarious and unattractive position of the earlier immigrants. ... There is just the same need now as in 1976 for action to give black people access to widening economic opportunities and life chances" (p. 323).

In 1985 Colin Brown and Pat Gay observed:

"The levels of discrimination found in this study are in fact higher than those found in the PEP study of 1973/4" (P. 31).

In 1986 Richard Jenkins' study encapsulated the same findings. He found that:

"racism and discrimination remain virulent and black workers continue to suffer disadvantage as a consequence. ...To be 'really' British is, it seems, to be white. ...in many respects little seems to have changed over the last twenty years in Britain with respect to racist discrimination in employment. Unfortunately there appears to be little likelihood that matters will improve in the near future" (pp. 240-254).

Troyna and Carrington also observed:

"A cursory examination of the recent evidence on individual racism in the U.K. suggests that racial attitudes have remained resilient to change, despite legislative, educational and other reforms" (1990, pp. 57-58).

According to Solomos (1991) Conservative politics continued to paint the image of inner cities as 'black enclaves' where minority youth flout 'British' law and order. Minority communities were presented as an 'enemy within' threatening the moral and social fabric of society (p. 26). An analysis of employment patterns and participation rates from the 1991 Census (Owen, 1994) shows that although there are substantial differentials in economic activity rates between various ethnic minorities, unemployment rates are higher for both men and women amongst ethnic minorities than for white people.

The Race Relations Act of 1976 forbids people to discriminate against or harass ethnic minority people on account of their race. Enforcing the law has proved problematic, even with a statutory body responsible for so doing. The ways the CRC can work to offer redress to complaints continue to be severely restricted by its limited resources. It lacks statutory power to deal with complaints of incitement to racial hatred and must refer these to the Attorney General. In 1990 only about 10 per cent of complaints were taken to court. Even when they won, the 'victims' often found themselves eased out of their jobs some months later on wholly new grounds or they became unemployable elsewhere. They were often seen as 'trouble-makers' and had to continue working in the same institution where the management resented them for their victory (Klein, 1993, p. 49).

The second review of the 1976 Race Relations Act commented:

“Levels of racial discrimination are still unacceptably high, ... The continuing evidence of widespread discrimination on racial grounds exposes the complacency of those who contend that the Act is fulfilling its intention, ... The Commission believes that victims of discrimination need better protection, and the more obviously multi-racial nature of our society, ... requires a review of the legislative arrangements safeguarding the interests of all its citizens” (CRE, 1991, p. 5).

The Committee concludes that its broad framework is sound but that the government must make reforms; without the introduction of such reforms black people would remain unprotected by the law in many cases of racial discrimination. More recently Sir Herman Ouseley, the chairman of CRE, commented on the limited scope of the Race Relations Act of 1976 and recommended:

“It is not someone else’s responsibility to end discriminatory treatment. Each and every one of us has a part to play. The strategy for racial equality and a fair society must be all-embracing so that no one can interpret it as conferring any special advantages or benefits or imposing special burdens or penalties on particular groups of people in the country” (The Guardian, February, 25, 1999, p. 25).

In 1994 a student union survey conducted at Oxford University found that 'Ninety seven percent of Black and other minority ethnic students reported having experienced verbal abuse or physical attack' (The Times, 8.11.94, cited in Griffiths and Troyna, 1995, p. 1).

The overall picture is one of widespread racism which has a serious impact on the lives of black people, but which nevertheless operates in a variety of different ways and forms. According to a poll conducted in 1995, 79 per cent of white people believe that there is racial prejudice against black people in Britain (The Guardian, 20 March, 1995, p. 19). All such evidence enables us

to better understand the reality of the day-to-day experience of Asian women teachers in British schools.

The Educational Response to the Black presence in British Schools

Before moving on to look specifically at the career experiences of Asian female teachers, I am, first of all, going to consider the development of educational policies in Britain since 1960 as they relate to the presence of black children and black teachers in British schools. This section will explore education policy and research into 'race' and education within a broader social context and seek to establish how policies and practices applied at a local level effectively serve to damage the life chances of black people. It has been argued that policy development relating to racial equality in education has been closely related to broader government race relations policies.

By and large the educational response was in terms of 'that critical slippage from the problems encountered by' to 'the problem of' black people (A. Green, 1982). The education system's various phases of policy initiatives in response to the black presence in British schools form part of the context I need in order to analyse fully the experiences of Asian female teachers, for, as an inquiry undertaken by Ealing LEA found:

"The problematisation of black children ... wider problematisation of the black community as a whole ... forms part of the context we need for our analysis of the racism experienced by black teachers, the crude and demeaning stereotypes within which they are confined, their channelling into narrow areas of the curriculum, the discounting of the indispensable skills they could bring to the task of creating a genuinely anti-racist, multicultural education service" (1988, p. 34).

Assimilation / Integration: an attempt to transform ethnic minority pupils into indigenous majority pupils

"No sooner were there black pupils in British schools than the education system began to fail them" (Klein, 1993, p. 22).

From the moment of his/her entry into the British education system, the black child was seen as presenting a 'problem' (Parekh, 1978). The black pupils were perceived as educationally 'disadvantaged' in certain ways (like 'non-English-speaking' or 'non-Standard English-speaking' or culturally deficit) that rendered them less able to cope with education. The solution devised laid in making good the imagined deficit that the black child was suffering from. From the 1950s to the mid-1960s the goal was 'successful assimilation of immigrant pupils' (DES, 1963). The imperative was to encourage black pupils to be 'trainee whites', to use John Eggleston's phrase (cited in Alibhai, 1988). But

"as the proportion of immigrant children in a school or class increases, the problems will become more difficult to solve, and the chances of assimilation more remote" (DES, 1965, p. 6).

So the solution devised for the 'problem' was a 'dispersal policy'. The systems of 'bussing' ethnic minority pupils between schools were even endorsed by the DES. The DES recommended that where necessary 'every effort should be made to disperse the immigrant children round a greater number of schools' (DES, 1965 p. 8), to keep the black proportion on the school roll below the 'educational danger point of one-third' (Gazette Series, 1963, p. 1, cited in Barot, 1996, p. 179). The main concern was to avoid the potential hampering of the progress of white pupils in multi-racial classes and as Troyna and Williams (1986) argued 'in rhetoric and ideological terms these policies were racially inexplicit' (p. 11). Angry reaction to this dispersal policy and to racist constructions of their children precipitated the ethnic minority community into opposition. As Carter (1986) observes:

"we- the parents- ... turn to the black teachers and began to understand that we were in the same sinking boat and that we needed to form an alliance to save ourselves and our children" (p. 24).

The practice of dispersal had come under attack on social, psychological and educational grounds (Street-Porter, 1978; Troyna and Williams, 1986; Willey, 1982). As a consequence this policy was eventually abandoned.

Then in the mid-1960s the efforts moved towards a more integrationist approach. In 1966 Roy Jenkins as Home Secretary spoke of the need to prioritise integration as a social, political and educational goal and stated integration was 'not a flattening process of assimilation but as an equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance' (quoted in Barot, 1996, p. 186). As the DES Circular on the Education of Immigrants put it:

"Schools can demonstrate how people from different ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds can live together happily and successfully, and can help to create the kind of cohesive, multi-cultural society on which the future of this country - and possibly the world - depends" (DES, 1971, p. 63).

The integrationist approach allowed "minority groups ... complete freedom to define their own cultural identity only in so far as this does not conflict with that of the white indigenous community" (Street-Porter, 1978, p. 28). But according to the Swann Report (1985)

"In practice there was little difference between the assimilationist and integrationist viewpoints in that they shared the common aim of absorbing ethnic minority communities within society with as little disruption to the life of the majority community as possible" (p. 197).

Integration and assimilation into the 'superior' dominant white culture were deemed necessary for harmonious race relations. But the underlying issue was a subtle form of racism directed at the cultures and life-styles of black pupils which provided a challenge to traditional British practice and beliefs (Mullard, 1981; Stone, 1981). In this spirit, Section 11 of the 1966 Local Government Act offered financial assistance for those authorities finding themselves with substantial proportions of Commonwealth migrant communities 'whose language and customs differ from those of the host community'. As Roy Hattersley expressed:

"I hope that, when the money under S11 is distributed, the Secretary of State will bear in mind that ... it is essential to teach these children basic British customs, basic British habits and, if one likes, basic British prejudices - all those things which they need to know if they are to live happily and successfully in an integrated way in this community" (Hansard, 1966, Col. 1336).

Cultural Pluralism and Multi-cultural Education: developed as a response to the deficiencies of assimilation/integration approach

By the late 1960s and early 1970s there was a growing realisation that policies of assimilation and integration had failed to achieve their objectives. Many ethnic minority pupils clearly still had educational needs which existing policies were proving unable to meet (Singh, 1988; Verma, 1989). In response to the growing unrest among the minority ethnic groups concerning such a 'problem-centred' and 'racist' approach to the education of black pupils, during the late 1970s official rhetoric moved towards 'cultural pluralism' or 'cultural diversity'. A 'celebration' of cultural diversity as an educational policy began to be described as 'multicultural education'. Multiculturalism was based on the premise that the key issue facing schools was how to create tolerance for black minorities and their cultures in a white nation characterised by cultural diversity or cultural pluralism.

"The more informed teachers become about a wider range of cultures and communities the more possible it is for all pupils to see their values reflected in the concerns of the schools, the less likely is the alienation from schools and indigenous society experienced by some minority groups" (HMSO, 1978, para 20, p. 6).

The Swann Report defines the concept in the following terms:

"We consider that a multi-racial society such as ours would in fact function most effectively and harmoniously on the basis of pluralism which enables, expects and encourages members of all ethnic groups, both minority and majority, to participate fully in shaping the society as a whole within a framework of commonly accepted values, practices and procedures while also allowing and, where necessary, assisting the ethnic minority communities in maintaining their distinct ethnic identities within this common framework" (DES, 1985, p. 5).

The concept of 'cultural pluralism' recognised the existence of different cultures but it omitted to acknowledge a key element of race relations, namely power differentials and relationships of domination and subordination. The Institute of Race Relations argued forcefully:

"We feel ... that an ethnic or cultural approach to the educational needs and attainments of racial minorities evades the fundamental reasons for their disabilities - which are the racist attitudes and the racist practices in the larger society and in the educational system itself" (IRR, 1980, p. 82).

At face value the idea of cultural pluralism might seem to be along the right lines but it was impossible to 'have mutuality of trust' between black and white people when inequalities were virtually written into the law and

sustained in all other institutions. As Bourne and Sivanandan (1980) observed:

"cultural pluralism, the framework, and multiculturalism, the solution deal with neither (institutional) racism, nor class questions" (pp. 345-6).

Bullivant (1981b), one of the strongest critics of multi-cultural education, argued that multi-cultural education could, in effect, be a strategy for controlling minorities rather than enhancing their self-determination, a view supported by other educational researchers (like Mullard, 1981; Stone, 1981). The Swann report (1985) also illustrated that the question of institutional racism was not seriously addressed. Hatcher (1987) argued that 'new multiculturalism' acknowledged the existence of institutional racism but by remaining within the 'ethnic relations' framework it excluded a structuralist explanation of racism in a class-divided society. Lynch (1987) criticised the concept of multi-cultural education as it focused on the cultures of minorities rather than the racism of the dominant community. Rex (1989) had argued that the effect of multi-culturalism, unless coupled with a clear equality of opportunity philosophy, was to divide society and further penalise minority ethnic groups. Multicultural education was arguably extremely patronising of black people and was designed to have a palliative effect.

The Anti-racist Education

The resentment that had built up over years of tolerating racial and social injustices erupted into a series of disturbances in Bristol in 1980 and then in Brixton, London in April, 1981. Liverpool 8, Handsworth and 25 other cities sparked into anger and violence on the streets. Even though Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher denied that these street uprisings had any connection with repressive policing, social deprivation or high unemployment, the riots of summer 1981 stirred the state, temporarily, out of a situation of complacency. A Home Affairs Committee announced, 'we have not got ethnic minority education right' (1981, para 30). To curb and prevent future social unrest some LEA's embarked on an anti-racist policy in an attempt to redress the balance and provide equality of opportunity in education. Advocates of anti-racist teaching offered a critique of multicultural education as a means of providing equality. This assertion implied opposition to racial attacks, to the deliberate denigration of other races and ethnic groups. It also dealt with the syllabus material. The 'anti-racist education' movement grew out of a realisation that simply focusing on cultural diversity did not ensure that more subtle forms of racism, particularly at an institutional level, would be addressed, as Sarup (1991) observed 'just to learn about other people's cultures is not to learn about the racism of one's own' (p. 31). 'Policies need to be "race-specific" if racism is to be countered' (Ealing's Dilemma, 1988, p. 33), and as Sarup (1991) argued, 'anti-racist education ... includes multicultural education... and goes beyond it' (p. 41). Central to the

concept of anti-racist education was the need to deal with interpersonal racism as well as institutional racism and to develop a more critical approach to all teaching methods and materials. So 'social scientists ... were increasingly talking about the need to understand and deal with the nature of racial relations and forms of racial discrimination in British society' (Solomos & Back, cited in Barot, 1996, p. 216). But the state policies repeatedly defined racism in terms of individual prejudice (Scarman, 1982) and interpreted it as a personal aberration rather than as a structural feature of the social system. Paul Gilroy pointed to an alarming consequence of new racism where blackness and Englishness were reproduced as mutually exclusive categories (1987, pp. 55-56). And as Gordon (1990) had written:

"The New Right argues Britain is not racist. What exists is not institutional racism but personal racism, the behaviour of individuals who may have behaved in a discriminatory way. Thus, the argument continues, there is no legitimate need or basis for anti-racism" (p. 188).

But according to Troyna (1993a)

"there are racists in Britain and laws to combat their discriminatory behaviour should be enforced; but that there is nothing inherently or institutionally racist about the structure of society and accusations along these lines should be summarily discarded" (p. 30).

Education Reform Act (ERA) (1988)

The introduction of the Education Reform Act (ERA, 1988) and the National Curriculum has changed the focus of debate. The ERA (1988) brings about a fundamental reconstitution of the institutional framework in which schools and colleges function. It is governed by two discrete educational strategies. On the one hand, there is centralisation through which power over the school curriculum is invested in the hands of the Secretary of State for Education (the National Curriculum). Tomlinson (1990) considers fears of British cultural extinction as being responsible for the development of an 'educational nationalism'. The National Curriculum was the means by which a 'common' British cultural identity was to be fostered amongst pupils. Carby quotes a 1964 Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council report 'a national system cannot be expected to perpetuate the different values of immigrant groups' (1982, p. 185). According to the New Right children in British schools should have access to a curriculum which reflects British traditions, culture and history, and that pupils should be treated alike without reference to or consideration of their cultural and 'racial' identities (Menter, 1992; Tomlinson, 1990; Minhas, 1988). John Major, as Prime Minister, stated that 'teachers should learn to teach children how to read, not to waste their time on the politics of gender, 'race' and class' (Quoted by Siraj-Blatchford and Troyna, 1993, p. 223). On the other hand, there is decentralisation of financial management – delegation of financial management to schools (LMS). We see the scenario in which 'consumer

participation' figures prominently, like 'open enrolment', 'parental choice', where parents are allowed, in theory, to 'shop' for schools. Schools have to 'prove' themselves by earning a place on national league tables and teachers are held accountable to the 'consumer' (parents and governors rather than students). But Blair points out:

“As schools are increasingly concerned with creating an image for themselves which will be attractive to the 'consumer', some may resort to the use of criteria which pander to the racist sentiments of the 'ideal' consumer by selecting pupils and teachers on the basis of those who are seen to be part of 'Us'- as defined by the Right Wing discourses of 'Britishness' which underpin many of the educational changes which have been introduced” (1994, p. 277).

And summing up this line of argument, Troyna forcefully maintains that 'Placed in their appropriate context, we see how opting out, LMS, open enrolment and other systematic changes will further disadvantage ethnic minority and other disfranchised pupils in a number of fundamental ways' (1993a, p. 79).

The Education Act 1993

The status of 'race' as a legitimate policy issue was further undermined by the Education Act 1993. Thus, since the late 1980s, there has been a number of reforms in educational policy but in all these policies, 'race' is

rarely accorded centre-stage (Troyna, 1994). 'Race' and ethnicity have been effectively removed from the vocabulary of policy makers, substituted with coded or proxy concepts such as nation, heritage and culture. It is unwise to deny that racism is a widespread problem and a dynamic and complex facet of school life. The deracialized form of current policy developments undermine the position of individuals and groups who seek to address 'race' issues and 'leaves the way clear for each new development to operate in a racially inequitable way' (Gillborn, 1995, p. 40). So the issue of race in the early 1990s took a new guise.

Summary

A characteristic failing of British education is that, despite its good intentions, it has failed to confront ethnocentric stereotypes and related race issues. As far as central government is concerned, the situation is one of non-policy making and refusal to place anti-racist education on the national policy agenda. The Report of the Elton Committee of Enquiry (1989) acknowledged evidence of 'racist attitudes among pupils' (para. 4.91) and even 'a few teachers' (para. 6.67) but advocated a limited form of multicultural approach that stressed cultural diversity and mutual tolerance. Grinter had observed that 'the 1986-88 educational legislation initiates structural changes that are potentially very damaging to the prospects for anti-racist education' (1990). In 1990 the Home Office published new guidelines for Section 11 (Home Office, 1990) which effectively curbed

project funding for multicultural and antiracist education. There was a calculated strategy on the part of the Conservative Government to end local authority control and roll back the achievements of policies and practices to promote multicultural antiracist education (Troyna, 1992). The decentralisation of financial management had severely restricted the pool of available resources for raising awareness of racism (Reynolds, 1992, Taylor, 1992). By defining racism as a set of mental prejudices held only by a small number of white people, it (British education) denies the structural aspects of racism in the education system and in society. Also now in the new market-oriented climate and with the partnership between central and local government much weakened, there is no longer central nor local government commitment to, or financing of projects and programmes to improve relations in an ethnically diverse society. The pace of recent educational reforms has distracted many teachers and other educationalists from the goal of promoting racial equality. Recent legislation has both introduced a highly prescriptive curriculum and at the same time given schools greater autonomy in certain areas of decision making. It would seem that schools are left with a responsibility to ensure racial equality in education but are operating within a political context where structural inequality is denied and even perpetuated. So the outlook both for black pupils and black teachers to enjoy equal opportunities and equal rights seems less than propitious. It is likely that these inequalities will be most keenly experienced in the inner cities where a substantial proportion of the black population lives. More recently Stephen Lawrence inquiry team made

the recommendation that 'consideration be given to amendment of the National Curriculum aimed at valuing cultural diversity and preventing racism, in order better to reflect the needs of a diverse society' (The Guardian, 25 February, 1999, p. 19). Sir Herman Ouseley (chairman of the CRE) also argues that the 'commitment to racial equality, through education has to be strengthened and extended across all school-age groups' (Ibid, p. 25). It is difficult to envisage how these recommendations will be introduced or implemented in the present political climate.

Another major concern is that official policies from the late 1960's onwards acknowledged the need for teachers to be aware of the backgrounds of minority ethnic pupils but there was no acknowledgement of the need for minority ethnic teachers even in schools with large numbers of black pupils. The employment of black teachers was not considered seriously at all. The Reports by the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration in 1973 and 1977 highlighted the shortage of black teachers. The Swann report (1985) also cited the scarcity of black teachers and suggested that more black teachers should be appointed, but not many LEAs have acted upon these recommendations positively. And this omission to acknowledge the positive aspects of employing more black teachers has serious consequences.

Where do the last few decades' educational policy changes leave the minority ethnic teachers? The ideological construction of black pupils as

undesirable forms part of a wider set of constructions of black people as inferiors, so that black teachers are also differentially positioned in relation to white teachers in the discourses of the educational market. I will discuss the position of black teachers in Chapter Three.

Having looked at education and racism in terms of policies and perspectives, it is appropriate to consider the reasons for choosing to study the career experiences of Asian women teachers, which are described in the next chapter. Studying the lives of Asian women teachers will provide a valuable insight into their experiences as teachers and how their 'racial' identities impact on their development as teachers. As a black person undertaking research into the lives and careers of black teachers I am already indicating that I consider black teachers' (including myself) experiences and opinions to be important.

Chapter Two

Reasons for choosing this area of study: Personal Experience

Introduction

"One often does research in part to discover more about oneself. This is not to say that it is self-indulgent, but that it is chiefly through the self that one comes to understand the world. In turn, the discoveries one makes reflect back upon the self, which then feed back into research, and so on" (Peter Woods, 1996, p. 1).

The story of who I am - a black feminist researcher and a teacher - and the details of my biography are crucial in understanding not only my motivation for engaging in research, but also in comprehending the importance of selecting a relevant methodology that exploits the researcher's inevitable participation in the ensuing social milieu (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p. 23). So I begin this chapter with my life story and some reflections on my teaching career which seem relevant to this research project.

My Story

It is not always possible to understand the mental torture and pain that white society inflicts upon its black individuals by looking at the 'so-called

successful' blacks. The sleepless nights, crying days, the psychic scars, the frustrations and dilemma of individuals like myself can never be compensated for. The way of life for the minority ethnic groups in Britain is very different to the lives they lived in their countries of origin. Humans adapt to cope with changes in socio-economic and environmental circumstances and one should see the minority communities as being in the process of adaptation to new circumstances. But it must be remembered that adaptation should not be confused with acceptance.

I first came to England in 1966, as a 26- year-old housewife. At 26, I had already lived most of my formative experiences and bore the indelible stamp of my native language and culture. From the very start, I have felt not only alien to British society, but literally irritated by it because of its tendency to classify people into rigid, endogamous categories based on their physical appearance, irrespective of class and cultural characteristics. Far from gradually becoming assimilated to it, as the 'policy of assimilation' would have had me, I reacted against British society. But instead of articulating my despair and anger, I internalised it. I realised that within this society 'race' had become a prominent criterion of social differentiation and considered 'us' categorically inferior. I became more personally alienated as a consequence of the alienation I experienced from 'society' and much of my intellectual and academic life is a product of that alienation.

In the early seventies experiences of being subjected to racial abuse became significant facets of the day-to-day social reality of Asians in Britain. The thrusts of racial discrimination before the 1976 Race Relations Act were more blatant and quite dispiriting. Living in a predominantly white area of East Anglia, my colour, dress and language were oddities.

I had a degree in English Literature and Language. I decided to go into teaching because I liked teaching and wanted to work with children. Knowing that at that time a teaching qualification was not necessary if you had a subject degree, I applied for jobs between 1970 and 1971, but did not get any as my qualifications were not from a British University, (that was what I had been told when I enquired about it). Consequently, I decided to apply for a PGCE with English as my main subject. But to my surprise I was told during the interview that I would stand in good stead if I studied Mathematics instead of English with the 'well-meaning' advice 'don't forget that you trying to teach English to our kids will be like carrying coal to Newcastle.' I was disappointed and hurt but decided to take the offer as I had A level (equivalent) in Mathematics. Yet when I looked at the syllabus I realised that I would not be able to complete it in one year since I had not got a degree in Mathematics. The LEA was reluctant to give me a grant for more than one year, the argument being that I had applied for a PGCE, i.e., a one-year course. I was determined not to be put upon and after some struggle managed to enrol for a two- year sandwich Teachers' Certificate course in Mathematics in 1971.

I was the only black student on the course. Once on the course I discovered that most of the lecturers and students had virtually no knowledge of the history of recent settlement in Britain, or of the customs, languages and religions of ethnic minorities. Also I found that some students were racially prejudiced, to the extent that they would not come and sit next to me or would deliberately ignore me if I tried to ask them anything. Being basically a shy person, these incidents made me more 'introvert'. To avoid more personal traumas, I decided to stay away from these people.

The first few months of the course were uneventful, then the time came for teaching practice. Our course tutor told us about all the usual accepted codes and practices and then he called me to his office for a further consultation. He appeared very sympathetic, understanding and concerned and asked me whether I would mind going to the school wearing European clothes instead of my usual 'sari' as I 'might face difficulties being accepted as I was'. He also asked me whether I would be going to assemblies or not. He said that he had 'warned' the headteacher about me (my colour?). I did not know what to say, I started wondering why my parents held the British education system in such great esteem and showed such considerable enthusiasm for it. I found the lecturer's attitude quite hard to accept and very patronising. I thought of leaving the course altogether. 'How was I going to instil in children the sense of pride and self-identity if I was not allowed to preserve it?' If the children were expected to accept my skin colour, why not my dress? I came back home bewildered and shattered. Issues of culture

and identity began to acquire saliency in my mind and I started considering seriously the strategies which would facilitate cultural continuity.

"To wish to integrate with that which alienates and destroys you, rendering you less than a person, is madness. To accept the challenge to join it and change it from within, when it refuses to accept that you are there in your fullness and refuses to acknowledge the results of interaction between you and it, is double madness" (British Council of Churches Report, 1976, p. 16).

The incident shook me, shaping my consciousness and experience of the world. Again not wishing to be labelled as a 'trouble maker', I conformed and was sent to a secondary modern school in rural Norfolk where I felt the staff and the children accepted me with some reservation.

During my final teaching practice I was told one day that the external examiners were coming to visit me. I felt uncomfortable thinking that my teaching practice was probably not 'up to scratch'. I was very depressed and sought the Head of the Department's advice. He assured me that there was nothing 'wrong' with my teaching practice but made a casual comment that had I not been 'black' the inspectors would not have come in. I was the only 'black' student and apparently my tutors had been enquiring, rather too frequently in his opinion, about my performance. So he had assumed that something like that might happen but tried to console me by saying that the

external examiners' visit was nothing but a formality. The old question of 'colour' raised its ugly head again.

The external examiners (three of them) came and observed me taking a non-examination fourth year class. What I found most distressing was that none of them bothered to introduce themselves or said anything afterwards either. They just walked into my classroom, two of them sat at the back and the other one stood at the side and scribbled a few notes. They all left before the lesson was finished. When I tried to talk to my supervisor about it, he just muttered a few monosyllabic assurances, like 'no problem' and 'not to become unduly worried' and so on. So I had to spend a few agonising weeks before receiving the official confirmation that I had passed!

When I finished my training in 1973, I was appointed to a secondary modern school in a white middle class area in Norfolk and at that time was the only 'black' teacher there. "Don't forget now, you'll be the only 'coloured' lady teacher in this borough", quoted the assistant education officer after my job interview. I did not know how to react. Was I supposed to feel 'honoured' or 'humiliated'? He also informed me that I would not get the Graduate allowance as my degree was not from the UK.

The school building was old and uninspiring from the outside. There was no playground or separate lab. I learnt later on that the school would be closed in a couple of years time. The headmaster had a voice full of conviction and

vitality. It was the sound of his voice, however, that attracted me then and still haunts me now. He told me how he had changed his attitude towards 'black' immigrants since his only daughter had married a Pakistani doctor. My time with him was indeed a revelation. I envied his quiet, unchanging way and understood through him the psychological acceptance of roles and felt a lot more secure in my 'Asian' identity. He made me realise my limitations and also helped me to laugh at English 'arrogance' and bigotry rather than being hurt and offended (he was himself a 'Welsh foreigner' in insular East Anglia). I had learned much from him, especially an awareness of quality, both of spirit and mind. I also learnt to view life in a more detached way.

But the staffroom was a different 'kettle of fish'. I was one 'black' among a gaggle of whites, depending on their approval, wondering about their sincerity, suspicious of any attempts to make a friend of me. Patronising words wounded me deeply since all I wanted was to be left alone to do my job without feeling I was always being watched, assessed, measured and compared. I tried hard to get on well with the other members of staff but from the various comments they made I realised that they wanted me to become 'one of them'. I remember vividly during one Christmas fair how shocked they were to find out that I spoke to my own children in my language! As Marris has put it:

"To be told the meaning of your life by others, in terms which are not yours implies that your existence does not matter to them except as it is reflected in their own." (1974, p. 39)

Parents and their prejudices were at the root of some of the problems I met. It was hurtful and bewildering to see how some parents used their children as mouthpieces to express their prejudices. I was a rarity in that part of Britain and that worked sometimes for or against me, depending on the level of tolerance. I still remember how each time the school said prayers for underdeveloped countries, the children would open an eye each and turn round to look at me.

During the fourth year of my teaching at that school, the Head of the Department became ill just after Christmas and I was in charge for a term and a half (we were the only two qualified mathematics teachers on the staff). The head said that I would get some extra allowance for running the department (a term and a half) and asked the Advisor to come into the school. The Advisor visited some of my classes and pointed out that I was doing the job satisfactorily but he was unable to recommend me for an extra allowance as I did not have a degree in Mathematics! And so after a time I became disenchanted with teaching.

Fear born of uncertainty and disorientation took hold of me. I used to feel each day as if I was going into a boxing-ring where any breach in the

defence would put me flat on my back. A point came when I seemed to have been overtaken by a kind of illness, born of isolation and loss of identity. I began to need my own kind. In the street I searched intensely for a 'black' face, hoping that in finding one I would also find some satisfaction of an intense psychological need. I realised that I had to be happy in spite of the assumptions that were made about 'blacks'. In my heart there was a side where the 'whites' lived with their words and insults and a 'black' side where I lived with my wounds and my medicaments. The headmaster retired and I missed his genuine support.

I began looking for jobs in the Midlands area, in multi-ethnic schools hoping that I would be more readily accepted there. I applied for several jobs for a Scale 2 position but did not get any interview. At that time I was too naive to really understand what goes on behind the scenes. It would have been useless to apply for a post which depended on an interview. I was constantly reminded that my knowledge of the system was not 'inbred'. Eventually the new headmaster suggested that I would be better off applying for a Scale 1 post, move into the area and then start to seek promotion. I persevered and did eventually get a job (Scale 1) in an all girls (predominantly white middle-class) comprehensive school in the Midlands, but it was not the type of school I preferred.

The majority of staff there was white women (I was the only 'black' teacher) and I had little contact with them at the staffroom level. I have never been

able to establish whether this was because of my blackness or if it was their normal attitude to new teachers. I also found that some members of staff used racist humour to make simple conversation and if ever I tried to challenge them, I had to contend with remarks like I was over-sensitive to racial issues. I was not given any real support. I had to set my own disciplinary standards and enforce them.

One day within a month of my starting there the Headmistress, the Head of the Department and the Advisor came along when I was teaching an O level class. I did not have any warning that they were coming. They did not offer any explanation afterwards either, but I found out later on from various members of staff that some of the parents of children in that class had complained about my English pronunciation. What could I have done? Everyone has an accent and when a non-English speaking person is talking accent should be taken into account. I believe that one can become accustomed to an accent within a week and there should be no problem, but in this country a lot of values are put on accent mainly because of the class system: those from working class backgrounds have working class accents. The negative reaction of the school/community made the burden of being different heavy. I was painfully aware of my skin colour, accent and foreign intonation and was sometimes made to feel embarrassed by them.

Within a term, a teacher on Scale 2 left and her job was advertised. Some of my colleagues told me to apply for the post. I declined at first feeling that if the Head of the Department had wanted me to apply, she would have at

least spoken to me about it. As they could not get anyone suitably qualified to fill the post, the job was re-advertised. I applied for it and was called for the interview but was not given the scale point. The Head told me later on that she had to think about the image of the school and not just my ability. I was shocked then but now I know that I am not the only one to face such discrimination.

"The legacy of acting on the perceived anxieties of white racist parents is ... still very much alive in Ealing today... a black female teacher who was shortlisted for a deputy head's post was not appointed, and the reason stated by the Head to this teacher was that parents did not wish to have an Asian deputy, they expected pupils to be taught by white people" (Ealing's Dilemma, 1988, p. 60).

In my case the teacher who was appointed as the co-ordinator of remedial Mathematics had come out of training college only two years before. She was not even trained in remedial work whereas I was actually doing the job, taking the non-examination classes as well as running a lunchtime slow-learners' Mathematics club. She said afterwards she felt sorry that she had got the job and I had not. But after two terms she had to leave suddenly. When her scale point was advertised I applied again and was given the point but only temporarily. By that time I had established a good relationship with the girls as well as with most of the staff but it cost me a lot in the sense

that I had to work very hard in break and lunch time giving them extra help and running the slow learners' club and so on.

I still wanted to work in a multi-ethnic school and moved to my present school with a multi-ethnic student intake. I moved there in order to identify myself easily with the pupils whom I taught. I thought that I could make specific contributions in such social and cultural areas because of the perspectives I could bring to the classroom and my ability to 'empathise' with pupils. I found it ironical that for a long time I was the only 'black' teacher amongst near one hundred staff members in a school with over thirty three per cent black children! In the new school (where I am still) I found that I was never under the sort of 'colour' pressure from which I had suffered in the past. But even in this school I find that not all members of the staff are tolerant of black pupils. Some of them are too narrow-minded. If ever I question the injustice rendered to so many of the black youngsters we work with, I am reminded that racism is a 'figment of my imagination' and the question of colour and discrimination does not exist in most of my professional colleagues' minds. I always try to help the children towards a feeling of responsibility and spirit of give and take. Some black parents will always suspect white teachers' motives - this is the consequence of years of subservience and paternalism. 'How can whites ever understand our hopes, our aspirations, our feelings and all the sources of our resentment?' - they ask me often. Most black parents have given me their trust, their love,

respect and support and some had openly told me that they were happy that I had come to the school.

The following year one senior member of the department was transferred to the computer department and I was summoned to the head's office about a week before the end of the summer term. I was asked whether I would be willing to take up my colleagues' extra duties as there was not enough time to advertise. My colleague had an allowance for his responsibilities and I assumed naively that I would be getting that as well. I did not think of asking the head about the pay before accepting. When I realised after the September payment that I was not given the extra allowance, I approached the head but his attitude was 'well, you have accepted your responsibility, there was no question of extra payment as the other teacher had "carried" his allowance with him and so on'. He also said that he had a hundred reasons why I should get it but his hands were tied and I should talk to the Advisor. When I tried to talk to the Advisor I heard a different 'tale' - the decision for extra allowance lay with the head! I was just shunted from the pillar to the post. It was obvious that no matter what I did I was not going to get the extra allowance.

I started looking deeper than I had before and realised how racism is actually institutionalised in people. It runs through the system - you do not have to get slapped across the face to realise it! I do not even bother trying for promotion now! One of the obvious reasons, I know, is because I am

black I will have difficulty! As far as I could see into the future I would always be at the bottom of the hierarchy. Whatever I did, however effectively I taught, someone, somewhere, would not have been convinced that I was able to do more. It was very depressing to me to be forced by colour to accept the status quo, especially when I saw colleagues much less qualified seeking and getting promotion. There is no doubt that promotion prospects for 'blacks' are restricted. Most important of all, I had learnt that to succeed as a 'black' teacher, one had to be twice as good as everyone else. To quote one headteacher's comment from the Ealing Report:

"We expect too much of them (black teachers). If one wants to use the resource properly then they need to be rewarded. We need to make it (black teachers' special contribution) a part of their job profile" (1988, p. 66).

Even a few years ago, when I was attending the University while studying for a Master's degree, if ever I was late for any staff meeting or parents evening, I used to get remarks from my other colleagues like 'people should not study when they are working, they should either study or go to work'. I did point out to them that I was studying in the evening which was supposed to be 'my time'. I must confess now that I was quite surprised to find that I actually 'answered them back', as in the past I would have just listened and felt hurt without reciprocating. Most of my colleagues' attitudes were not very encouraging or conducive to a studying atmosphere. I do not think that the

whole of British society is racist or prejudiced but the minority who discriminate do not treat you like a person; you are just somebody to do the work and that is it.

Setting an agenda

I have found it quite hard to write my own experience partly because it released an avalanche of hidden feelings, emotions and sentiments which I tend not to bring to the surface. I agree with Maylor (1995) who asserts that 'in writing one's own autobiography, facing's one's past, examining its effects on one's present life can be exhilarating, traumatic but it is one of the most difficult tasks imaginable' (p. 63). In writing this I have realised the depth of institutional bias and how much I have 'bled' inside! In schools there was a decided lack of support and positive guidance from Advisors and headteachers. I would have liked to have had discussions with them to help me make the right decisions about my career. I have had an interest in slow-learners since I left college and have acquired considerable experience in that field but I was never encouraged or advised to attend any in-service courses. It did not take me long to realise that the structured inequalities that existed in the education system were due to the combined effects of capitalism and racism. The longer one lives here the more aware one becomes that there is much prejudice. It has been made worse by the Governments' policies and rendered significant by the prevailing economic conditions and systems. I basically feel sorry for people who have to resort

to racism to prop up their self-image. One of my deepest resentments about British society is that it does not give me the personal option of ignoring 'race' and it imposes on me and everyone else a racial label that I consider irrelevant. The society forces me to be 'race' conscious and, therefore, it makes normal, uninhibited relations between indigenous people and us nearly impossible. The colour of the migrants and their children ensures that they remain the most obviously visible scapegoats for the nation's ills. Instead of concentrating on our problems, we are seen as constituting the problems ourselves. My views have grown out of many years (nearly twenty-five years now) of teaching in this country. These have been years during which I have been observant, concerned with and highly disillusioned by the progress - or rather lack of it - that black teachers have been 'allowed' to make in this country.

Ever since I started teaching I have had to face the child who would always test me, sometimes by ridiculing my accent, parents who would be suspicious; and teachers who would be inhibited by my colour. My experience has shown that children are not born with colour and race prejudice. They absorb it from the adults around them. Nearly all of them are so steeped in their racial perceptions of themselves and each other that they simply cannot conceive of a society without racial consciousness or identity. Prejudice was shown by innuendo and implication and I reacted by becoming defensive and life became a fight for survival and dignity.

Black women teachers have to tolerate abuse and inaccuracies but basically we are reluctant to challenge the authorities. I have realised that it is pointless to complain, as the problem of the 'them and us' culture is present in a multitude of contexts. We are spending our lives in a relatively hostile, negative environment, where our culture, languages and religious values are of passing interest or curiosity value to the indigenous population. We sometimes feel that we have no one giving us actual moral support. Are we victims of prejudice and discrimination? We face quite a few external and internal obstacles. The external ones are sometimes easier to cope with; but the internal ones are more difficult to outline, face and overcome. My strong radical views usually draw antagonistic responses from teachers and colleagues. If ever I made any comments about how racist their attitudes were, I always got 'Oh, no - not you again'. What they failed to comprehend was that sometimes their negative attitudes signalled the academic downfall of many black students. The consequence of that is that at an early age an awareness of one's overall position in society develops. I have moved deliberately between the singular and plural voices in order to emphasise that much of what I have described are feelings and experiences expressed by my interviewees as well.

My intention to remain silent all these years was motivated by fear of being labelled a troublemaker but I started wondering whether my experience was 'unique'. So in a way my research project has been motivated by my experience of specific gendered and racialized incidents while attending

Teachers' Training College in England in the 1970s and later on during my teaching career. As time passed I realised that those negative experiences were social issues rather than signs of my personal inadequacy (as I was sometimes led to believe by my white colleagues). 'Is it just me' or do other Asian women teachers with similarly complex and contradictory social identities – always feel they have to fight this structural relationship to education which is fraught with dilemmas and contradictions? I felt like Ann Oakley, who asserted that 'academic research projects bear an intimate relationship to the researcher's life... personal dramas provoke ideas that generate... research projects' (1979, p. 4).

So my unique autobiography, mediated by my pre-existing subjectivity and prior life experiences, had been central in shaping my research project. My own professional and academic experiences had also enabled me to become more aware of and sensitive to real difficulties being faced by other Asian women teachers in the education system. Ever since the 'New Right's' rout of the teacher unions in the mid-1980s, I had noticed how the conditions for teaching had deteriorated. I also knew how conditions could affect not only teaching practice but also teachers' careers. Writing myself into the research problem is about both wanting to speak for myself and wanting to have the authority of my own experiences recognised. These were some of the 'personal realities' (Woods, 1996, p. 11) that had guided me in my research. But as Casey observed:

"my own experiences may have provided impetus for this project, but, in a more than reciprocal return, my study of the life histories of other teachers has given me an opportunity to reflect upon my own teaching, and to explore the social grounding of my own ideas" (1993, p. 9).

As well as being a participant in the research, I am the initiator, collector, interpreter, user and publisher of the research. I construct the situation and define the outcomes and, therefore, have responsibilities beyond those of a participant.

Chapter Three

The Position of Black Teachers in the National Context:

Some Introductory Observations

Introduction

"Black teachers in this country are a new concept. Today's parents remember their teachers who were white. The problem is one of the acceptance of black teachers" (Ealing's Dilemma, 1988, p. 75).

During the second part of this century there have been increasing numbers of children from a variety of cultural groups in schools in Britain. And as I have discussed in Chapter One there were various specific 'official' policies to cater for these groups of pupils. These policies created the category of 'immigrant child' which provided the rationale for enforced dispersal (Boyle, 1965), the neglect of mother-tongue provision (Shallice, 1984), the hidden curriculum of racist values, the bias of school text books, over-referral of black students to ESN schools (Coard, 1971) and their under-representation in sixth forms and higher education. In this chapter I am going to consider various reports and surveys which will demonstrate how the position of black teachers was closely bound up with these 'official' approaches taken towards black pupils. This chapter is divided into the following sections:

- **The Early Scenario**
- **The Swann Report and the Employment of black teachers**
- **Newham Asian teachers' Association Report (1985)**
- **The CRE Survey (1988)**
- **The Ealing Survey (1988)**
- **The Macdonald Report (1989)**
- **Current Situation: The effect of 1990s Educational Policies on the employment of black teachers**
- **The position of Black Women teachers**

The Early Scenario

Education policies from the late 1960s onwards acknowledged the need for teachers to be aware of the backgrounds of ethnic minority pupils but there was no acknowledgement of the need for minority ethnic teachers even in schools with large number of black pupils. The teaching profession did not (still does not!) appear to reflect cultural diversity in its workforce. So it is not surprising that in 1969, Bagley found that a large number of Indian and Pakistani immigrants had gained entry as qualified teachers on the B voucher system but were unable to obtain teaching posts, even after taking re-orientation courses.

The LEAs with 2 per cent or more of Commonwealth immigrant pupils in the total school population were entitled to a fifty per cent grant (raised to

seventy five per cent in 1969) from the Home Office towards expenditure on extra staffing (Section 11, 1966). This made it a relatively cheap and easy way for authorities to fund works with black pupils. However, the majority of staff funded in this way were indigenous white teachers with the emphasis placed on the teaching of English to black pupils although the few black teachers who were awarded qualified teachers status inevitably found themselves destined to one of these posts.

"I was regarded as having nothing to offer except a 'race- cast' role teaching English as a second language to immigrant pupils" (T. Mukherjee, 1988, p. 213).

Then since the late seventies the recruitment of teachers from minority ethnic groups has been a recurring theme in government reports (Education in Schools, 1977; the Swann Report, 1985; the CRE Survey, 1988), but "public policy statements are, in themselves, an imperfect guide of action" (Troyna & Ball, 1985, p. 25). Proposals and ideas frequently become marginalised, modified or simply forgotten. The reports by the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration in 1973 and 1977 highlighted the shortage of black teachers, as their numbers, compared to the numbers of black pupils, were insignificant. Education in Schools (1977) published by the DES shortly after Callaghan's Ruskin Speech (1976) placed emphasis on teaching quality and welcomed the recruitment of members of minority ethnic groups. The 1977 Select Committee felt black

teachers could provide a valuable input into schools and recommended to the DES that 'exceptional steps' should be taken to increase the numbers of black teachers. The DES responded by inviting a group of seven local education authorities with large numbers of black pupils to set up courses to encourage more black people into teaching. These Access courses were funded by Section 11 money and provided a foundation year from which students could proceed to a BEd. Whilst not seeking to undermine the value of such courses in providing opportunities for younger black people who were under-achieving at schools, it is important to recognise that they did not offer any opportunities for black teachers who had already qualified as teachers overseas. In many cases Asian teachers qualified and experienced in their countries of origin were not given qualified teachers' status and found that their entrance to the teaching profession in England was quite restricted (Ghuman, 1995). Many of these teachers would be employed to teach Asian languages but as instructors, paid on an hourly rate and on short-term temporary contracts. This not only undermined and undervalued the Asian teachers but also Asian pupils and the status of their languages.

Then as the concept of multicultural education gained momentum another role for Asian teachers developed in the teaching of Asian languages. Once again teachers were funded from Section 11. Equally as marginalised as their colleagues teaching ESL, Asian teachers often found that they were given black pupils only because they were Asian, although their home language might not be the one that was being taught. The creation of

funding through Section 11 had reinforced the racist notion that schools needed to adjust the language and customs of black pupils until they became 'normal' enough to benefit from 'normal education'.

The Swann Report and the employment of black teachers

By the end of the seventies black communities were concerned about the limited number of black teachers and pressed for an increase in their numbers. To diffuse black parents' and pupils' resentment towards the education system (Gurnah, 1987), the DES launched an inquiry into the needs of minority ethnic pupils. The Rampton Committee submitted its interim report in 1981. The Report revealed racism in society and in schools and recommended steps to eradicate it in and through education. The Conservative Government felt Rampton had been too extreme and found many of the recommendations unacceptable. Those on the left, particularly black academics, felt Rampton had not gone far enough in stressing the racism of teachers and criticised it for failing to introduce any structural changes. The 'unintentional' racism of teachers was only discussed as one of many contributory factors in the underachievement of black pupils. The government delayed publication of the report and replaced Rampton with Lord Swann as a chairman.

Controversy and conflicting opinions concerning its findings surrounded publication of the long awaited Swann Report in March 1985. Academically

the suppositions asserted in the Swann Report need to be questioned, as the black members of the committee were angry about discrepancies between some of the research findings and the content of the report. The Rampton Report (1981) identified unconscious racism in schools and the Swann Report (1985) devoted a major theoretical chapter to issues of racism in education. Although the Swann Report was weak in its recommendations, it did make an important step forward in conceding that ethnic minority teachers did experience racism. The report stated:

"Ethnic minority teachers (and would be teachers) have been and are still subject to racial prejudice and discrimination both in gaining employment and in advancing their careers" (1985, p. 613).

The report stated that clearly there were 'disproportionately low numbers' of teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds in schools and continued:

"ethnic minority groups ...are disproportionately under-represented in the teaching profession... there is however no firm statistical basis for any discussion of the number of teachers of ethnic minority origin and such estimates as have been made in recent years have tended to be both limited in scope and definitionally imprecise" (1985, p. 600).

It also expressed concern over the number of 'fully qualified' minority ethnic teachers committee members met who were 'stagnating' in jobs below their

levels of experience and capabilities. The committee urged LEAs and the CRE to devote far greater efforts to identifying and overcoming racism within the teaching profession. The report suggested that minority ethnic teachers with overseas qualifications and experience were a possible source for recruitment but went on to state that such teachers might find it 'difficult to relate to British born ethnic minority youngsters' (p. 606). The report also suggested that the DES:

"Should clarify the arrangements for granting qualified teachers status to members of ethnic minority communities who possess overseas qualifications, with a view to encouraging them to enter the teaching profession as long as this involves no diminution of standards" (p. 614).

It is concerning that throughout this section of the report the recruitment of black teachers whether British or overseas qualified is constantly linked with warnings about the lowering of professional standards.

Newham Asian Teachers' Association Report (1985)

In Newham, where the LEA had issued an anti-racist policy declaring its commitment to achieving equality in education and employment, the Asian Teachers' Association found that the policy statement without effective action amounted to no more than tokenism (Newham Asian Teachers'

Association, 1985). The report found that the vast majority of teachers had actively sought promotion, yet although a substantial number were shortlisted, over half reported that they had received no promotion at all since starting teaching. Moreover, there was a relatively widespread perception that they were not given the same encouragement as their white counterparts and were failing in their attempts to achieve internal promotion within their schools. One disturbing feature of the survey was that all who participated reported at least occasional racist remarks from colleagues within the staff room.

The CRE Survey (1988)

The CRE decided to undertake a survey of teachers in eight local education authorities between 1984 and 1986 as a result of receiving numerous complaints from black teachers on the discrimination they had experienced in recruitment and in career progression. The survey found:

"that ethnic minorities are severely under-represented in the teaching profession ... ethnic minority teachers are not only under-represented in the profession generally, but they are disproportionately on the lowest scales, even where their starting scales and length of teaching service are similar to their white colleagues" (1988, p. 7).

The report concluded:

"The total number of teachers in the 1189 schools surveyed was 20,246, of whom only 431 (2%) were of ethnic minority origin. It should be remembered that these schools are in areas where the proportion of people of ethnic minority origin is higher than the national average" (CRE, 1988, p. 13).

Out of this survey the CRE made a series of recommendations but the influence of this report was questionable. This quasi-government (CRE) body could be argued to have acted as a buffer rather than an agency of change. In a similar way to the Swann Report (1985), the CRE Survey raised concerns, provided guidelines for good practice but in reality could not bring about any appreciable change in real practice.

The Ealing Survey - 1988

An independent enquiry (1988) into the recruitment and promotion of ethnic minority teachers in the London Borough of Ealing had been commissioned by Ealing Council after a campaign to recruit one hundred and forty primary teachers resulted in only three minority ethnic primary teachers being appointed. The panel found that in a borough with thirty per cent minority ethnic population, the minority ethnic teaching force was only eight per cent. Twice as many Asian teachers as white teachers were employed on temporary contracts and 21.8 per cent of Asian teachers were supply teachers compared to only 5.3 per cent of white teachers. The majority of

the black teachers were found to be at the bottom of the teaching hierarchy, predominantly teaching E2L, Community Languages or Maths and Science, i.e. the 'shortage' subjects. Twenty seven per cent of black teachers were not teaching the subject they had originally been appointed to teach and a high percentage were found in the Section 11 funded posts.

The enquiry panel found that despite the council's equal opportunities policy, there were 'difficult and deep-rooted problems of racist attitudes and conduct' in the LEA, 'especially in matters of employment'. The committee located 'major racism at management level' that resulted in the placing of ethnic minority teachers in main scale posts in schools and their conspicuous absence or only token presence in the inspectorate, advisory and management posts. The panel's recommendations to the council were extensive and the council affirmed positive action in the recruitment of black teachers with the setting of targets and agreed procedures for selection and promotion of staff. But without effective monitoring it would be difficult to assess how successful the Ealing Council has been in recruiting and promoting black teachers since then.

The Macdonald Report (1989)

The Macdonald Inquiry was set up by Manchester City Council to investigate the murder of an Asian pupil by a white pupil. The Council 'refused to publish the report, ostensibly for fear that it was libellous' (Troyna

& Hatcher, 1992, p. 187). The inquiry team members independently published the report (The Macdonald Report), which provided 'a unique anatomy of racist harassment in schools' (Ibid, p. 187). The Macdonald Inquiry panel made the following comments reported to them by the Community Languages Team in Manchester:

"As Asian teachers, we would say that definitely we are not getting our due rights in this Authority. The number of Asian teachers in this Authority is alarmingly low. We are suffering institutional racism in this authority. ... one member of the team has an MA in English Literature, and another a Ph.D. in Chemistry. Two of the team had had Masters degrees from Pakistan, one in education, but only one of them had been given DES recognition. Another member of the team had come to England with a Masters degree in Education and had done a Post Graduate Certificate of Education to qualify for DES recognition.... The issue is not lack of qualifications amongst South Asian teachers, but a systematic blockage of opportunity even to those who have recognised qualifications in subjects other than community languages" (Macdonald Inquiry, 1989, Chapter 23, p. 3).

All of these reports revealed that many black teachers were still in low-grade posts with little hope of promotion because of the operation of racist stereotypes and expectations by white colleagues. They were subjected to racism in British society and their experiences had developed from rather

different historical conditions - generally those of imperialism and colonialism (Carby, 1982; Parmar 1982). Also in all these reports there had been a tendency to view the recruitment of ethnic minority teachers in terms of reflecting the multi-cultural dimension of schools, providing positive role models for minority ethnic pupils, supporting the pastoral needs of these pupils or acting as links between the school and minority ethnic families. There had been little or no emphasis placed on the value of employing minority ethnic teachers for the qualities they themselves brought to the role.

Current Situation: The effect of 1990s Educational Policies on the employment of black teachers

The presence of more ethnic minority teachers in schools has been argued for by the Swann Report (1985), the CRE (1988), the Ealing Report (1988), the MacDonald Report (1989) and others but "little has been done to make the profession attractive to such teachers and it is they who are left to 'cope' with the racism of colleagues or pupils" (Klein, 1993, p. 114). According to Shallice (1984) institutional racism accounted for the relatively low number of blacks recruited into the teaching profession and the concentration of black teachers in the lower echelons of the profession's hierarchy. For example Les Francis commented:

"In 1987-88 I was elected to the position of Vice-Chair of Headteacher Appointments. I wanted to appoint more black and

ethnic minority headteachers, but I found that the obstacles were mostly in the earlier stages of the selection process" (quoted in Olowe, 1990, p. 24).

Ranjit Dheer, Assistant Director of Education for the London Borough of Southwark, argued forcefully:

"Discrimination now takes subtle forms. ... There is racism in the ... way black teachers are treated ... there is racism in the way cleaners are always black and teachers are usually white ... a lot of teachers have been denied promotion deliberately. ... The black candidate does not get sent on management courses, so at interviews they are at disadvantage. When the headship of a school falls vacant, the inspectors have the authority to put somebody in that post on a temporary basis. It is ninety-nine percent likely that a white candidate will be placed as acting head and allowed to get ... experience. ... Out of 850 secondary schools the number of black head teachers can be counted on the fingers of two hands!" (Ibid, pp. 72-73)

Cole (1989b) observed how in some cases the racist attitudes of students in teacher education institutions were extremely worrying and he pleaded for a drive to recruit more people from minority ethnic groups into teaching. But it was, as Siraj-Blatchford (1991) observed, unlikely to be of much avail while

minority ethnic students continued to experience racism of the nature and extent revealed in her research. She concluded:

"black students faced direct and indirect racism from their peers. ...What the survey does demonstrate is an alarmingly high level of perceived racism. ... The level of racism in schools, from some teachers, from pupils and from lecturers within ITE, suggests that staff development and appraisal of school placements is not a luxury, it must be seen as a necessary and integral part of departmental policy" (1991, pp. 44-48).

In 1993, Gillian Klein observed "It is therefore not surprising that in the 1990s the number of ethnic minority teachers is actually declining" (p. 113). Ghuman (1995) also noted that the picture regarding the employment of black teachers was still similarly depressing.

The Education Reform Act (1988) and the centralised National Curriculum placed a greater emphasis on 'social order, traditional values, authority and national identity' (Woods, 1992, p. 39). But as Maud Blair (1994) observed, such an ideology of 'national identity'

"places black teachers in a conflictual position in relation to their roles as professionals charged with the 'delivery' of this kind of National Curriculum. It might influence ideas about who is best suited

to carry out such a task, and have adverse effects on black teachers' chances of appointment and on the roles they are assigned in schools" (p. 277).

She also suggested that one of the effects of market ideologies introduced into the education system in the late 1980s was to worsen the already poor employment prospects and conditions of work for black teachers. She argued:

"Racist selection by 'acceptability' operates against the employment of black teachers as much as it does in other areas of the labour market" (1994, p. 284).

More recently, Callender (1997) observes that:

"The position of Black teachers in British school is best observed in relation to their dual (and often conflicting) role as members of the Black community and as agents of a system which continues to fail large numbers of Black children" (p. 61).

The current climate of underfunding, job cuts, large classes, discipline problems, increased workloads (brought about by the 1988 ERA and the introduction of NC) may account for the disillusionment of some teachers and the negative image that teaching has acquired. Increasingly, teachers

find themselves being judged by their performance in the classroom and by the academic success or failure of their pupils. This is facilitated through appraisal schemes and the publication of league tables of school examination results. The monitoring of teachers' performance together with the changes in the education system (including the increased accountability of teachers to parents and school governing bodies) and the additional demands (especially administrative tasks) on teachers' time, has led to fears of teachers 'becoming a minority group' (Woods, 1994, p. 250). Duncan (1992) suggests that if we add racism in teaching to the factors cited above we will understand black people's lack of interest in teaching.

In 1989 DES initiated the Articled and Licensed Teachers Scheme which provided formalised routes for gaining qualified teacher status for people who had obtained their qualifications overseas. The 1990 amendment replaced the former ad hoc arrangement whereby individuals or LEAs could apply to the DES. The DES saw the Scheme as a possible solution to the black teacher shortage. But as Barrett et al (1992) revealed institutional practices had been partly responsible for the lack of success of these schemes in increasing the number of black teachers. I contacted the DfE in 1995 to find out whether the DfE (after accepting the recommendations of the working party in 1987 to collect ethnically based statistics) has published any detailed national statistics on the ethnic composition of the teaching force. After experiencing considerable difficulty in finding someone who was prepared to discuss the topic, I was informed that the data was not available.

The Position of Black Women teachers

"The two main pieces of legislation currently operating in Britain (The Sex Discrimination Act and the Race Relations Act) in relation to the disadvantages faced by black people on the one hand and women and girls, on the other, were contemporaneous. This reflected a clear awareness on the part of the legislators that the common element was equality. There was a common concern about discrimination. However, despite the similarities in approach and administration there has been a difference in focus between issues of race and of gender related to the origins, different starting points and consequences for the establishment of the specific concerns" (Gregory, 1987, cited in Shah, 1990, p. 310).

For women teachers in general, sex discrimination in selection and promotion is an acknowledged feature of employment, and in practice, there seems to have been little movement from the situation described by a woman teacher in the NUT survey in 1980: "I have never ceased to be amazed that women are penalised for having children, but men are promoted because they have a family to support" (p. 54).

According to Mirza (1992) young black women are, at their point of entry into the labour market, failing to 'secure the economic status and occupational

prestige they deserve' (p. 189). The Hansard Society Commission also documented:

"how little change has been achieved in women's access to positions of power in Britain. ...the proportion of women in senior academic posts is derisory and has scarcely risen" (quoted in Lees and Scott, 1990, p. 333).

There is evidence to suggest that women often encounter a ceiling or threshold which prevents them from progressing beyond a certain level (Gibbes, 1980; DES, 1985; CRE, 1988; Brar, 1991b). They are disproportionately underrepresented at management levels in a teaching profession where men form the significant group. There are several factors contributing to the unequal position of women in the teaching profession like ideological assumptions about women's rightful place, men teachers' antagonism, their fight to protect their privileges and the vested interests of power groups. I am aware of the fact that all women are not as successful in promotion terms as men are but black women 'are few in comparison to other women in similar educational management positions' (C. Walker, 1993, p. 17). It is also recognised that black women teachers are likely to have many things in common with their white women colleagues but some aspects of black women teachers' professional experiences within a racially structured environment may differ from those of white women.

"Black women teachers ... acknowledge an experience of sexism shared with white women teachers, but, ... indicate that access to management posts and working as managers present them with formidable additional difficulties because of the operation of racism" (Al-Khalifa, E., 1989, p. 91).

Black women teachers need to respond to racism and/or sexism at a personal level and its potential impact on their professional practice. They had to encounter not only the sexist stereotypes but also the racist stereotypes. So they suffer the double disadvantage because of their 'colour' and gender. In 1988 the CRE Survey found that black women teachers had the lowest status of all with eighty per cent on Scales 1 and 2 compared to sixty-two percent of white women (CRE, 1988). I want to acknowledge here that even though my intention is to study the career experiences of Asian women teachers specifically, I feel that as far as racial discrimination in employment is concerned, the experiences of other black teachers, both men and women, are similar.

An early autobiographical account of the experiences of a black woman teacher is that of Beryl Gilroy who came to Britain from Guyana in 1951 as a young teacher. Despite initial difficulties in finding a teaching post she eventually became head of a London infant school. She recalled: "attitudes to the few blacks then in the country were much the same as they are today but the way people deal with them or react to them has altered" (Gilroy,

1976, cited in Osler, 1997, p. 49). More than a decade after, the experiences of Bangar and McDermott, having both been educated in Britain, caused them to question schools' motivations in appointing black teachers and the roles which black teachers were expected to adopt:

"When we started teaching, we were both aware that our position would necessarily be different from that of white teachers but we did not imagine that our working lives would be so dominated by issues to do with racism. ... throughout our teaching experience we have found ourselves channelled more and more into black issues (Bangar & McDermott, 1989, p. 138).

Many black women teachers hardly fare better at the hands of their white colleagues, often finding themselves the butt of racist jokes, hostile remarks and isolation in the staff room. In the case of black women teachers from Asian backgrounds, the stereotyping of Asian women as passive and submissive reinforces this invisibility. While it is true that such characteristics could be said to be an ideal typification of women, they acquire new force as a stereotype in the case of Asian women teachers. Consequently they suffer from patronising and dismissive treatment from white colleagues. If for example, pupils sexually harass an Asian woman teacher, this can be interpreted as demonstrating her unsuitability for employment in teaching because of a lack of cultural 'fit'. If she rejects male teachers 'physical contact', she is the victim of her own culture. "A woman to them is a lower

creature, but an Asian is even lower. It's totally a sexual object - you know- 'a bit of black' sort of thing" (Sikh woman teacher, talking about men teachers in her school, cited in Al-Khalifa, E., 1989, p. 91). If she behaves assertively, she is viewed with antagonism because she contradicts not so much a sexist stereotype, but a racist stereotype, held about Asian women, which predicts deference and compliance.

"In school she has had to contend with discussions about 'Pakis' in the staff room. One teacher said he would like to send all blacks back on the banana boat, and another told her that he was unable to sit by her because she was black" (The Guardian, 5 April, 1988, reprinted in Open University, 1989a).

And

"A teacher who showed an interest in Asian culture was asked by a colleague, 'why don't you wear Indian dress?' and was greeted by a mock Indian prayer movement every time she passed this colleague in the corridor" (Macdonald et al, 1989, pp. 140-41).

Philomena Essed (1991) in her study explored the simultaneous consequences of racism in varying sites and varying social relations by reconstructing the experiences of black, professional women in the Netherlands and the United States. She found that the black women in her

study were upset by the 'hypocrisy' which they identified in covert expressions of racism, whilst continually being reminded about the tolerance of the dominant group (p. 108). Essed maintained that the complete neglect of racial issues in order to "maintain a non-discriminatory self-concept", was itself a form of racism (1991, p. 139). Her analysis of the black women's negative experiences included the following: incidents where supervisors refrained from intervening in incidents, thereby leaving the women concerned to solve the problems themselves; incidents where dominant group members neglected to acknowledge worthwhile contributions made by black women, were inflexible when it came to accommodating the black women and where they even refused to provide a positive recommendation in the event of the women wanting to apply for promotion (pp. 231-43).

Michele Foster (1993) examined the experiences of Black teachers in different regions of the United States and concluded:

"in their own ways all of the teachers with whom I spoke have actively resisted racism. ... in contrast to depictions of Black teachers which portray them as individuals who invariably uphold only the status quo, these teachers not only are aware of institutional racism of American society, but throughout their careers have acted in ways that have challenged the existing social order. ... Not only are Black teachers more often characterised unfavourably than are White teachers, and as lacking the political awareness and resolve to

challenge racism, but these negative characterisations diverge from the portrayals of Black teachers found in the essays, sociological studies, and autobiographies and narratives written by Black teachers themselves" (pp. 171-2).

Walker (1993) in a study of black women managers reminds us that these women are a small group within a female minority in senior management positions; they are likely to share many of the same pressures as other women in such situations as well as encountering additional pressures which are specific to themselves. Maylor also in her study of black student teachers and teachers concludes that:

"black women have a variety of experiences ... as ... qualified teachers, and that these experiences differ in some significant ways to the experiences of white teacher. For the black women in this study their experiences ... were conditioned by two main factors: 'race' and gender" (1995, p. 368).

Summary

There is no doubt that Britain's teaching force still does not adequately reflect the pupil population it serves. As I have already discussed, since 1960 political ideology and Government attitudes have played major roles in shaping the formation of many policies in education. But the underlying

theme remained the same - black pupils presenting a 'problem' in schools; the policies and practices to recruit and employ more black teachers were 'ad hoc'. And policies have generally failed to change the school structure and educational system.

"successive governments have promised reform, while actually doing very little to break down the structural separation and relative powerlessness of organisations such as CRE to bring about fundamental changes. Thus there has been no cohesive plan linking the various elements of state intervention, even when this has been called for in various government reports since the mid-1970s. ... what has been achieved is the perpetuation of existing inequalities"

(Solomos, 1989, p. 178).

The CRE (1988) report confirmed that the number of ethnic minority teachers was disproportionately low. They were still mostly in powerless positions, very few were above the main scale and few were visible at management level. Other minority ethnic teachers were in Section 11 funded posts which were often regarded by other teachers as of lower status. They often found themselves being discriminated against and abused by their white colleagues and senior white teachers. After the introduction of Local Management of Schools (ERA, 1988), there was a great deal of discussion about how schools would be forced to employ the cheapest teachers in order to maintain acceptable teacher / pupil ratios. As

black teachers have generally been treated as 'cheap commodities', regardless of age and experience, there was a possibility that that could have had some positive effect on black teachers' appointments. Yet the rate of employment of black teachers has not gone up whilst reports from black teachers indicate greater vulnerability where cut backs have occurred. Also the increasing role of governors in appointments and promotions could have had a positive influence on black teachers' career prospects. But, as Deem et al (1992) have shown, most governing bodies are made up of white, male, middle-class people for whom questions of equality and justice are often not a top priority. So these policy changes in the late 1980s have operated unfairly for black teachers as well.

Research by Cole (1989b), Siraj-Blatchford (1991) and Maylor (1995) showed inherent racism in many teacher education institutions- in admissions, recruitment, administration, accommodation, curriculum and resources. So young adults from ethnic minority groups are not so keen to enter the profession as they are aware of black teachers' lack of status. Statistics from the Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR, 1992) show that black and ethnic minority graduates accounted for 7.9 per cent of applicants and 5.5 per cent of those accepted onto PGCE courses. Professor Jim Murphy, head of education at the University of East London said "Ethnic minority teachers are second-class citizens in a second-class profession, receiving lower pay, lower status and fewer promotion opportunities than their white colleagues" (Times Educational Supplement,

November 7, 1997, p. 6). In the same article, Clive Booth, chair of the Teacher Training Agency, observed that nobody knew how many minority ethnic teachers were working in Britain. He also pointed out that: "Ethnic minority teachers have the most difficulty securing a first placement after training, and in some instances find securing a training place hard. I find that extremely worrying" (Ibid, p. 6).

Painful personal accounts and a significant amount of research evidence indicate that at all levels black teachers are forced to challenge and respond to racism as part of their everyday experience. As John (1993) highlights:

"A fundamental difference between Black teachers and White teachers is that for Black teachers, the school, with all its structural arrangements, becomes a site for struggle against racism in much the same way that the community outside the school is. The experiences of racism within the society generally are replicated within the school in a wide variety of ways, ...in attitudes of students, staff and parents, in the negative expectations people have of Black staff, and in the belief that it is principally the responsibility of Black staff to deal with 'difficult' Black students and 'awkward' Black parents" (cited in Callender, 1997, p. 62).

So it is difficult to predict whether the number of ethnic minority teachers in British schools will increase or not in the near future. An Adviser for Multicultural Education in one LEA put it like this:

"The biggest problem ... is the lack of black staff, both as teachers and headteachers, and as senior officers in the education service at all levels. ... I think this could be the single biggest flaw in the system, because when you go into schools, you can feel the gap" (quoted in G. Singh, 1993, p. 200).

Another major concern is that, in Britain, research has, on the whole, tended to concentrate on the academic performance of black children and not much by way of in-depth studies has been done to focus on the experience and plight of Asian women teachers. (Although I am aware of the fact that there are now one or two studies being undertaken in Britain concentrating on the experiences of black teachers, for example, Dr. Chris Pole at CEDAR at Warwick University was doing some work on black teachers). Still this is an area which at present remains seriously under-researched. There is clearly a continuing need for the development of an archive of life histories of black teachers (men and women) and I hope my study of Asian women teachers' career experiences in one education authority will be a contribution to such an archive.

Chapter Four

Methodology

Introduction

In any research the issue of method is of fundamental importance, but it is also necessary that method not be viewed simply as a tool one uses to solve a problem. According to Vygotsky (1978) there is no tool whose use does not shape the person using it just as it also shapes the external environment. But every method has its strengths and weaknesses, and it is impossible for the researcher to select an approach which is without drawbacks or problems. The question is of fitness for purpose. My main concern was to choose a method which was best suited for use in the research in question and also 'how best to describe and interpret the experiences of other people and cultures' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 577) using that method.

In this chapter I focus on the design and method of my research and some ethical and methodological issues underpinning it. This chapter is divided into the following sections:

- **Looking at other Asian teachers' experiences: Finding an appropriate method**

- **Life Story to Life History**
- **The chief values of life history in studying teachers' lives /experiences**
- **Feminism in life history research**
- **Studying Black Women's Lives**
- **Ethical and methodological issues surrounding the use of life history in social research**

Looking at other Asian Teachers' Experiences:

Finding an Appropriate Method

A literature search on black teachers (whether men or women or both) revealed only a small number of studies (Brar, 1991b; Callender, 1997; Ghuman, 1995; Maylor, 1995; Osler, 1995; Singh et al., 1988). Pat Sikes and her colleagues (1985) in their studies of teachers' careers included only one South Asian male respondent in their sample of forty teachers and a brief reference was made about this teacher's experiences of racism within his school situation (pp. 87-88). According to Barry Troyna "This silencing of black experiences is not only politically unfortunate but, in terms of the sociological enterprise, theoretically and methodologically maladroit" (1994a, pp. 325-339). My reading of the little that I could find on Asian teachers' lives revealed that South Asian teachers' experiences remain under-represented in the research documents and no work has been done

on South Asian women teachers specifically. To address the theoretical silencing of ethnic minority teachers' experiences, I have had to adopt an autobiographical and biographical approach as a means of discovery. There is a well-known gulf between teacher activity and academic research, and between teaching practice and theory (Day, 1995; Degenhardt, 1984; Eisenberg, 1995; McNamara, 1976). And there was the additional, predictable problem that what advisers and outsiders believed went on in a school was different from Asian teachers' experiences. Mac an Ghail's (1989) study of black youth revealed to him that much previous traditional research was 'distorted, de-racialised and degendered' (p. 186). I realised that if I wanted to understand the concerns, anxieties, hopes and aspirations of Asian women teachers and tease out some of the salient issues and factors, I needed personal stories/testimonies. Hence the need for the narrative and biographical research approach which offers 'one respectable way of indulging our wish to have evidence from the lives of others that we are not alone in our difficulties, pains, pleasures and needs' (Mearns and Sikes, 1992, p. 210).

I used the same approach while doing the dissertation for my Master's degree that focused on the career experiences of Asian women teachers. I was struck by the similarities of my perceptions and experiences with that of the other Asian women teachers I studied. In the light of the fact that Asian women teachers do not comprise a homogeneous group, the life history approach made it possible to obtain biographies that were 'unique' but still

within each individual narrative, there were episodes, experiences and emotions with which other teachers could readily identify. On my evidence all these teachers had negative career experiences but in some ways that was incidental to the information that I had about how they had personally experienced these incidents. The personal stories they told of their lives – the way they selected, constructed and described their realities – threw light on how they constructed their sense of self in relation to their gender, class and ethnic backgrounds. According to Norquay

“individuals often struggle with varying and often contradictory subject positions which are constructed around gender, race, class and ethnicity ... which intersect in a variety of ways” (1990, p. 292).

Some socially constructed meanings are universals; others, as this research has tried to show, are limited to particular subgroups or subcultures.

It is also important to remember that as a result of their personal experiences, researchers conceptualise the situations they research in different ways and choose particular methods which will seem more suitable to them than others. According to Harding (1986) the researcher is unavoidably present in the research process, and her social location and personal experiences shape her work. Feminist methodologists also suggest that research is an act of self-discovery as well as a process of learning about others (Reinharz, 1983); research work must be unalienated labour

(Reinharz, 1984; Stanley, 1990a) and recommend that we exploit our subjectivities and personal experiences. A biographical research approach seemed especially appropriate since I had come to research this area through my own personal experiences and insights or, to put it in another way, through a process of 'heuristic inquiry'. It is heuristic in that it seeks to focus on intense human experiences, intense from the point of view of other teachers and myself. According to Moustakas (1990) heuristic inquiry involves

"a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience ... the self of the researcher is present throughout the process, and while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge (p. 9).

Advocates of heuristic research (e.g. Moustakas, 1990; Patton, 1990; Polyani, 1983) suggest that it consists of six phases, the first of which is 'initial engagement', that is, the discovery of some experiential issues of intense personal significance, which also hold important meanings for others in similar situations. Denzin and Lincoln also advocate that one of the prominent features of qualitative research is 'the avowed humanistic commitment to study the social world from the perspective of the interacting individual' (1994, p. 575). Hence the need to bring more into consideration

the researcher's own subjectivity and position as researcher. In response to students concerns about the

"validity of using their own life-experience in thinking about theories or reflecting on their own practice" (Griffiths, 1995, p. 75)

Griffiths asserts that

"ultimately knowledge can only be produced through the careful consideration of individual experience. But be warned! Your experience is not enough on its own. You will need to use it carefully: bearing in mind relevant theory and your political position. And you will have to be prepared to reflect and re-think your understanding of the experience over time" (Ibid, p. 87).

The point that Griffiths makes about reflection and rethinking is important. My autobiographical account (set out in Chapter Two) described the intense impact my career experiences had on me as a teacher and as a person. And in coming to this research I was returning to the concerns which had haunted me ever since I started teaching (nearly twenty-six years ago now). These concerns were: What is the relationship between teaching and the social environment of the teacher? How are Asian women teachers influenced by the students they teach and by their white colleagues? Why are ethnic minority teachers under-represented in the teaching profession

and why is their presence disproportionately high in the lower ranks of the profession? By talking to women teachers of Asian descent in one local education authority, I tried to provide a microcosmic but in-depth insight into their teaching experiences. I also discussed how I had used my own experience and insights and how being an 'insider' had impacted on the research process. So the result of my research can be considered a 'dialogic' production in that it arose out of the encounter between other Asian women teachers and myself and, also my autobiography is woven into what I write about other teachers. (Clandinin, 1989; Elbaz, 1990; Grumet, 1988; Personal Narratives Group, 1989; Pinar, 1992; Tierney, 1993). Connelly and Clandinin assert:

“A text written as if the researcher had no autobiographical presence would constitute a deception about the epistemological status of the research. Such a study lacks validity” (1992, p. 11).

The next four phases of heuristic research, 'immersion', 'incubation', 'illumination', and 'explication', variously involve the researcher in both actively questioning, capturing intuitive insights, mediating, dialoguing and reflecting on the issue and also in being open and receptive to tacit knowledge and intuition. The process culminates in the 'creative synthesis', usually in narrative form, which brings together all the issues, themes and dimensions that have emerged into a total experience, showing patterns and relationships. "creative synthesis enables one to bring together as a whole

the individual's story, including the meaning of the lived experience" (V.J. Janesick, 1994, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, p. 216).

Heuristic strategies are useful in that they explicitly recognise personal knowledge and experience as valid and valuable data. However, whilst acknowledging the importance of individual, subjective interpretations of experience and understandings, the significance of the influence that social interaction, conflict, contradiction and inconsistency have upon these interpretations has to be recognised. I had to survey previous research papers, historically analyse black people's settlement and employment pattern, political and educational responses to their settlement and understand the prevailing discourses and cultural practices to be able to link micro with macro. This approach had enabled me 'to bring into focus the three-dimensional social world of biography, culture and history' (Mac an Ghail, 1989, p. 185). Also I had to bring together an embedded understanding of the issues raised by a symbolic interactionist view of the world which places

"emphasis ... upon the construction of meanings and perspectives, the adaptation to circumstances, the management of interests in the ebb and flow of countless interactions containing many ambiguities and conflicts, the strategies devised to promote those interests, and the negotiation with others' interests that is a common feature of all teaching situations" (Woods, 1996, p. 7).

The research is contextualized within situations and definitions of situation. The researcher's self is inextricably bound up with the research and research activities are constructed and interpreted in distinctive processes. All these colour the nature and content of the data they yield. I will now look into the chief values of using life history (from the perspectives of a life historian and a black feminist) in studying teachers' lives, some issues and concerns relating to life history approaches and how I had tried to overcome them.

Life story to life history

'Stories' have recently moved centre stage in social thought (Plummer, 1995). Most of us are involved in telling and listening to stories most of the time. We try to present ourselves, our experiences and beliefs through stories, making connections between apparent contradictions and offering some sort of an explanation to somewhat chaotic and inconsequential events. As Dan Mc Adams (1985) asserts:

"An individual's story has the power to tie together past, present and future in his or her life. It is a story which is able to provide unity and purpose" (cited in Plummer, 1995, p. 172).

'The life story is a personal reconstruction of experience' and 'The life history is the life story located within it's historical context' (Goodson, 1992, p. 6).

Middleton (1992) wants us to

"move from life stories to life histories, from narratives to genealogies of context, towards a modality that embraces stories of action within theories of context. In so doing, stories can be 'located', seen as the social constructions they are, fully impregnated by their location within power structures and social milieux. Stories provide a starting point for active collaboration, "a process of deconstructing the discursive practices through which one's subjectivity has been constituted" (p. 20).

And Goodson also confirms that:

"Only if we deal with stories as the starting point for collaboration, as the beginning of a process of coming to know, will we come to understand their meaning: to see them as social constructions which allow us to locate and interrogate the social world in which they are embedded" (Goodson, cited in Hatch et al, 1995, pp. 97- 98).

So an analysis of the social, historical, political, and economic contexts of a life story by the researcher is what turns a life story into a life history. Properly collected life stories / histories are not mere narratives or texts in

abstract, they give substance and status to the experiences and emotions they describe and, as Plummer argues, this can be 'empowering' on both a personal and a social level (1995, p. 27). I have found that theoretical approaches, which bring class, 'race' and gender together within educational theory, continue to be unsatisfactory for demonstrating how one aspect of identity impacts on another. I believe that the life stories / histories of these teachers can become part of socio-political argument by focusing on their career experiences and perceptions, their pedagogical understandings and cultural reactions to the educational policy directions of the late 1980s and 1990s.

The chief values of life history in studying teachers'

lives / experiences

"In understanding something so intensely personal as teaching it is critical we know about the person the teacher is" (Goodson, 1981, quoted again by him in 1994, p. 31).

The resurgence of life history research as a legitimate method for studying teachers' lives has enjoyed something of a renaissance in the last fifteen years or so (Ball & Goodson, 1985; Butt, Raymond & Yamagishi, 1988; Casey, 1993; Goodson, 1985, 1992, 1994; Sikes, Measor & Woods, 1985; Thomas, 1995; Woods, 1985b, 1987a). Woods argues 'life history approaches offer real prospects for bridging the divide between education

research and the practice of teaching, and the empirical supports of sociological theory' (1985b, p. 13-26). Considerable attention has also been paid to giving teachers 'voice' (Elbaz, 1990; Goodson, 1991) and to studying them as individuals with their own personal and institutional life histories.

"The proposal I am recommending is essentially one of reconceptualising educational research so as to assure that the teachers voice is heard, heard loudly, heard articulately" (Goodson, 1991, p. 36).

And A. Hargreaves (1991) argues:

"Failure to understand the teacher's voice is failure to understand the teacher's teaching. For this reason, our priority should be not merely to listen to the teacher's voice, but also to sponsor it as priority" (p. 11).

Butt, Raymond, McCue and Yamagishi (1992), summing up this line of argument, state that:

"The notion of the teacher's voice is important in that it carries the tone, the language, the quality, the feelings, that are conveyed by the way a teacher speaks or writes. In a political sense the notion of the teacher's voice addresses the right to speak and be represented. It

can represent both the unique individual and the collective voice; one that is characteristic of teachers as compared to other groups" (p. 57).

The chief values of taking a life history approach for my research are as follows:

First, life history study acknowledges that teachers are not free to do what they want; they occupy specific cultural positions, negotiate particular value systems and operate within a matrix of power relations inscribed by the discourses of class, 'race' and gender. It acknowledges the crucial relationship between individuals' lives, stories, experiences and perceptions and historical and social phenomena. The retrospective quality of life histories can provide historical depth.

Secondly, individual life is not as clear or ordered as many social science accounts would have us believe. Life history methods explicitly recognise that lives are not hermetically compartmentalised. What happens in one area of our lives affects other areas too. Our personal, professional and public experiences and aspects of life inevitably interact with each other.

Thirdly, life history technique documents the inner experiences of individuals, how they experience, create, interpret, understand and define the rules and roles of the social worlds they live in. Each life history portrays

the subject as a whole, in the temporal, geographical and socio-cultural context. The power of life history is in the dialectic between the unique experiences of individuals and the constraints of broad social, political, and economic structures. It may be possible artfully to weave these constraints into life stories so that they are barely visible, but their presence is essential. As Goodson (1981) maintains, life history 'both gives historical depth to ethnography and permits a view of wider lives' (p. 66). It has enormous potential for exploring concrete social experience in humanistic fashion; of getting at the ways in which participants in social life construct and make sense of their particular world - their 'definitions of the situation', their 'first level of constructs'.

Fourthly, as the material of the life history comes from the participants themselves (Michelle Foster, 1993), it accommodates and makes use of data produced through heuristic inquiry.

Fifthly, as the researcher and participant work closely together to come to a shared understanding of the participant's story "research participants tend to be more involved in the design, conduct, and analysis of the inquiry" (Hatch et al, 1995, p. 117). According to Andrew Sparkes:

"Life history has greater potential to develop collaborative modes of engagement in which greater control and status is given to the subject. In relation to this, it has greater potential to develop

knowledge that has relevance and meaning to the subjects or story tellers" (Cited in Hatch et al, 1995, p. 117).

I will discuss later on how my research participants were involved in my research process.

Finally, life history research has the ability to place theoretical understanding in a practical light, making it possible to bridge gaps between understandings from micro and macro perspectives (Pat Sikes, Andrew Sparkes, cited in Hatch et al, 1995, p. 118).

Woods has gone so far as to argue that life histories, because of their special qualities in revealing the self, have an important role to play in 'the construction of a meaningful, relevant and living teacher knowledge' (1987a, p. 136). So I chose to pursue a research methodology which, I believe, provided invaluable insight into the subjective meaning of experiences from the viewpoint of the teachers and also had allowed me to 'understand the ... women's lives from their own perspectives' (Brah and Shaw, 1992, p. 53). As a research process it is not so much about systematic inquiry made public but rather self-discovery made public. Narrative is used as a means of discovery – a way of finding out and of validating experiences and emotions, which have their origins in these teachers' experiences. By concentrating on these teachers' accounts, I have attempted to focus on personal experiences- these experiences relate to historical and structural

phenomena. As Popkewitz maintains 'to understand where individuality begins, one must first understand the ways in which history and social structures impinge upon our choices' (1988, pp. 379-400). There is a maintenance of 'the tension between the individual as an active social agent, the product of a given "life-history" capable of making positive decisions and choices, and the individual as influenced by specific social structures and ideologies' (Griffin, 1987, p. 216). Therefore I have also tried to keep wider historical, social, cultural, economical and political influences in view.

Feminism in Life history research

The purpose of this section is to give a brief overview of some of the aspects of feminist theory that relate to life history / biographical research.

'Traditional social research has been for men' (Harding, 1987, p. 8).

Feminist writers, theoreticians and methodologists have criticised all aspects of social science for being predominantly bourgeois and patriarchal, that is, dominated by White middle-class and /or male researchers (Fonow and Cook, 1991a; Maynard & Purvis, 1994; Stanley and Wise, 1993), and for ignoring women's lives, experiences, and status either by omission or commission. As Margaret Nelson noted:

"Public history often ignores minority views. But women's lives are further hidden because important information is overlooked,

consciously avoided, or distorted" (1992, cited in Goodson, pp. 167-186).

And Seller (1994) also argued:

"The apparently objective, neutral, rational voice of philosophy surreptitiously privileged the viewpoint of the middle / upper class European male, rendering invisible all other perspectives, experiences, voices" (p. 45).

So the primary objective of feminism has been to challenge women's subordinated position within both state institutions and civil society. But there is no single, unified feminist methodology or epistemological approach. 'Clearly, there is no single "feminist way" to do research' (Reinharz, S. and Davidman, L. 1992, p. 243). There are, however, several shared assumptions and principles underlying feminist research, such as, the significance of women's lives, experiences and perceptions as the material of research; the need to address women's lives and experiences in their own terms and to ground feminist theory in the actual experiences of women including those of women of different races, cultures, classes, and so on (Cotterill & Letherby, 1993; Harding, 1987; Stanley and Wise, 1993); to promote an interactional methodology which will be non-exploitative and non-hierarchical, and will establish reciprocal relationships with respondents (Bergen, 1993; Edwards, 1993; Finch, 1984; Oakley, 1981; Ramazanoglu,

1992; Stanley and Wise, 1993); research on women should provide the women studied with explanations that could be used to improve their life situations, that is, to be empowering and emancipatory for participants. Sculley (1990) argued for a specifically feminist methodology which "puts women at the centre of research that is nonalienating, non-exploitive, and potentially emancipating" (pp. 2-3). Dorothy Smith (1992) urged feminist researchers to be reflexive and to 'participate as subjects in the orders of ruling' (p. 96). Jaggar (1989), Wilkins (1993) and others acknowledged the importance of emotion in the research process and in the development of sociological understanding.

Biographical approaches incorporating some, if not all, of these assumptions have been popular with feminists (Bloom & Munro, 1995; Casey, 1993; Cotterill & Letherby, 1993; Griffiths, 1995; Middleton, 1992; Personal Narrative Group, 1989). Reinharz suggests that biographical work articulates closely with the imperatives of feminist research precisely because 'it draws women out of obscurity, repairs the historical record and provides an opportunity for the woman reader to write and identify with the subject (Reinharz, 1992, p. 126). According to Graham (1984) the life history method is a good way of examining women's lives because it helps them to 'communicate the complexity of their lives' (p. 13) and reveal the unequal way in which they experience the world with men. In fact the editors of The Personal Narratives Group (1989) claim that life history narratives

"are particularly rich sources because, attentively interpreted, they illuminate both the logic of individual courses of action and the effects of system-level constraints within which those courses evolve" (p. 6).

However, the ways in which some feminists have used such methods and the claims that they have made for them do raise certain questions. I will consider some of these now.

Firstly, the commonplace premise to consider the spoken and written narratives of women's lives as 'texts' is problematic in the sense that the narratives must be contextualized otherwise the picture that is presented can be determinist and essentialist. Just to let women 'speak for themselves' is not sufficient for understanding the processes and practices through which their social relation is organised (Ramazanoglu, 1989b). As Plummer notes:

"to sense the importance of stories in social life is never to suggest that stories are all there is: the telling and reading of stories is always grounded in social processes that by definition are 'beyond the stories'. There is more, much more, to life than stories" (1995, p. 167).

But some feminists have not explicitly taken this line and regarded experience as an end in itself (Kelly, Burton & Regan, 1994, pp. 29-30;

Maynard & Purvis, 1994, pp. 5-7). The experience depends upon influences resulting from the social class, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, age, etc. So analysis has to proceed from a wider basis than the purely personal if it is to offer alternative and useful ways of understanding how people experience the world and what the social implications of their experiences and understandings are. As Dorothy Smith has argued that:

"A sociology for women must be able to disclose for women how their own social situation, their everyday world is organised and determined by social processes which are not knowable through the ordinary means through which we find our everyday world" (Smith, 1986, p. 6).

Secondly, some feminists stress on the non-exploitative and non-hierarchical relationships with the respondents in an interview situation in biographical and other types of qualitative research (for example, Duelli Klien, 1983, p. 95). Although feminists are not the only researchers to make this claim, it has become something of what Kelly, Burton & Regan call a 'key definer' of feminist research' (1994, p. 36). The relations of power between researcher and respondent are even more important (Lather, 1991; Popular Memory Group, 1982, p. 223), and in most cases, there is bound to be an inevitable difference in the balance of power. A fundamental example of the researcher's power is, of course, the establishment of criteria for inclusion and exclusion of subjects and also as Glesne & Peshkin put it,

"in most instances ... the researcher maintains a dominant role that reflects his or her definition of the inquiry purposes. As long as the purposes are his or her own, the researcher sustains a power imbalance that may or may not get redressed" (1992, p. 82).

So making equalitarianism a requirement of feminist research clearly limits its scope and, ironically, its usefulness to women (Stanley & Wise, 1993). Yet, as Neal (1995, p. 520) notes, this point has tended to continue to be obscured.

Thirdly, 'reciprocity', (Oakley, 1981), which occurs when the female interviewer shares personal information with the female informant, is regarded as good feminist practice (Cosslett, 1994; Nielsen, 1990; Stanley, 1990c). It is believed that reciprocity / self-disclosure reduces the exploitative power balance between researcher and subject (Graham, 1984); helps not only to overcome participants' inhibitions but also to place the interaction between the researcher and researched on a 'more equal footing' (Cook and Fonow, 1984); carries ethical safeguards by diminishing 'the distance between "taker" and "giver" of the life history' (Measor and Sikes, 1992, p. 215) and arguing there should be 'no intimacy without reciprocity' (Oakley, 1981, p. 49). Bristow and Esper (1988) maintain that self-disclosure or reciprocity promotes 'true dialogue' rather than 'interrogation' in an interview situation. But Hammersley discusses what often happens:

"What is involved in the process of self disclosure is the presentation of those aspects of one's self and life that provide a bridge for building relationships with participants, and the suppression of those which constitute a possible barrier" (cited in Goodson, 1992, p. 215).

Some researchers (Measor & Sikes, 1992) argue that self-disclosure strategies are 'ethically dubious' as

"while we talked about the importance of relationships it nevertheless seems that we viewed them as exploitable, they could be sacrificed for the pursuit of data" (p. 216).

Lynda Measor also discussed the importance of 'staying bland' (Burgess, 1984, p. 24) as she encountered difficulties when some of her views were known in a school where she was doing research (op cit., p. 216). According to Edwards (1993) self-disclosure can be significant in generating solidarity among women, regardless of race or social class differences among them, although race may be a more powerful placement factor than sex. But as Ann Phoenix writes:

"while it is sometimes very comfortable to be a feminist researcher interviewing women, that cosiness does not simply come from shared gender but is often partly the result of shared social class and/or shared colour. The interview relationship is partly dependent on the

relative positions of investigators and informants in the social formation. Simply being women discussing 'women's issues' in the context of a research interview is not sufficient for the establishment of rapport and the seamless flow of an interview' (1994, p. 50).

So adherence to a 'pure' notion of reciprocity limits the scope of feminist research because it pre-empts the possibility of interviewing men. And it is difficult to be clear whether the matching of interviewees with interviewers on particular characteristics will produce 'better' or 'richer' data than not matching. I believe that the most important factor is how two people get on, regardless of their race and sex.

Fourthly, another concern closely associated with the interactive process between the researcher and respondent is that of feminist research as an 'emancipatory' or 'empowering' experience for both the researcher and the researched. Barry Troyna maintained that all research is potentially exploitative and that, in any event, claims for the 'empowering' or emancipatory properties of any research, within whatever paradigm and regardless of the methods used, are at best grandiose and naive, at worst, disingenuous and deceitful (1994b). But as Bergen (1993) claimed:

"Researchers are empowered because they are able to recognise how the research process affects them as both researchers and women (Cook and Fonow, 1984). Research participants are

empowered because they understand that their personal experiences are no longer raw material for the data mill but they are actively involved in sharing their stories with others and evoking change" (p. 202).

And as Goodson argued

"it is possible to construct research projects in such a way that, the least, neo-colonialist problems of power are minimised and participants also experience some form of 'empowerment' " (Sikes, Troyna & Goodson, 1996, pp. 34-54).

'When women speak for themselves, they reveal hidden realities: new experiences and new perspectives' (Anderson et al, 1990, p. 95). Women teachers' own understandings and interpretations of their experiences have been until, very recently, 'not only unrecorded, but actually silenced' (Popular Memory Group, 1982, p. 210). And I hope by working with the teachers collaboratively so that they were not silenced, by 'empowering' them to participate and share equally in the decision-making process, I have managed to carry on non-exploitative research and given them the opportunity to gain their own voice. In doing this I followed Casey who asserts:

"Essential to my approach is a respect for the authenticity and integrity of the narrator's discourse. The speaker is seen as a subject creating her own history, rather than an object of research" (cited in Goodson, 1992, p. 189).

At the time of the interview and later, when transcripts were sent to interviewees, I also stressed that they were free to add or amend anything that they wished and to delete anything that they might not wish me to include. As Hargreaves (1994) suggests, if the limits of the individual experiences and voices are recognised and the interpretations are historically and socially contextualized, then biographical approaches can be of value, both for personal and professional development and also in terms of the conventional research goals of advancing knowledge and understanding. It can be argued that in using the life history method 'dialogue is both the research tool and the research outcome', which enables the "whys" as well as the 'what's' of women's experience ... to take shape' (Billson, 1991, p. 211). I feel that sensitively collected and richly detailed life histories could do much to raise the awareness of others about some of the confrontational issues of gender and racial differentiation in schools.

Studying Black Women's Lives

"Knowing from a feminist standpoint is not the same as and indeed precludes knowing from ... a black standpoint" (Cain, 1986, p. 265).

Mainstream sociological and feminist research methods do not sufficiently examine the experiences of Black women. Feminist methodology has rejected patriarchal assumptions in social science research but has reproduced racist assumptions (Marshall, 1994). It has been frequently argued by black feminists (like Amos and Parmer, 1984; bell hooks, 1993; Collins, 1986, 1990; Mirza, 1992; Wright, 1987) that feminism has failed to take into account the complex ways in which gender inequalities interrelate with class and race oppression. In addition to the social construction of femaleness, black women also have to deal with racialized constructions of black womanhood and the lived experience of being black and female (bell hooks, 1989). Alison Jaggar and Paula Rothenberg argued forcefully that 'feminist frameworks that do not take account of the experience of women of color, are not only incomplete, they are racially biased' (cited in Reinharz, 1992, p. 257). Bonnie Thornton Dill (1983) argues that in order to truly understand black women's lives, one must investigate not only the social structural components which affect their lives but also the relationship between these components and the self-perception of black women themselves:

"For Black women and other women of color an examination of the ways in which racial oppression, class exploitation, and patriarchy intersect their lives must be studied in relation to their perceptions of the impact these structures have upon them" (p. 138, cited in Ollenburger and Moore, 1992, p. 63).

And Razack (1993) also argues that we

"need to devise alternatives for telling about the lives of women of colour that transcend the narrative about the white woman or the one about the black man. Since the stories of women of colour fit into neither, telling them will require attention to multiplicities, contradictions and relations of power embedded in the interpretive structure" (p. 68).

White scholars doing research on race and ethnicity should examine self-consciously the influence of racism (individual, institutional or structural) and the way it shapes the formulation and development of their research, rather than assume a colour-blind stance. Relying primarily on the theoretical works of women of colour, Julie Blackman (1993), Nancie Caraway (1991) and others, urged white women to be engaged in "crossover tracks", in critical, democratic conversations about 'race' and racism. When elite, white academics write about people of colour, their raced and classed translation grants authority to minority ethnic people's "native" and "underarticulated"

narratives (Fine, 1991). The power of their translation comes far more from their whiteness, middle-classness, and education than from the stories they tell (Kitzinger, 1991). The question is not whether white scholars should write about or attempt to know the experience of people of colour, but whether their interpretations should be taken to be the most authoritative (bell.hooks, 1989). When the ethnic minority scholars do the same kinds of work as white academics, they are more likely to be heard as biased, self-interested, or without distanced perspectives (Cook and Fine, 1994). Elizabeth Higginbotham argues that empirical studies must examine the sources of Black women's oppression and reflect the diversity of their experiences.

"In our eagerness to counteract the negative stereotypes, we must not create a different one, which also fails to reflect accurately the varied lives of Black women. Even though many Black women are able to overcome difficult situations, Black women are not 'superwomen' devoid of needs and emotions" (Higginbotham, 1982, p. 96).

Black feminist researchers have to understand the interlocking nature of racism, sexism and class oppression together with internalised and wider oppression. Collins (1986, 1990) argues that the 'peculiar marginality' of Black feminist scholars gives them distinctive analyses of race, class and gender. She urges women to venture into the 'marginality' and unearth a

"collective self-defined Black feminist consciousness" by listening to black women's stories as they confront and resist images of themselves as 'Other'. She recognises that dominant groups have a "vested interest in suppressing such thought" and for that reason she encourages women to engage in just such subversive work - in contexts where we're wanted or not, in communities that feel comforting, and in those we know to be strange and dangerous.

"By embracing a paradigm of race, class and gender as interlocking systems of oppression, Black feminist thought reconceptualizes the social relations of domination and resistance. ... Offering subordinate groups new knowledge about their own experiences can be empowering. But revealing new ways of knowing that allow subordinate groups to define their own reality has far greater implications" (Collins, 1990, p. 222).

The process of conducting research is especially difficult for Black women because they occupy an 'outsider-within' status. But Collins asserts that the unique 'insider-outsider' position of the marginalized Black feminist researcher allows her to recognise consequences that those who are part of the dominant culture are unable to comprehend and observes:

"On certain dimensions Black women may more closely resemble Black men; on others, white women; and on still others Black women

may stand apart from both groups. ... the act of being simultaneously a member of a group and yet standing apart from it, forms an integral part of Black women's consciousness" (1990, p. 207).

It is important to remember that black people's lives are not confined to issues of racism, but are multidimensional. Troyna (1994a) warned against the danger of 'images of' studies of ethnic minority teachers which he argued, in their attempt to compensate for the missing variable of 'race', ran the risk of ethnicism' by presenting the ethnic communities in question as 'other' against a white norm. He further argued that such studies:

"have a tendency to degenerate into essentialism and reductionism. This means that racism - in institutional, systematic, interpersonal or ideological forms - is adduced as a monocausal model or explanation for, say, the low representation of ethnic minorities in the teaching profession. ... Yet ... racism articulates with gender, class and age in a complex, sometimes contradictory and often nonsynchronous ways" (Troyna, 1994a, p. 331).

I have tried to avoid this dilemma by allowing the concerns of black teachers to strongly influence this research and by considering how racism operates without separating it artificially from other structural constraints. I acknowledge that racism, imperialism, class and gender oppression are connected to each other and determine, in very different patterns, the lives

of all and each of us. By placing the teachers' experiences at the centre of the research I have tried to build up a picture of black women teachers' professional lives, operating in a society structured by 'race' and gender at several levels. I have accepted the label the women gave themselves as a marker of their awareness of their race /gender position. The group is one to which "I", the researcher, belong and it is precisely because I belong that this is the focus of this research. We have a shared career history. As a South Asian woman researcher I was in the double position of being a member of the White Western academy, which traditionally oppresses and marginalises through racism the communities to which I belong. This led to the difficulties of trying to 'both step out of and also draw on one's subjective awareness of the social, economic and political subordination of one's community' (Marshall, 1994, p.109). For Anima Mama (1991) this necessarily entails a holistic, historical and community-oriented approach that supports the struggles of Black women. I adopted an active 'insider-outsider' position and had endeavoured to pursue my research from a black feminist perspective which shared the common principles of equity, non-hierarchy, negotiation, emancipation, subjectivity and reciprocity. Like Casey, I also have tried to portray the Asian women teachers as 'authors of their own life history narratives, as "authors of their own lives," and, just as importantly, as authors of social change' (Casey, 1993, p. xiv).

Ethical and methodological issues surrounding the use of life history in social research

Life history research explicitly depends upon stories: as data, in analysis, and in presentation. The articulation of voice through the telling of a story is undoubtedly problematic and it is worth considering some of the methodological and ethical dilemmas that can arise while conducting a life history research.

The act of telling one's story is an act of creating one's self. A life (the story of a life) is created in the consciousness to give order and meaning to events that have no "intrinsic or immanent relations" (Freeman, 1993, p. 95). Stories mean nothing on their own. What gives them their meanings are the 'interactions which emerge around story telling' (Plummer, 1995, p. 20) and these interactions include the interpretations made by tellers and hearers. But tellers and hearers (i.e. participants and researchers) are bound by discourse structures to a limited range of expression and understanding. These discourse conventions shape, and in many ways limit, how we construct our own versions of a life (life as experienced), how we organise and express ourselves through story (life as told), and how such a life can be understood and represented in text (Emihovich, 1995; McLaren, 1993). As Maynard & Purvis note:

"The notion of experience needs to be problematized, since individuals do not necessarily possess sufficient knowledge to explain everything about their lives. Accounts will vary depending on such factors as where respondents are socially positioned, memory etc. There is no such thing as 'raw' or authentic experience which is unmediated by interpretation" (1994, p. 6).

Language itself fundamentally affects that which we can know through the process of life history. As Denzin argues:

"there is no clear window into the inner life of a person, for any window is always filtered through the glaze of language, signs, and the process of signification. And language, in both its written and spoken forms, is always inherently unstable, in flux, and made up of the traces of other signs and symbolic statements. Hence there can never be a clear, unambiguous statement of anything, including an intention or a meaning" (1989, p. 14).

The life as told may be different at different times, with a different audience, or when told with a different purpose. Life stories may contain errors and bias in the selection of evidence on the part of the respondent. As Hammersley (1992) contends that as the life history is based on social (re)construction the potential exists for 'error as well as truth' (p. 193) in the process of retelling. So life history "data are subject to incompleteness,

personal bias and selective recall" (Butt, Raymond, McCue & Yamagishi, 1992, p. 91). While accounts may be a genuine reflection of a person's experiences, there might be circumstances or events which surrounded these, of which the person was not aware; the interviewees may be untruthful either intentionally or unintentionally. And as Burgess (1985) argues:

"At root the problem is to retain and defend the authenticity of the participant's account. But to do this such problems of lapsed memory or partial or selective recall must be faced" (Burgess, p. 147).

Personal narratives – the stories we tell ourselves to explain our experiences – are not 'mirror of a world out there', nor an exact record (Riessman, 1993, p. 64). They are incomplete, inconsistent, subjective and contain an inevitable bias, both in the selection and the presentation of content (Stanley, 1993, p. 48). It is the nature of this bias that is important (Crawford et. al, 1992, p. 153). For instance, when the teachers are talking about some past painful experiences, some other perspectives and values have been absorbed as the time has gone on; as Thomas observed 'From the present "facts" are singled out for meaning they may not have had' (1992, p. 18). One has to acknowledge that informants 'may not have observed all relevant events, may use concepts which are insufficiently clear, may misdescribe what has been seen or heard or made false generalisations etc' (Foster et al., 1996, p. 62). People do, however, reveal

truths when talking about their lives, even if sometimes they lie, forget, exaggerate, get things wrong. The unintentional misrepresentation, inconsistency or discrepancy happens for various reasons but the result is the same and that is that people's various life stories do not provide objective 'truths' about 'reality'. Rather, 'they give us instead the truth of our experiences' (Personal Narratives Group, 1989, p. 261).

Etter-Lewis (1991) argues that life history data can be a way of hiding or 'screening out uncomfortable emotions that accompany painful experiences' (p. 47). But the kind of information that was revealed to me by my interviewees indicated that rather than life history being a deliberate attempt to hide or suppress 'uncomfortable emotions', it was a way of bringing to the surface emotions which had often been subconsciously buried over a number of years.

Validity - notions of truth

Can subjective accounts be valid beyond individual interpretation? There are concerns relating to representativeness, reliability and validity of life history materials. LeCompte and Goetz (1992, pp.31-61) make the important point that as ethnographic research is very different in kind to experimental research, consequently, the issues of reliability and validity need not be defined, or even applied, in the same ways by these two differing approaches. The validity of the life history materials, that is whether they are

a true and accurate reflection of a situation from that person's viewpoint, can be established by employing some form of triangulation technique. For example, life history data can be compared with documentary sources, or data obtained from other sources or some form of respondent validation could be approached. Instead of speaking about validity of life history accounts one could ask instead about their authenticity, that is the extent to which they ring true, the ways in which the researcher feels that they are legitimate, authentic accounts. Mischler (1990) suggested that in place of validation one should consider the 'trustworthiness' of observations reported, interpretations offered, and conclusions drawn. Life history as research is about understanding how the research process illuminates our ways of knowing (Munro, 1991). It 'is to be regarded as providing insights into the subjective perspective of an "individual"' (Ribbens, 1993, p. 87). If we accept research as an engagement with matters which are partial, contested, inter-subjective and illusory (as is all truth) [Munro, 1991] and that accounts need to be analysed in their specificity and not taken as representative samples of universally agreed categories, the accounts can be said to be valid. 'There are no general rules of validation that can impose an abstract order on the confusion and complexity of daily life' (M. Blair, J. Holland with S. Sheldon, 1995, p. 289).

I tried to validate the interview materials by sending the complete transcript to the respondent. Then I followed it with a second interview when I discussed with them the summary of the main themes and emerging

categories. The subsequent interviews were used mainly to focus upon themes and issues which emerged. It also offered the subject the opportunity of adding further information and me the opportunity of checking on what data have been collected. I also had the opportunity to cross-reference some of the data obtained from an individual teacher with my other interviewees' accounts.

It has long been argued that what passes for rationality, truth and objectivity is contested ground and that, in practice, most accounts compound imagination and fact and that this does not 'weaken the usefulness of a text for perspective analysis' (Holloway, 1989, p. 15). Data is always open to question, truth is an historical product and there are multiple versions (Purvis, 1987, p. 71). All claims that one particular version is the truth should be regarded as deeply suspect (Thomas, 1992, p. 4). Faraday and Plummer also argue

"the life history technique is grounded in a pragmatist approach to knowledge in which the ultimate test of truth is experience. The life history technique ... is not so much concerned with grasping the totality either of structures or personality as they are concerned with depicting the immediate lived experience as actual members in everyday society grasp them. These experiences shift and change from context to context, and criterion of truth here is the grasping objectively of these experiences. Hence one may be objective in

one's portrait of the truth of any world view, but this is not to say that this world view makes any claim to being any kind of universal truth" (1979, p. 779).

It is important to note that qualitative data are always open to alternative explanations. It is the weight of the evidence that makes an analysis more or less convincing, and this judgement will vary between different readers. There is no single standard, no 'significance test' for qualitative data. As Becker reminds us, 'in the empirical sciences there is never compelling proof there is only plausible proof' (quoted by Gillborn, 1995, p. 54). And 'no set of guidelines or conditions will ever be sufficient to rule out alternative explanations. At best an ethnographer (like all social scientists) can only persuade the reader to agree that the explanation is a plausible one, but not that it is the only plausible one' (Brewer, 1994, p. 243, original emphasis).

Critiques by Peter Foster, Martin Hammersley and Roger Gomm (1996) challenge the conclusions of several qualitative research projects (for example, Wright, 1986, 1992a; Mac an Ghail, 1988; Troyna, 1991a; Gillborn, 1990b; Riddell, 1992) that expose inequalities in schools. But according to Troyna, Foster and his colleagues have taken "on the mantle of 'methodological purists'. Their purpose is to explicate the allegedly dubious empirical grounds on which claims of racial inequality in education have been mounted" (1993, p. 167). Foster et al 'accuse antiracist researchers of

distorting their data in order to sustain their political convictions' (Troyna, 1995, p. 396). They argued:

"many of the claims made in that literature cannot be sustained on the evidence currently available. ... research ... often lacks clarity about what is to count as discrimination. ... it generally fails to establish that systematic discrimination has taken place ... analysis of observed incidents and/or of informants' accounts is often speculative, failing to take account of significant threats to its validity" (Foster et al, 1996, p. 174).

They concluded that 'we need to be able to answer the question of when evidence is sufficient to accept a claim as true' (1996, p .38) and no published study has, as yet, proven the existence of racism 'beyond reasonable doubt'. But as Troyna argues the 'data in favour of the proposition that racism is institutionalised in schools derive from a range of qualitative and quantitative studies in schools up and down the country', yet 'their legitimacy and veracity has been challenged ... by the 'Methodological Purists'" (1995, p. 401).

Foster et al argue that research findings must be 'sufficiently' plausible and credible to be accepted as true. They define 'plausibility' as 'the relationship between a claim and existing knowledge, the validity of which is currently taken to be beyond reasonable doubt' (1996, p. 38), and 'credibility' as 'the

likelihood that the process which produced the claim is free of serious error' ((bid, p. 38). But Gillborn maintains that

“In practice Foster, Gomm and Hammersley tend to apply crude and absolutist notions of plausibility and credibility ... What seems plausible and credible to some, might appear to be wildly exaggerated, or even politically motivated propaganda, to others. The criteria for plausibility and credibility cannot be divorced from the assumptions of the individual critic, whose views may reflect particular political, methodological, class-based, gendered and racialized assumptions” (cited in Connolly and Troyna, 1998, p. 41).

Troyna argues that Foster et al seem to 'require research on social injustice to be based on data which are not amenable to alternative interpretations' (1993, p. 168) and set some unattainable requirements which can never be fulfilled. In this 'unequal world' research takes place in social settings where power relations are stratified by class, 'race', gender, and other structural characteristics.

Foster and his colleagues (1996) also argued that 'the interpretations presented, relating to a relatively small number of incidents, are frequently used as grounds for generalisations which cannot be sustained. ... What we find in this literature, then, is a general tendency to overinterpret the data available' (p. 174). I disagree with the view that because of the limited

number of people involved in a life history study, generalisations are impossible. It is extremely unlikely that any study in social science could produce the same results, even if it was desired. What does, and should, occur is that we build upon, adapt and extend previous work. Connolly maintains that 'ethnographers can still make claims about ... a particular social group ... and ... it is important that they do fully consider the wider application of their work' (1998, p. 130). Incidentally, it is worth pointing out that it is possible to theorise from one life history study and one can also generalise from the developed theory (Becker, 1970). Armstrong also believes that 'it is possible to generalise to one type by showing that several life histories are basically similar' (1987, p. 17). Bertaux has suggested that recurrent patterns 'yield ... a direct access to the level of social relations which constitute ... the very substance of sociological knowledge' (1981, p. 31). He also argues that life history studies are representative at the sociological (theoretical) level. I would argue that whilst my study of twenty Asian women teachers may not be considered representative of the total population of Asian women teachers, the data that I have collected provides a valuable insight into the experiences of black women teachers. I agree with Connolly, who asserts that

'Rather than producing generalizations, ... ethnographic research should be concerned with identifying and understanding particular social processes and practices and the specific sets of causal relations that exist within them' (Connolly and Troyna, 1998, p. 123)

My main aim in this study was to identify and explain causal social processes and to understand why certain individuals and groups experienced what they did and behaved in a particular way. My intention was to focus on the meanings which the teachers themselves attached to actions, events and choices in their lives and work.

Foster et al (1996) further argued that the 'discovery' of discrimination has been supported in certain studies (for example, Wright, 1986; Mac an Ghail, 1988; Gillborn, 1990a) by the selective interpretation of informants' accounts and by placing considerable reliance on informants' accounts. They suggest that research findings in the area of educational inequalities need more careful scrutiny than they typically receive. But according to Gillborn (1998) 'one of the basic requirements of critical qualitative research' is to seek and include in the analysis, 'the perspectives of a range of participants' (cited in Connolly and Troyna, p. 52). Whilst it may be considered difficult to substantiate the subjective experiences of the teachers I interviewed without having access to any other documents, I found some of the teachers' statements were verified by other black teachers who were present in any given situation at the school. For example, some of the teachers referred to incidents which had taken place in particular schools where other black teachers were also present. On each occasion the telling was the same in relevant respects. If these occurrences were untruths, they could not have been remembered and told in the way that they were. It could be argued that events whilst experienced individually, were often apparent to others and so

the potential for misrepresentation on the part of the narrator was minimised. So some triangulation has been possible when a number of teachers have recalled the same episodes in their working lives which they have seen as significant. Since a number of teachers have also worked together or have been in the same formal or informal networks, it has also been possible to compare individual teacher's perceptions with those of the others, for example, in accounts of school ethos and management approaches. And despite the lack of additional data, I do not believe that the data I present is deficient. It is also important to note that as this was a life history study my interest was to find out how these teachers experienced their teaching situation and how they reacted to it. I am mindful of the fact that whilst triangulation 'attempts to relate different sorts of data in such a way as to counteract various possible threats to the validity of our analysis', it does not necessarily 'produce a more complete picture' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.199). As Bertaux states that

“when the interviews bring again and again the same elements of a recognisable pattern, when subsequent interviews with new persons confirm its presence in every life, then the pattern may be considered not merely fantasy of the researcher ... but a structuring feature of the actual process” (1981, p. 134).

I feel that there is no ground for treating all subjective experience as untrue because through subjective experience it is possible to find objective

meaning. What I had tried to do was to present 'factual information' about these teachers' experiences by placing the weight of evidence on their own voices. The pattern, which emerged in the experiences of the teachers in this study, was important in validating their statements. I agree with Troyna who 'argues (unconditionally) that qualitative research provides the most sensitive tool for analysing the complex nature of racism' (1993, p. 168).

There is no doubt that participants are vulnerable when they agree to enter into relationships with life history researchers. The moral dimension of this inherently close and subjective involvement requires researchers to fulfil certain obligations to their informants. On the most basic level, "Researchers have an obligation to protect people from being managed and manipulated in the interest of research" (Measor & Sikes, 1992, p. 211). Feminists have also raised questions about the ethics of research which, having generated all sorts of issues in respondents' minds, then abandons them to come to terms with these on their own. Clark and Haldane (1990) used the term the 'scientific equivalent of slash and burn agriculture' (p. 143) to describe situations where after an interview, the subject may be left with her emotional life in pieces and no one to help put them back together. Kirkwood (1993) reveals that one of her informants declined to return for a second interview because she had found the first so traumatic. Paul Thompson recommends remaining a while after the interview is over to 'give a little of yourself' (1988, p. 211). I was quite flexible during the interview sessions and often there was a good deal of laughter after the tape recorder was

turned off. I also tried to invite the respondents to come and join the local black teachers' group.

Another concern is how to balance individual stories and social-historical contexts within the text. Life historians not only need to take special care in establishing relationships with their subjects but also in constructing their texts, and in framing the presentations of their texts for readers. As Clandinin and Connelly observe:

"Researcher relationships to ongoing participant stories shape the nature of field texts and establish the epistemological status of them. ... These intensive relationships require serious consideration of who we are as researchers in the stories of participants, for when we become characters in their stories, we change their stories" (1994, pp. 419-422).

Lisa Smulyan framed the issue as follows:

"How do we place the individual within her social context and demonstrate the powers and forces that shape her experience and also provide a rich description of her story, her shaping of her world?" (cited in Hatch et al., 1995, p. 120)

So life historians need to provide a tapestry rich with threads of time, place, character and context.

In writing up life history research we are revealing the experiences of real people, in real situations, struggling with real problems (Hauser, 1995; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). It involves 'real' people, not just texts, so 'we need to pay the closest attention to the aftermath of the research' (Lightfoot, 1983). Grumet (1991) warns that the personal nature of such work can put the participant at risk. Like all research, one must observe confidentiality and anonymity of subjects, respecting their individuality and wishes. It is important that the subject be protected and fictitious names be used. Settings and respondents should not be identifiable in print and they should not suffer harm or embarrassment as a consequence of research. As Bulmer (1982) puts it "Identities, locations of individuals and places are concealed in published results, data collected are held in anonymized form, all data kept securely confidential" (p. 225). Nevertheless, as I was dealing with a small particular community, it would certainly have been possible for subjects to recognise not just themselves, but other participants in the same study, so I could not guarantee for sure the anonymity of the subjects. I was aware that all the teachers agreed to take part in the study because they placed their trust in me that I would not 'mis-use' what they were saying or misinterpret them in the process of writing. Yet, as Stanley and Wise argue the written product of any research needs to be recognised as a

construction and not a representation of the reality it is about, with the writer having considerable power over the researched:

"Within writing, researchers have the last - or rather the penultimate (for readers have the last) - say about what 'the research' meant, found, concluded. Writing dispossesses the researched. ... when it comes to writing researchers can - and in a sense ultimately must - take responsibility for the research carried out" (Stanley & Wise, 1993, p. 218).

How I tried to address some of these difficulties will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. I believe that as a researcher we should ensure that we are honest about our findings. The researcher should not offer the findings as the whole truth or as being able to speak for everyone. The way in which we write up our research findings should not present minority groups as 'Other'. Above all, researchers 'must not only document what is going on but intervene and challenge any injustices which their inquiries have uncovered' so as to 'contribute towards social change in and through their research activities' (Troyna, 1995, p. 397- 401).

Chapter Five

In the Field

Introduction

The focus, in the present chapter, is to give a brief description of the research informants and to describe the conduct of the research and the analysis of the data. It also prepares the ground for the presentation, in the following chapter, of the fieldwork data. The rest of this chapter will be organised under the following headings:

- **Research informants**
- **Dilemmas of the researcher's role: What I did**
- **Data collection: The research interview**
- **Data Analysis**
- **Data Presentation**

Research Informants

The sample from which the interview data were derived for the research includes 10 first generation and 10 second generation South Asian women teachers. The term first generation refers to those Asian teachers who were

educated in their country of origin and may even have taught elsewhere before arriving in the UK as adults. They mostly migrated to the UK in the sixties and seventies and some of them had to go to British universities and colleges to improve their academic standing or to do in-service work. The term second generation refers to those Asian teachers who had either their full schooling or most of their schooling in the UK, and who also went to British polytechnics or universities to gain academic and professional qualifications. Brief descriptions of these teachers as they were at the time of the interview are given at the end of this section. Due to a moral and ethical responsibility to protect their interests I have to maintain a promise of confidentiality. So it was very hard for me to decide what information to give so as to safeguard their anonymity but also satisfy possible curiosities. In the end I decided to include the information about how they had acquired their teaching certificate (first generation teachers), the type of educational institution in which they were working and how long they had been working as a qualified teacher, though I was aware of the fact that some of the first generation teachers worked for a considerable length of time as educational assistant, language aid, nursery supervisor, instructor etc. before gaining their qualified teacher status.

I approached the authority in 1989 for information on Asian women teachers, but as the authority did not keep data on the ethnic origin of teachers, it was difficult to locate all the Asian women teachers. I started with my own networks of teachers and then worked outwards, using what has

been called the 'snowball sampling' method i.e. the sample is developed through friends of friends and recommendation (Coleman, 1958). In the end I had names of more teachers than I was able to take up. They cannot, in any sense, be considered to constitute a 'random' sample of Asian women teachers and I am making no claims for comprehensive generalisation.

Of the twenty teachers I interviewed, eleven were not known to me prior to the interview. In the research practice it has been considered more reliable, objective and legitimate to question people you 'don't' know than to question people you know, for example, friends. It is argued that telling friends some things about oneself may be considered risky and hence may not be told (Grumet, 1987). I made the initial contact by telephone rather than by letter. Explaining the research over the telephone allowed the teachers the opportunity to ask questions and voice their concerns immediately. I was then able to respond to them as an embodied person rather than an unknown correspondent. I discussed the objectives of the research with the teachers in an entirely open manner. I also told them that if they agreed to take part, we had to meet and talk about their career experiences. I did not elaborate as I believed that to emphasise the procedure to be followed early on in a research process, in which neither of the participants knew where it would take them, seemed something of a pre-emptive measure which might act to constrain the very forms of relationship that life- history work depends on. Complete confidentiality was assured to all of them and the fact that I knew several teachers in the group personally helped matters. All the

teachers I contacted by phone needed little, if any, persuasion to participate in the research. In fact, almost all of them expressed an interest in the project and I consider myself to have been extremely lucky and privileged to have got so agreeable and informative a research population so effortlessly.

A brief description of the Informants

The status of each teacher is shown as at the time of interview. The interviewees included teachers paid on the Standard Scale (S.S.) as well as teachers with incentive allowances "A" to "D". All the teachers names have been changed.

First generation teachers

Jasvinder S.S. + B (MGSS) Overseas (QTS given)

She qualified in India and taught for six years there. On arriving in Britain she was granted QTS and started working as a language teacher. But when she wanted to change to primary teaching she faced some difficulty. At the time of the interview she was working as an adviser at the Multicultural Group Support Service, in a Section 11 funded post. She had been teaching for more than twenty years.

Gita S.S. (Primary) Overseas (PGCE)

She was a fully qualified music teacher from India. In the UK, she worked as a music instructor for a long time, and then she decided to do the PGCE to gain qualified teacher status. At the time of the interview she was working as a temporary part-time primary teacher- 0.5, the other 0.5 time she was working permanently with [...] Centre for Performing Arts. She had been teaching for three years after PGCE.

Neeta S.S.(Primary) Overseas (B.Ed)

She did her degree in India. She tried for nearly two years but was unable to find any teaching job. Then she did O and A levels so that she could go to a University of her choice to do her B.Ed. But unfortunately she was not accepted at that University. She did a four-year B.Ed course to gain qualified teacher status. At the time of the interview she was working in a primary school. She had been teaching for more than ten years.

Soma S.S. (Primary) Overseas (QTS given)

She was a graduate from India. She was given QTS but as she did not start working straightaway, she had difficulties later on in having her qualifications recognised. Finally she was granted QTS. At the time of the interview she had been working as a primary teacher for less than five years.

Meena S.S. (MGSS) Overseas (B.ED)

She was a qualified teacher from overseas but was unable to find any teaching post. When she decided to do a four year B.Ed course she realised that she could not afford financially. Eventually she did a two year B.Ed course. At the time of the interview she was working at the Multicultural Group Support Service, as a Section 11 teacher. She had been teaching for more than ten years.

Parveen S.S. (Secondary) Overseas (Licensed)

She was a graduate from India. She had to work as a language instructor for a long time before taking the licensed teacher route to gain QTS. At the time of the interview she was working in a secondary school as a humanities teacher. She had been teaching for less than five years.

Ranjit S.S. (Primary) Overseas (QTS given)

She was a fully qualified teacher from India. She was given a DES number and at the time of the interview was working in a primary school. She had been teaching for more than fifteen years.

Mumtaz S.S. (Primary) Overseas (Licensed)

She was qualified overseas but was not granted a DES number. She had to go through the licensed teacher scheme to gain QTS. At the time of the interview she had been teaching in a primary school for more than five years.

Ravinder S.S. (MGSS) Overseas (Licensed)

She was qualified overseas and had to take the licensed teacher route to gain QTS. At the time of the interview she was working at the Multicultural Group Support Service, as a Section 11 teacher. She had been working for more than five years.

Hina S.S. (Primary) Overseas (Licensed)

She was qualified overseas but was not given the DES number. She had to take the licensed teacher route to qualify. At the time of the interview she was teaching in a primary school. She had been working for more than five years.

Second generation teachers

Sarandip S.S. + B (MGSS)

She was born and brought up in the UK. She did her degree and training in the UK. At the time of the interview she was working as an adviser in the Multicultural Group Support Service, a Section 11 funded post. She had been working for more than ten years.

Neelum Deputy Head (Acting)

She came to this country while young. She trained as a teacher in the UK. At the time of the interview she was working as an acting deputy head in a primary school. She had been teaching for more than ten years.

Yasmin S.S. + B (MGSS)

She came to this country as a teenager and did her degree and teacher training in the UK. At the time of the interview she was working as an adviser in the Multicultural Group Support Service, in a Section 11 funded post. She had been teaching for more than fifteen years.

Surinder S.S. +B (MGSS)

She was born and trained as a teacher in the UK. She was secondary trained and had taught in two different comprehensive schools in the authority. Lack of promotion prospects had forced her to accept a job at the Multicultural Group Support Service as a Section 11 teacher. At the time of the interview she was working in the Curriculum Review Group. She had been teaching for more than fifteen years.

Shazia S.S. + A (Permanent supply)

She was born and educated here. She had worked for ILEA for several years before moving to [...] LEA. She had had difficulty in finding a suitable job here and had tried unsuccessfully for a number of deputy head positions. At the time of the interview she was working as a permanent supply team teacher. She had been teaching for more than ten years.

Bhavini Deputy Head (Special)

She was born and trained in the UK. She was specially committed to working with children with special needs. At the time of the interview she was the deputy head of a special school. She had been teaching for more than ten years.

Nazish S.S. (Primary)

She came to the UK in her early teens and went to college here. She was a secondary trained science teacher. She had a lot of difficulty in finding a suitable job. At the time of the interview she was working in a primary school. She had been teaching for more than fifteen years.

Amarjit S.S. +C (Teachers' Centre)

She was born and educated in the UK. She had worked in industry for several years before becoming a teacher. At the time of the interview she was working as an adviser, a Section 11 funded post. She had been teaching for more than fifteen years.

Kuldeep S.S. (Secondary)

She was born and educated in the UK. At the time of the interview she was teaching in a secondary school. She had been teaching for more than five years.

Anju S.S. (Secondary)

She was born and educated in the UK. At the time of the interview she was teaching in a secondary school. She had been teaching for less than five years.

Dilemmas of the researcher's role: What I did

"The fact that the researcher has a self, engages in interaction, and interprets and imbues meaning gives rise to a number of dilemmas in the researcher role. If handled sensitively, however, these can be a source of strength" (Woods, 1996, p. 54).

I now move on to look at how I made strategic use of my insider status at each stage in the actual process of carrying out the research. Rather than discard my own experienced world as a source of reliable information and take on the conceptual frameworks and relevance of a discipline which cannot deal with personal experiences – I made my own personal experience and perspective central. When we use 'ourselves as our own source of evidence' (Callaway, 1981) 'the knower can be part of what is known' (DuBois, 1983). I have already attempted (in Chapter Two) to acknowledge and explore the role of my own personal, professional and political experiences in constructing the research project. Now I want to make explicit the effect of my experiences and my reasoning procedures

upon the research and upon analysis. As Myrdal argues that only when value 'premises are stated explicitly it is possible to determine how valid the conclusions are' (1944, p. 1058).

According to Dorothy Smith to understand the everyday world of women as it is known by the women who continually create and shape it within the materialist context, the researchers must 'participate as subjects in the orders of ruling' (1992, p. 96). I had examined the experiences of the teachers in the same way that I had done mine. This self-reflective method of constructing knowledge was more compelling and reliable than standard, detached ways of knowing (May, 1993; Stanley, 1985).

"The work of inquiry in which I am engaged proceeds by taking this experience of mine, this experience of other women ... and asking how it is organised, how it is determined, what the social relations are which generate it" (Dorothy Smith, 1979, p. 135).

Based on my experience I drew up a list of some important hypothesised variables. This process is often called 'judgement sampling' (Burgess, 1984) or 'strategic sampling' (Thompson, 1988). These variables were: to include both first and second generation teachers; to include teachers from both primary and secondary sectors; to include teachers of different ages and at different stages of their careers. The biggest problem I encountered was deciding when to stop. By the end of the fieldwork period I had names of

quite a large number of teachers each of whom would have fitted my criteria of variables. On a number of occasions my imagination was simply caught by something I was told by a teacher about an individual teacher and I decided to interview her.

"One of the deepest lessons of oral history is the uniqueness, as well as the representativeness, of every life story. There are some so rare and vivid that they demand recording, whatever the plan"

(Thompson, 1988, p. 131).

Data Collection - The Research Interview

From 1989 to 1994 I conducted semi-structured life history interviews with this group of 20 Asian women teachers working in one education authority in the Midlands. My choice of very loosely structured, open and informal interviewing was made on the basis of its advantages for allowing teachers to talk about their experiences in terms of their own 'frames of reference' and to introduce and develop themes that were important to them. I believe that it is ethically and politically necessary to provide a framework allowing research respondents as much control over the interviewing process as possible. In my case conversation seemed nearer than interview to describing accurately what had happened. During these times teachers were encouraged to structure their own narratives – telling their story in whatever way they chose, moving at their own pace and setting their own

limitations on what information they wanted, or were willing to share. They remained, as I had, totally in control of what they revealed about their experiences at all times. This seemed highly appropriate in accessing knowledge that is personal and which other methods have not readily elicited – precisely because of its personal and private nature. Paget (1983) emphasising the 'conversational' character of intensive interviewing, discussed how an interviewer and respondent collaborate in a 'search procedure'. The researcher is actively involved with respondents, so that together they are constructing fuller answers to questions that cannot always be asked in a simple, straightforward way. I felt that the conversational method provided a dialogical interaction between the teachers and myself which overcame subject-object dualism and where the process of research itself became transformative (Gitlin et. al., 1993). The method also helped teachers to become active subjects within their lived experience where 'genealogies of context' (Goodson, 1992) were shared. The resulting data were characteristically rich, evocative, highly localised and subjective.

One-to-one conversation had a number of advantages. It was easier to manage; issues could be kept relatively confidential; analysis was more straightforward in that only one person's set of responses were gathered at any one time. The conversations took place in a variety of settings, including respondents' homes, teachers' centres, respondents' schools and my house. These conversations, which occurred over several sittings and lasted

between one and a half to four hours, were taped, with the respondent's permission, as the verbal accounts were ultimately the only source of data and thus had to be accurate. So tape recording of the conversation assured completeness of the verbal interaction and provided material for reliability checks, transcription, and playback. Also observational field notes, concerning such things as informants' facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, and other non-verbalised social interactions were all noted very carefully, describing the setting in which the interview took place. Often these details proved as important as the interview itself. For example, one teacher stood up and paced back and forth while describing an unpleasant incident in the playground. As she walked from one corner to the other, looking and pointing to the outside garden, it became clear that she had relived this moment many times. In another instance, while describing a sexual harassment incident the teacher kept on covering her face with both hands as if she was ashamed to be seen. Sometimes conversations at the beginning or end of meetings, when the tape recorder had been switched off, yielded very rich data. Their perceptions of reality were expressed as feelings, thoughts and beliefs.

Several teachers spoke bilingually, using their mother tongue. I was not sure whether this had any serious significance or not. But what I observed was that they used mother tongue especially while describing anger and frustration. I felt that being able to describe their strong feelings of emotions in their own language facilitated a greater level of rapport between the

teachers and myself. But when it came to transcribing, I was in a dilemma whether to quote the actual Hindi/Bengali sentences, or try and translate them in English. In the end I decided to translate them as best as I could even though I was aware that it added another level of interpretation. Whilst transcribing I also noted that they – in varying degrees – slipped in and out of using spoken grammatical structures: incomplete sentences, re-affirmations, for example, 'you know', 'sort of like' etc.; what this showed in this particular context was our comfortableness with each other. Each teacher was given a copy of her transcript to alter anything she felt was inaccurate or wanted removed. None of them changed their scripts. I have not 'corrected' the grammatical structure of their speech when using quotes.

I only intervened to ask questions for clarification, to invite interpretation and analysis, to answer direct questions or to share experiences. If the interviewee did not wish to respond to any particular question(s), no pressure - subtle or otherwise - was put on them to respond.

Some studies have found that the colour of the interviewer does have an impact on the data collected. For example, black people have been found to express more radical opinions about their lives when interviewed by a black interviewer than when interviewed by a white one (May, 1993). I would argue that 'race' matching may not necessarily produce more reliable data. But the particular combination of my gender, 'race' and shared experiences and meanings with the teachers gave me a passport into their 'stories'. By

being an 'insider', someone who identified with and sympathised with them, I became a part of their conversation. 'I have already lived what I am researching' (Greed, 1990, p. 147) and that feeling played an important role in establishing my relationship with the teachers and deepened the area of trust with them. As soon as it was established that we had a shared experience of events and a shared vocabulary for discussing them, teachers seemed to open up and 'became warm and eager to talk' (Finch, 1984, p. 79). I was surprised by the teachers' willingness to trust me. The more I investigated deeper and deeper into teachers' careers, the more I gained insights into 'individuals coming to terms with imperatives in the social structure' (Goodson, 1981, p. 74). Although it could be argued that being an 'insider' I adopted an unquestioning stance but I tried not to 'enter the field with preconceptions' (Denzin, 1978b, p. 10, quoted in Patton, 1990, p. 24), and allowed the teachers to 'tell it as they see it' (ibid). I was conscious of the need to be critical throughout my fieldwork as well as in the data analysis stage. In this I followed Casey's example:

"Essential to my approach is a respect for the authenticity and integrity of the narrator's discourse. The speaker is seen as a subject creating her own history, rather than an object of research" (Casey, cited in Goodson, 1992, p. 189).

I feel that my own identity, both personal and professional, had a significant impact on the teachers I interviewed. There was an assumption amongst

them that the need for an elaboration of certain experiences, like sexism and racism, was often unnecessary because it was part of my experience too. Also being 'empirically literate', that is, already familiar with the phenomenon, setting and social organisation under study and, as Riemer points out, being an insider acted 'as a built-in truth check' (1977, p. 474), a form of triangulation.

"Indeed, the gender and ethnic solidarity between researcher and researched welds that relationship into one of co-operation and collaboration that represents a personal commitment and also contribution to the interests of women in general (e.g., in giving voice to "hidden women", in generating the "emancipatory praxis", and in seeing the field settings as "sites of resistance"). In this sense the personal is related to the ethical, the moral, and the political standpoint. And you do not rip off your sisters" (M. Punch, p. 89, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

The teachers had plenty of interesting things to say about their experiences and consequently some of the interviews were relatively long. Sometimes I had to go back and talk to the interviewees three or four times as they insisted that they had not said all they wanted to. I had done that in seven cases but after about three or four sessions in each case, I felt that I had to stop. I stopped because not only it was time consuming, (mainly on my part, as the teachers did not think that I was taking their 'time', at least that was

what I was told), but also no new material or thoughts were being generated (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). I must mention here that even though I did not continue interviewing them, I did not 'abandon' my interviewees. As a member of the centre group for black teachers, I encouraged those teachers to join the group so that they did not feel exploited or manipulated. I also tried to involve them in our frequent group discussions so as to share their worries and anxieties and make them a part of my research process. One point of significance to raise here is the fact that one of the 'spin-offs' of my doing research on Asian women teachers was that so many of my informants decided to use the centre group (their own admission!) afterwards and we still have regular meetings.

But sometimes, as Casey found "The intensity with which these women told their stories and the coherence which developed as they spoke meant that they often ended with a strong sense of closure, one which I felt I could not violate by asking further questions" (1993, p. 18), and I had to stop even though some of my questions were left unanswered.

I was particularly careful to point out to the teachers that my primary relationship with them was for research purposes and not for more general purposes of friendship. In practice, I found it difficult to adopt the role of 'marginal native' (Freilich, 1977) as I was interviewing teachers who shared experiences, beliefs, values and friends with me. So I tried to pursue themes jointly with the teachers and we shared our own memories of fear,

humiliation, confusion, unhappiness, dissatisfaction and the dynamics of intercultural encounters in the teaching profession.

As I have already mentioned before, I followed the feminist principle of self-disclosure, i.e. as they talked about their experiences, I imparted details about my own. In doing that I do not believe I was allowing 'interviewer bias' to distort the interview, the interviewee would have inevitably made their own judgements about my value position even if I had not been explicit. Song (in Song and Parker, 1995) considered it necessary to disclose personal information about herself in order to 'encourage a more open interview' (p. 249). Ribbens, however, highlights the difficulties that can arise from such disclosure 'it does seem to me that to talk about yourself completely openly in an interview situation might significantly shift what is said to you, in fairly unpredictable ways' (1989, p. 584). But I felt that self-disclosure, painful though it was at times, established my authority in the subject, positioned me as an equal and provided a very safe environment for the other teachers to talk about their experiences. In this I was following Griffiths and Smith (1987), who used their personal histories as the impetus and direction for their study, using a commonality of experience with their respondents to develop interview questions and to establish 'rapport' and move the interviews ahead. The self-disclosure helped me to gain access to more personal areas of data as I moved from the status of stranger to friend (Lather, 1986) and the data became 'a mutually shared knowledge, rooted in the intersubjectivity of the interaction' (Bertaux, 1981, p. 20). I also felt that

self-disclosure helped in generating solidarity among us (like Edwards, 1993, p. 192; Stanley and Wise, 1993) and facilitated a greater responsiveness to my research than I had previously envisaged. It led to discussions about how their and my experiences compared, ranging in type from "I didn't have this", or, "I know so many teachers who had the same problems" to "I used to think that it was only me, it was my failure. I didn't know that other people were affected the same way" and so on. In talking about our specific experiences we created a self-identity, consciously or subconsciously (Rosenwald and Ockenberg, 1992, p. 1). These teachers were very articulate, but felt denied of opportunities to have their voices heard and they could not resist the opportunity to discuss events that were so important to them.

I was frequently asked for my opinions and about my experiences (Like Oakley, 1981; Finch, 1984). Brannen (1988) feels that in one-to-one situations it is easy for the researcher to be drawn into the interviewee's problems, which can lead to emotional exhaustion on the part of the interviewer. Brannen suggests to remain 'silent yet sympathetic [which] is hard and yet it may be all that the individual can offer in the circumstances' (p. 560). The nature of life history research means opening up to public scrutiny deeply hidden feelings, painful aspects of a person's life which sometimes requires the listener to be extra sympathetic. So sometimes I had to listen to the injustices the teachers had encountered and I assumed the role of empathic listener. Contrary to my expectations, allowing my

informants time to talk to me using their own 'frames of reference' meant that I had to invest far more time than I could have ever have planned in advance. I had found that my research role had swayed between being a researcher and a counsellor and the fieldwork was very slow at times. Cotterill does not believe that 'the researcher has any role as a counsellor' (1992, p. 598). But Winstanley (1992) found that some research participants see the researcher as a counsellor. As a black woman I felt that I could not stand by without trying to help other black women, even if that help was only in the form of listening. I also tried to involve the teachers in the research process so that they felt that it was a collective enterprise. I am sure that the final result in terms of data was more rich and intricate due to my counselling role. I also felt that our interactions blurred 'the distinction between the [participant's] role as subject and as human being' (Reinharz, 1992, p. 264). Measor and Sikes raised one of the most important issues for this form of close and sympathetic involvement when they commented:

"One of the issues that emerged was the way that some of our respondents took advantage of the counselling potential of the interviewing sessions. There were some limited points of comparison with a Rogerian style of counselling, in that we listened, reflected back, asked questions, which encouraged people to reflect on their actions, and did not pass judgement. ... there is a responsibility there, ... it is a basic human responsibility to other people. We should not

initiate situations that we are not prepared to see through to their potential conclusion" (1992, p. 226).

Goodson (1992) had expressed concern over the therapeutic dimension of life history work:

"If the co-partners in a collaboration treat sessions as counselling or therapy sessions this has implications for the research study. ...

Counselling / therapy in short would push us in one direction, research in another" (pp. 246-247).

But I felt that my counselling role added to the richness of the interview material and served a therapeutic function not only for me but also for the teachers as they had often phoned asking me for advice on various issues and confided in me later on as well. I do not know whether there is some perfect model of researcher/ researched relation but most, if not all, of my interviewees had the same interest in and relation to our situation. I am not sure what the teachers wanted from me in return as I did not ask them at the time of the interview. But I am positive that being 'listened to' counted a lot for some of them as I found that almost all the interviews proceeded smoothly, much like a long, intense conversation. In the end I was able to establish intense, passionate connections with them and I often left the majority of the interviews with invitations to make social calls in the future. Cannon (1989) argues that even if the 'transition to friendship' (Oakley,

1981, p. 44) is not inevitable, lasting friendship can develop from research. Our membership of the local black teachers' group made it possible for us to meet afterwards - informally and socially. My experiences with the other teachers in this study have demonstrated how much women rely on each other for help and support.

Often the divergence and similarity of our opinions and experiences became a topic of discussion in itself. For example, one of my interviewees emphatically replied that she had not experienced any discrimination as an Asian woman. She had become a deputy head in a special school after nine years of teaching. Nevertheless she expressed the view that being the only Asian teacher in special education had acted as a spur for her, making the comment:

'I am as surprised as anyone to be where I am.'

Some of the informants appeared to be equally involved in the main objective of the research and we spent hours mulling over topics, findings and hunches, ironing out any errors of detail and interrogating the analysis. The collaboration was not consensual on either side, but was conducted in a spirit of constructive criticism. Throughout the five years of my fieldwork I continually asked the teachers directly about my latest ideas and theory and incorporated their feedback into my evolving analysis. The final analysis I developed draws heavily on the theoretical contributions of the teachers I

interviewed and to this end I believe that I had conducted a 'collective' piece of research.

Data Analysis

"The principal value of oral history is that its information comes complete with evaluations, explanations and theories, with selectivities and silences, which are intrinsic to its representation of reality" (Popular Memory Group, 1982, p. 228).

According to Harding

"The best feminist analysis ... insists that the inquirer her/himself be placed in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter, ... That is, the class, race, culture and gender assumptions, beliefs and behaviours of the researcher her/himself must be placed within the frame of the picture that she/he attempts to paint" (1987, p. 9).

But Woods (1986) refers to the process of 'washing your mind clean' when doing qualitative research. Whilst I would argue that this is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve in conceptualising a study, it is what I have attempted in the analysis of the data. In the analysis I have not assumed that each interviewee shares my understandings. Instead taking each transcript of their experiences I listed emerging themes within and across transcripts.

Whilst doing this, I also noted themes which were implicit within the data. My intention was to allow the participants in the research the opportunity to bring their own perspectives to the analysis and to allow them to interpret their own social situations. As the involvement of the pupils in Mac an Ghail's (1988, 1989) study was crucial in his study of black youths, I also structured my analysis around reflections, explanations, observations and theories offered by the teachers. My aim was to give black teachers an opportunity to speak for themselves; to find out what it felt like to be a black teacher within the context of a society and an education system which is structured by bias and discrimination. From a great abundance of very rich material I tried to categorise the data, using the teachers' narratives to substantiate the categories that they and I defined and identified. I used a comprehensive framework, grouping like with like and focusing on the themes considered to be primarily of interest to educationists and teachers. Ian Dey (1993) observes:

"it is possible to begin with categories which are based on a general comprehension of the data and proceed to a fuller and more detailed categorisation (Jones, 1985). The emphasis here is on a 'holistic' approach, attempting to grasp basic themes or issues in the data by absorbing them as a whole rather than by analysing them line by line. ... This approach is more feasible where the analyst already has a fair idea of what s/he is looking for in the data" (p. 104).

So the process of developing categories is one of continuous refinement. To categorise the data in a reliable way, it is necessary to clarify what to include and exclude. There is a need to follow a consistent approach and avoid arbitrary and ad hoc decisions. According to Ian Dey:

"Creating categories is both a conceptual and empirical challenge; categories must be 'grounded' conceptually and empirically. That means they must relate to an appropriate analytic context, and be rooted in relevant empirical material. Categories which seem fine 'in theory' are no good if they do not fit the data. Categories which do fit the data are no good if they cannot relate to a wider conceptual context. We could say that categories must have two aspects, an internal aspect - they must be meaningful in relation to the data - and an external aspect - they must be meaningful in relation to the other categories" (1993, pp. 96-7).

I had some idea in advance of the issues I wanted to pursue, but by the time I collected all the data (over more than five years), these categories had been considerably redefined and reformulated. As Nias (1991) remarks:

"The fact that I have worked for so long on the material has enabled my ideas to grow slowly, albeit painfully. They have emerged, separated, recombined, been tested against one another and against those of other people, been rejected, refined, re-shaped" (p. 162).

Making sense of a data is a very personal and individual process and though I speak from the position of an insider, I am giving my interpretation of my own and others' accounts. 'How far is it possible for ... [any] observer to "speak for" the observed?' (Walkerdine, 1991, p. 195). I acknowledge here that life histories inevitably emphasise the uniqueness of human experience and the open-ended way in which interviews were designed meant that analysis was a slow process. Even when some common themes were highlighted in the process of analysis, there were still difficulties in generalising from the accounts of these teachers as accessing the different domains of meaning generated by others was a difficult task. I knew that for a black feminist and anti-racist researcher, respondent accounts of racism could be a deeply emotional experience and it was important not to allow that to obscure an analysis of other processes which might be vital to an understanding of the complexity of teachers' experiences. To address this issue I have attempted to present a plural text – a collection of richly described examples of what teachers thought, said and did – which are not synthesised into a consensus. The different accounts confirm each other. As Bertaux points out 'each life story ... each piece of evidence should be made to contribute to the understanding of a given network of social relations' (1981, p. 40). He believes that the analysis is not complete until the network of social relations has been fully understood. I presented a great deal of the teachers' own accounts as direct quotes. It can be argued that this type of analysis enabled me to develop a wider understanding of Asian women's lives as practising teachers.

Most of the narratives displayed the hallmark of genuine expressions. These were full of heartfelt bitterness derived from the experience of racial and/or sexual discrimination, sometimes open, at other times veiled insult; of endeavour and failure, of involvement and alienation; and in a number of cases, of achievement and recognition after years of rejection or indifference. The teachers discussed a variety of topics, but I was struck by the similarity of the topics they chose to talk about. They talked about how they had responded to or made sense of their experiences within and outside the classroom and how they had developed some positive individual or collective strategies to combat the discrimination they faced in employment and so on. I had to put the teachers' "accounts" 'together in such a way as to construct an integrated and coherent whole, and to convey the feel and excitement participants associated with it' (Van Maanen, 1988, cited in Woods, 1996, p. 129); like Todorov, who observes:

"no utterance in general can be attributed to the speaker exclusively; it is the product of the interactions of the interlocution, and broadly speaking, the product of the whole complex social situation in which it occurred" (1984, p. 30).

The interview data is supplemented with my personal impressions and informal discussions with the teachers. I have tried to quote the teachers' conversation verbatim, as Patton argues:

"Direct quotations are a basic source of raw data in qualitative inquiry, revealing respondents' depth of emotion, the ways they have organised their world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions" (1990, p. 24).

I have changed the responses where I thought the reader might find it difficult to understand comments in that form, but only minimally, to enhance readability and comprehension, interspersed with some commentary which is there in order to provide the necessary contextual information. So the teachers' accounts of their experiences are presented as extensive, uninterrupted narratives quite liberally so that, following Casey's experiences, "the women's own words rang out loud and clear, creating significance within the virtual vacuum of research on black teachers" (Casey, 1993, p. 108).

As specific accounts, these do not claim to be true for all Asian women teachers, in all places and at all times. It is risky to conflate one set of experiences with the different experiences of other Asian women teachers. All my interviewees were working for one LEA. It is likely that other Asian women teachers employed in other shire counties, while sharing some of these experiences, would have very different stories to tell. So there are difficulties in generalising from the accounts of such a group. I should say at this point that the selection of comments for quotations was essentially a subjective exercise, but an attempt was made to give voice to differing

opinions and perspectives. I had also shown the draft of the research findings to some of my interviewees, both to check that my interpretations reflected their perceptions and concerns and to establish whether they were happy with the level of personal details presented. My over-riding aim was to be as comprehensive as possible in coverage. What I hope to achieve here is:

"to allow the black" teachers "to speak for" themselves about the "nature and various" manifestations of their experiences "rather than to read it, or analyse it, in terms of - theories borrowed whole from other" literature, "appropriated from without" (Gates, 1988, xix, cited in Casey, 1993).

"Thus, while apparently idiosyncratic and seemingly individual expressions can be observed in these narratives, the vocabulary which each woman has in common with other teachers in similar circumstances is considered to be more important for the purposes of this analysis. Bakhtin's notion of the password, 'known only to those who belong to the same social horizon' (Todorov, p.42) applies here, for important common verbal patterns do emerge within the narratives of each particular social group of teachers in particular social circumstances" (Casey, 1993, p. 26).

I placed the perceptions and experiences of these teachers at the centre- neither race nor gender was privileged - and analysed the data from a united and integrated perspective. The majority of the teachers expressed themselves neither as a black who happened to be a woman nor a woman who happened to be a black, but as an individual whose perspective encompassed the multiple elements of a complex identity. Referring to black discourse in general Gates remarks:

"our history often turns on a tension, a dialectic, between the private perceptions of the individual and the white public perceptions of that same individual" (1987, p. 37).

My intention was similar to Casey's, who asserts:

"the homogeneity routinely attributed to black women is, in fact, created by a white gaze which perceives her as 'a mute, visible object' (Johnson, 1989, p. 44). The 'complexities of (her) experience' have been 'subsume (d) into a tractable sign' which 'void(s) the possibility of meaning within the blackened shell of selfhood' (Benston, 1989, p. 156-157). To analyse the discourse of black women, therefore, we must recognise the ways in which their narratives challenge the dominant white meanings which have always already been constructed around their personal, work, and social relations" (1993, p. 111).

Data Presentation

In writing-up my data – life histories- I have used the pronouns, I, me, our, we. These are used to suggest that we- the respondents have possession of information and knowledge to which others may not have access and to signal that 'such knowledge is contextual, situational, and specific' as well as gendered and raced (Stanley, 1993, p. 49). There is a tendency now towards an exploration of emotionality as central to the feminist research process and sociological understanding (Cannon, 1989; Cotterill & Letherby, 1991; Stanley & Wise, 1990; Williams, 1990). Ellis (1991a, 1991b) made a plea for the use of one's emotional experience as a legitimate object of sociological research to be described, examined, and theorised. I have already mentioned how the impetus for the research had grown out of my own personal / emotional experiences. Emotional sociology is valid when it is a process of self-reflection and allows for the deconstruction of the research process. I have tried to collect, select and organise the data and write the accounts of the research from a 'reflective practitioner's' (Woods, 1996, p. 124) mode. Emotional sociology is a transformative process where the underlying meaning of the research is negotiated. According to Wilkins (1993) our emotional responses, if properly understood, have a

"sensitising, cognitive function which alerts us to the meanings and behaviours of others... Secondly a sophisticated sensibility, grounded

in our emotional responses, has an important interpretive function"
(p. 96).

I want to acknowledge here that the accounts from my informants and myself (in Chapter Two) are emotive and, to some extent, polemical but that does not render them non-objective, non-scientific and non-valuable. Jaggar (1989) points out 'emotion is an indispensable even if unrecognised part of all knowledge' (p. 6) and 'emotions may be helpful and even necessary rather than inimical to the construction of knowledge' (p. 146). I have presented the accounts of our experiences directly with passions, intensity and convictions which can, perhaps, be seen as being expressions of anger and hostility but that is certainly not the case. I agree wholeheartedly with Jaggar when she argued that:

"Emotions ... are ways in which we engage actively and even construct the world. They have both mental and physical aspects, each of which conditions the other. In some respects, they are chosen, but in others they are involuntary; they presuppose language and a social order. ... Like everything else that is human, emotions in part are socially constructed; like all social constructs, they are historical products, bearing the marks of the society that constructed them" (pp. 152-159).

What I wanted to ensure was that in making visible and recording the experiences of these Asian women teachers, I did not fall into the trap of informing the powerful about an oppressed group (Neal, 1995; Stacey, 1988). Instead I wanted to present their 'undoctored' stories in a way that would challenge the existing perceptions. As Jaggar (1989) commented:

"the grain of important truth in emotivism is its recognition that values presuppose emotions to the extent that emotions provide the experiential basis for values. If we had no emotional responses to the world, it is inconceivable that we should ever come to value one state of affairs more highly than another" (p. 153).

I agree with Hargreaves (1994) who asserts:

"much of the research and writing that has addressed the emotions of teaching has started less from teachers themselves and what they have to say than from preconstituted theoretical agendas and concepts that have then been applied to teachers and teaching. ... There has been rather less focus on how teachers themselves talk about the emotional dimensions of their work. ... as one scans accounts of teachers and their work, it is clear that teachers do talk extensively about their emotional responses to their work" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 141).

And I have tried to write the accounts in such a way so that our unadulterated 'voice is heard to speak throughout the construction of the story' (Day, 1991, p. 545, cited in Woods, 1996, p. 129), and where I am 'asking the reader to 're-live' the events emotionally with the writer' (Richardson, 1994b, p. 521, cited in Woods, 1996, p. 81).

Chapter Six

Research Findings

Introduction

I have already noted in the last chapter that I primarily attended to those issues which the teachers themselves emphasised. The criteria for finally selecting data for objectification was difference, conflict, contradiction, anomaly, gaps, and sameness, within and across transcripts. The issues emerging are not universal or eternal, they are grounded in the lived experiences of the teachers in this study. I had tried as faithfully as possible to emphasise those features the teachers chose to stress. The themes which emerged during the interview point to common perceptions and experiences and provide a basis from which the following generalisations can be made:

- **Gaining/ Achieving Recognition of qualifications (first generation teachers)**
- **Finding a teaching post (both first and second generation teachers)**
- **Career patterns, promotion prospects and professional development**

- **Professional difficulties - experiences of racism and racial discrimination- from educational authorities, white colleagues, parents and pupils**
- **Coping strategies**

The attitudes, opinions and perceptions of both first generation and second generation teachers were compared for all the above points. Also as my research data have a good deal in common with the CRE (1988), Ealing Inquiry (1988), MacDonald Inquiry (1989) and other research findings, I will refer to some of the major points of significance from those studies throughout this chapter.

Gaining / Achieving Recognition of Qualifications - first-generation teachers

My sample of ten first generation interviewees who had qualified overseas, included three who had been granted qualified teacher status and given DES numbers on request in the sixties and early seventies. The rest had to take additional courses - either PGCE or other courses designed for overseas qualified teachers in an institute of higher education to update their knowledge and skills. At a time when many English teachers had only two or three years training, not always to degree level, overseas qualified teachers were expected to have studied to masters level in their home countries before they were granted a DES number (Macdonald Inquiry, 1989, Chapter

23, p. 3). However all three who were granted a DES number, talked about the discrimination they had experienced particularly in terms of having their expertise valued. For instance, Jasvinder told me:

"I was a fully fledged graduate teacher before I came to this country. But my qualification was accepted as an ordinary three-year teacher training diploma as I did not have a first class degree. ... I started as an EFL teacher. ... When I wanted to move to ordinary secondary school, the authority was reluctant to transfer me. After a lot of persuasion, the authority decided to send an Inspector to observe me teaching before they offered me any position in an ordinary school."

Soma was given the DES number but as she didn't start teaching immediately, when she wanted to use her DES number to enrol for a course later on, she had to face a lot of difficulties. She was more discerning in her comments about the bureaucracy of the system:

"I have qualified from India. I did MA in Economics and BEd from India and I had three and a half years teaching experience in a secondary school as well. When I came to this country in 1976, I applied to DES for QTS. I was told that I could teach in a secondary school straightaway but if I wanted to teach in a primary school, I had to do one-year teacher training. ...

At that time there was unemployment of teachers and I thought that what was the point of doing one year's training and not getting a job at the end of it. ... Then after my children were grown up, ... I started applying for jobs but did not even get an interview. So I worked voluntarily for one year as a Home School link worker in [...] Nursery. I also started attending some courses for children under fives hoping that that might help me in getting a job. ... One of the language assistants in the Nursery told me 'why don't you start working here voluntarily for some time? It might help you finding a job later on'. We used to have mums and toddlers groups ... and I enjoyed doing that. After doing that for one year I started applying for jobs again. I thought even if I get an educational assistant's job, which will give me some experience. You will be surprised how many application forms I had filled in but I did not even get an interview. That was only for an educational assistant's job! You will be surprised even though I worked for a year voluntarily at the [...] Nursery they did not call me for the interview for the language assistant's job. I was called for an interview once at [...] school but I did not get that job. They got someone with experience. I told them 'if you are not going to give me the job how am I going to get some experience?' I decided not to apply for any more jobs. ...

Then about three and a half years ago I started working at this school part-time (0.5) as a language assistant.... I started going to all the Insets that were run at the school. The headmaster was very

supportive and he encouraged me to attend them as well. [...] from Multicultural Centre was very helpful and she took all my qualifications and tried to see if I could join the License Teachers Scheme. When I enquired about it they told me that I have to take GCSE Maths and English. I was very annoyed about that. I said to myself that I do not want to do that again. I had done them many years ago. Then I thought I might as well do that if that helps me to get a job. I went to [...] school and enquired about their evening classes for Maths. Then I heard about the Distant Learning Programme and thought that probably that will be a better idea. I did not mind doing part-time training- I did not want to do full-time training. At that time there was not any part-time teacher training course so I thought that Distant Learning scheme would be a good idea. But then I was told that to join that scheme I needed my Qualified Teacher Status number. I had my QTS number. I applied for the number in 1976 and got it in 1977. When I wrote to the Department of Education and told them that I had got my number, they said that the number was not valid after such a long time. It was only valid for a certain length of time. As I did not get a job straightaway after that time, I have to apply for a new number again. I wrote back to them when they said that they have to verify all my qualifications again. I had all my qualifications (MA and B. Ed) verified once before when I wrote to the Universities and got all the relevant papers. I felt very annoyed. I did not want to go through that

process again. ... In 1976 and 1977 my dad went on my behalf to the universities and paid them the relevant fees and filled the forms and they sent the papers to the DES. So I phoned the DES and told them that I had already supplied them the necessary verification papers. They told me that they don't keep all the records of the teachers. 'We throw them after a year'. I wrote back to them stating that if they had destroyed my records I had all the replies that the DES had written to me and I could photocopy them and send them the copies. And I sent them all the copies of the correspondences. But even then I did not have any luck. Somebody from the education office as well as the person who was running the Distant Learning course wrote to DES on my behalf. Only then they decided to give me my QTS and backdated it, stating that I was qualified to teach from 1982. The DES has messed me about if they had given me the QTS number straightaway, I could have started teaching rather than waiting and doing all these language assistant's jobs or education assistant's jobs. ...

I filled an application form to do some supply teaching. One of the teachers in this school was off sick and I started doing her job as a supply teacher. I am attending all the Inset courses to make sure that I know about the National Curriculum and everything. I started doing supply teaching part-time (0.4) since last year. I did not leave the other part-time job- I was doing that also. That job was not permanent - it was only temporary. The DES gave me the QTS in 1992 even

though they have backdated it. I wrote to them in 1990 and they did not have any record but when the education office phoned them they had 'somehow' managed to find my records and send me the QTS."

At every stage this teacher had to face difficulties. When she felt that her job hunting was unbearable, she almost was 'not going to apply for any more jobs'. It is clear from her narration how difficult it is to overcome structural 'bureaucracy'. The agony, frustration and tension this narrator described in her narration, yet her determination to succeed, call to mind so many other black teachers' plight, as the quotes from other teachers will reveal later on in the section.

Ranjit received no encouragement from her head and her quest for promotion was not at all well supported:

"Every time I tried to apply for a Scale 2 job, I was reminded by the head that my qualification was not from this country, so I would not stand a chance. ... On the surface she appeared to be sympathetic and understanding but in the heart of heart, you know what they mean. ... Even after years of teaching, I still feel that they don't treat me as equal."

They were treated as 'second class' teachers excluded from the system by the 'overseas qualifications bar'. The experiences of my interviewees were

not unique. Tuku Mukherjee who qualified in 1969, after training in the U.K. observes:

"I qualified as a mature teacher in 1969. At the time there were hundreds of other experienced teachers from the Indian subcontinent sweating out their aspirations on factory floors. Yet I was told I had 'made it'. I had been offered the opportunity to escape from the scrap heap of working in a bottling factory in East London. I was a recognised teacher with a DES number. Yet even then I realised that a Black man only made it on White society's terms" (1988, p. 211).

In the 1970s and early 1980s there was a strong emphasis on quality control of teachers and a raising of professional standards. So my other seven overseas-qualified interviewees who had applied for qualified teacher status in the 1970s and 1980s, found that they met many barriers at different levels which blocked their access to having equality of status. They all mentioned how their skills, experiences, years of study and the qualifications they had obtained overseas counted for nothing in Britain. These people often, with considerable years of teaching experience behind them, were unable to find jobs in the state sector unless they were prepared to return to studying and obtain additional qualifications in England. Throughout the narratives of these seven teachers, these themes recurred again and again. Each of them had to undergo additional training to be able to teach. Hina had

difficulty in getting any kind of employment, let alone a teaching job. She recounted:

"I couldn't even get a cleaning job. I felt harassed and confused and put down unnecessarily. ... When I could not manage to get any job, I decided to join the Licensed Teacher's Scheme. I knew it would be hard with young family and so on, but still there was no alternative. ... And you know, when I was finally accepted in the Licensed Teachers' Scheme, I suddenly experienced a quite unfamiliar gush of self-confidence."

Meena recounted her narrative of retraining- the tensions, the conflict, her anger and her hurt were all so apparent. In this account one can see several sets of assumptions which gave shape to the actions she had to take:

"It was very little money. It was like an insult because I was a qualified teacher with years of experience behind me. There were times when I felt like giving up and starting a career in social work as it would only take two years to qualify which seemed less daunting than a four years course. When I was finally accepted onto a B. Ed course I found that financially I could not cope, as I haven't been living in this country long enough to qualify for a grant. ... Eventually I saw a two year B.Ed course advertised at Bristol Polytechnic and although it meant a lot of travelling, I felt that it would probably be my

best chance as the publicity encouraged Asian and Afro-Caribbeans. ... Out of an initial group of twenty, only six people successfully passed the Mathematics examination, and so were allowed to enrol. The other thing was that the course had initially been advertised as a B. Ed Honours course but ended up just B. Ed. ... I am sure that the course would be seen to be of lower status in the eyes of the DES because the six students were from minority ethnic groups."

Gita gave an account of how she decided to do additional training to gain 'teacher' status because of the low value attached to her 'instructor' status:

"I did my degree in Music from the University of Punjab. I taught there for two years before coming to England. Since coming to this country, I had been teaching music as a music instructor, not as a music teacher. I was paid a lower rate as well because I did not have the teaching certificate from this country. Some of my colleagues and especially the music adviser were asking me to do PGCE so that I could be paid properly and also do other things in my free time. So after all these years of teaching experience, I had to do one year PGCE".

Neeta had to start from scratch. She did find herself doing a four year B. Ed course, although the university was reluctant to accept her despite her

degree from India and three good A level grades (two Bs and a C) from the UK. She commented:

"They had a stereotype of people who were qualified overseas particularly in a place like India. They think, she couldn't really cope with this sort of education, she must have a language problem, and she wouldn't be able to write a dissertation. ... I had to travel a lot to go to a University that will accept me. ... There was nothing I could do to convince them, other than to show them that I could do it, if they gave me the chance...

And I really did show them when I ended up in the top five in my group. But the irony of the whole situation was I was not awarded a "first" although I was told I was on the 'borderline' and made to go through a viva. What can you do? You just have to accept it, I suppose. I was too meek to challenge them then."

Her narrative portrays a strong sense of authentic striving to achieve her goal. Her determination to show the 'white' people that she 'could do it, if they gave me the chance' documents how to survive victimisation and 'win a war'. Even though she had a degree, she did A level in the UK to be able to go to the University in her hometown, but in the end she was not accepted there and she was bitter about that.

Likewise, Ravinder described her experience and expressed how vulnerable and powerless she felt when her qualification was not recognised. What really hurt her was the complacent attitude of the 'white woman' interviewer, who 'didn't want to listen or consider my case'. She really had to struggle after years of teaching experience in Pakistan:

"I came to England about fifteen years ago from Pakistan. I was qualified in Pakistan. I am B. Sc. and B. Ed and was teaching for ten years in an English-medium senior school in Pakistan. When I started applying for a teaching post here, I was told that I would not be able to do any teaching job as my qualification was not recognised. I wrote to the Department of Education and Science and was advised to do one year PGCE course. ... I duly applied. I was called for an interview at [...] and the woman (white) who interviewed me arrived nearly one hour late and then abruptly told me that I had to take O level English and Mathematics before I could be considered. I tried to argue my case saying that I had already got a degree in Science and also I was teaching in Pakistan. But she did not want to listen or even consider my case. I was so dispirited that I decided not to go ahead with it after all! ...

One of my friends told me that the Multicultural Centre was looking for some language assistants. I went and saw the co-ordinator. He told me that there would be twenty such posts available and asked me to apply. I sent in the application but instead of getting an

interview for a language assistant's post, I was called for an interview as a nursery supervisor! I got a temporary post in a nursery, lasting for seventeen months. ... I persevered and managed to get temporary posts as educational assistant and language assistant. Few years ago, when [...] had a recruitment drive especially recruiting ethnic minority teachers, I sent in an application but still without any luck. I felt that I was knocking my head against a brick wall".

Ravinder eventually went through the Articled and Licensed Teacher Scheme to become a qualified teacher. Her narration portrays her desperate attempt to be accepted as a teacher. During the conversation she vacillated between conscious efforts to maintain her self-pride and feelings of despair.

As Carter (1986) has observed:

"Another disappointment for some was the total lack of credit given for the education we had already received at home. It seemed that the great British education system only counted if you got through it on home ground. Back to square one again" (Carter, 1986, p. 77).

Similarly this personally assertive teacher, Parveen described her years of struggle within the education system to gain equality of status. During these years she was extremely unhappy and suffered from severe emotional disturbance and physical trauma:

" I did my degree from the University of Gujerat in India and was teaching Gujerati and English in a secondary school there. I came to U.K. in 1978 and started applying for teaching jobs. I was told that I could not get a job as my degree wasn't good enough, it wasn't from here. I was told that I had to start from scratch. I was told to do O levels and A levels, then hopefully I could do a four years BEd. I felt dispirited. The whole idea was so daunting that I decided to drop the idea....

Then in 1981 I joined O level classes for English and Maths. The Maths teacher told me that I did not need to do Maths. I continued with my English and passed my O level with good grade. I started applying for jobs again and had the same excuses thrown at me 'you have not got the degree from this country, your qualifications are not recognised and etc. etc.' Then eventually I got a job in an infant school in the reception class as a language aid helping Asian children. In fact I was doing the teacher's job - taking a small group of children teaching them literacy, numeracy and doing everything. That was the frustration for me doing the teacher's job but getting paid very little. When the class teacher used to be away from the school for any reason, I had taken the whole class on my own. The head teacher sometimes came to see how I was coping. She was very pleased with me and at the end of the year she told me '[...] if your qualification is not recognised, why don't you do PGCE?' I was not that keen at first but then I decided to have a go. When I went in for

the interview at the University the interviewer told me 'oh no, we can't offer you two languages' and my application was turned down. ...

Then there was a job advertised at the Multicultural Centre for a teacher of Hindi. The job was advertised for five or six times and I applied every time but it was turned down with the same comment 'you are not qualified from this country'. I was confident that I would be able to do that job. I was really very upset....

Then in 1983 a job came up at [...] school because they were starting the Asian languages there. I accepted the job as an Instructor there and you wouldn't believe, it was just for one hour and ten minutes lesson, I used to travel 7 miles. I was spending more money on petrol than earning. At times I thought of giving it up but my husband encouraged me to continue there. I continued and in the second year they increased my time a little bit, and the third year they increased a little bit and so on. Finally I became a full-time Instructor. I was doing the same job as a teacher but getting paid very low salary. And you wouldn't believe what the LEA did. I had to fill in the time sheet every month, say I have done five hours a day and I filled that in, but they said 'oh no, you don't teach during break and lunch time, so that time will be deducted from your total time sheet'. How cheeky they were! I was an Instructor and my job was advertised every term and I was interviewed every term. There was a clause that if they could find a qualified teacher, they would not appoint an Instructor. So I was at risk all the time. Even then they deducted the time we were not

actually teaching! I couldn't do or say anything because I knew that I was standing on a very shaky ground. I was helpless. ...

Then the Licensed Teacher Scheme started and I joined. When I joined the scheme I was already teaching for seven years! The two years of training were quite hectic, I was under tremendous pressure. I had to take examination classes, I had to produce good results as well as coping with writing essays and dissertations for the course. We were released two mornings from the school to attend the course. I had to be trained as a Humanities teacher. I was under so much pressure that I fell ill during the last term of the course and was in hospital for three weeks. I was advised to stay at home for three months. That was the crunch time. I was so upset. I worked so hard but then at the end I couldn't have anything. But luckily my tutor was very sympathetic and she sent a very good report. That was how I got my QTS.

After I got the number from the DES, the LEA sent me a letter stating that I was a permanent teacher with the authority. So I am a permanent teacher now after working for ten years! LMS came into practice soon after that. If I wouldn't have done the training before, I don't know what would have happened to me. They probably would have thrown me out." (snaps her fingers)

Parveen was 'doing the teacher's job', yet the hierarchy would not grant her the teacher status. Throughout her narrative one can feel her sense of

'helplessness' and total dismay. She was rather puzzled by the authority's behaviour 'you don't teach during break and lunch time, so that time will be deducted from your total time sheet'.

Mumtaz described how the friendship and support of another Asian teacher in the similar position as herself had helped her to complete her training:

"After my marriage, I came to England. ... I did my Degree from the University of Gujerat, but it was not recognised for teaching in this country. ... I started work in a factory. Then I managed to get an unqualified language assistant's job in the [...] as there were a lot of Asian children there. ... There was no holiday pay, no respect, and no status. ... I worked for nearly seven years like that. ... Then I was advised by my head to join the Licensed Teachers' Scheme to improve my qualification. ...

It was very tough, working as well as studying. I tried to give up many times and go back to my factory job, but [...] from [...] school was also doing the same course and both of us managed to cheer each other up and struggle along."

Summary

My interviewees were not alone in facing these difficulties. The Independent Inquiry in Ealing (1988) found that the Senior Personnel in the Education

Department were unwilling to assist teachers in gaining DES recognition. '4% of ethnic minority teachers were refused DES recognition of their qualifications on initial application' (Ibid, p. 36). The testimonies from some of the headteachers in Ealing will portray the stereotypical analysis of the difficulties the black teachers had to face:

"Black teachers do not go to the DES to see if their qualifications are recognised, nor do they enquire as to what would make them valid.... It is not easy for the older generation of Asian teachers who qualified overseas to cope with the demands - I am not sure that teaching is the right profession for them (1988, pp. 72-74).

Ghuman (1995) also found that "the first-generation teachers ... met very many problems ... most of them had to work, initially at any rate, in manual jobs and undertake a further course of study in the UK" (p. 18).

The teachers in my study who took the Articled and Licensed Teacher Scheme route continued working in their schools whilst being released two mornings a week to attend training. They also had to satisfy the authority and the DES of their ability in Mathematics and English. When the scheme started they all were very wary about embarking on it as they were not convinced that they would really obtain qualified teachers status at the end of it. They were concerned that this form of training wouldn't be given equal status with traditional forms of teacher training as comments from colleagues

and the professional associations were not encouraging. The TES of 16.3.90 published an article by Ted Wragg entitled "Dodgy licences for the disqualified" - not a very positive message.

My interviewees all felt that they had been discriminated against because they were qualified outside Europe. Gita, Mumtaz, Parveen, Ravinder and Soma even mentioned the names of some European teachers who had qualified outside UK and were given the DES number without any further training or qualification. Whereas my interviewees had to take various routes to gain qualified teacher status working in the mean time for the authority in a variety of roles, as Language Aids, instructors of Asian languages, posts funded under Section 11 or as unqualified teachers. The necessity to undertake further training to 'compensate for' their different skin colour underlines the extent to which racial and cultural discrimination exerts particular pressure on black people in British society. It also highlights how cultural and racial identities are an integral part of power relationships in Britain. But I was struck by these teachers' determination to gain the qualified teacher status despite the 'hoops' they would have to jump through before achieving that. The teachers' perceptions of their struggles were not of antagonism but of solidarity with other women to help them overcome their feelings of inadequacy, lack of confidence and low self-esteem. Even now, when we meet informally, these feelings create a sort of group identity and the majority of them are keen to establish a strong network to support others.

Finding a teaching post (both first and second generation teachers)

There is some evidence to suggest that black teachers may be employed as a last resort, when there is nobody else to fill a post and there is a danger that classes might be sent home (Lynette Hubah, 1984). "Ethnic minority teachers are only given jobs when they can find no better teachers - all promotions go to others while we do all the donkey work and are nowhere today" (CRE, 1988, p. 56). An experienced black London teacher has shared this problem since starting her career in 1970:

"She has done well at interview and then not got the job. One school told her that she was very good but we don't have many blacks here" (Guardian, 5th April, 1988, p. 21).

What emerged from the interview data was that both first and second generation teachers did not face any overt discrimination, in the form of a "colour bar", (mainly due to The Race Relations Acts), but they met very many problems in obtaining their first teaching post.

First generation teachers

Out of my ten first generation interviewees, six had to struggle hard to obtain their first teaching post. They all described their difficulties candidly. The following excerpts reveal their reflections. For example, Ranjit was able to

get the DES recognition but was unable to obtain a teaching post. She ended up by taking a factory job which she held, with some unhappiness, for nearly two years.

"The DES recognised my qualification only after verification from the University of Delhi and that process took nearly nine months. ... In the meantime I was unemployed. ... I applied so many times but did not have any luck. To survive, I took a job in the local hosiery factory. ... Even after I got my DES number, it took me nearly sixteen months before I could get a permanent job as a teacher."

Hero also describes the predicament of Indian and Pakistani teachers:

"Jobs on Bradford's local buses, however, remained the exclusive domain of highly educated Pakistani and Indians. A study in Coventry, reported in the Morning Star (5 January, 1967), showed that half of the Indian bus conductors were university graduates" (1992, p. 320).

Gita gave me the impression that she was 'worse off' after doing her PGCE as she had not managed to find a full-time permanent post. The irony was that she was working full-time as a music instructor, which she had to give up in order to do her PGCE:

"Even after I finished my training, I was offered a temporary part-time job at [...] school as a E2L teacher. Then after a year I got another job at [...] school, again temporary part-time, to do 0.5 time as a language support teacher, which is Section 11 funded post. The other 0.5 is with [...] Centre for Performing Arts ([...]CPA) which is permanent. ... Even though my main job is with [...]CPA, I never had any support or encouragement from them to succeed. I know it is all going to change from next year when individual schools will be responsible for arranging the music lessons and so on. I don't know what is going to happen then".

Mumtaz seemed to be quite bitter about her experience. Her sense of frustration for not being able to find a permanent post was so apparent. She did her retraining rather reluctantly but still her aspiration to find a 'better job' had not been fulfilled, and she felt being 'cheated':

"When I embarked on the Licensed Teachers Scheme, I was hopeful that at the end of my struggle I would be able to get a better job. When I finished my training, the head told me to apply for jobs elsewhere as the school wanted to appoint another language assistant rather than a teacher. I was so shocked! After so many unsuccessful applications, finally I managed to find a temporary post in a primary school to cover a maternity leave. ... Then I was unemployed again. ... I sometimes feel now that whether the training

was at all necessary or not! I am still working on a temporary basis. The authority would not give me a permanent contract. I feel I have been 'cheated'. Why did they allow me to do the training then?"

Likewise, Ravinder observed:

"Initially I was appointed on short term temporary contracts for half a term. Then I got another temporary job for a month, followed by another one and so on. I was getting tired of being employed on a series of temporary contracts. I did not know what to do. I wrote to the authority asking why I had not been offered a permanent job but didn't receive a reply. Then a friend of mine advised me to apply to the Section 11 Language Support Service, if I wanted a permanent contract. I did not really want to leave the mainstream teaching but in the end I thought 'what's the point?' I knew that there would be a considerable amount of re-deployment of primary teachers in the city and so it would be more difficult to secure a permanent appointment. In the end I had to leave mainstream teaching in order to secure a permanent job."

The LEA did not even acknowledge her letter! Moving both her hands to show a sign of despair and anger as she spoke, Ravinder reinforced her feeling, stating how she was forced 'to leave mainstream teaching in order to secure a permanent job'. Obviously she had higher expectations of herself

because subconsciously she was still a 'fully qualified teacher'. She became totally bewildered about what she was supposed to be doing in order to gain a permanent contract.

Hina described her anger and frustration. During the conversation she mentioned how much of the time she felt very isolated and even the words 'depression' and 'breakdown' were mentioned several times:

"I applied so many times but never even got an interview. Then I got a temporary job in a primary school to cover a maternity leave. ... Then I was unemployed again. ... It took me nearly two years to find a permanent post after I finished my training. ... I was under the impression that the authority would give us a permanent job as soon as we finished our training. ... I was very angry. I felt I was fighting my battle entirely on my own."

Like this black teacher's comment from Ealing's Inquiry:

"I had to struggle for 7 years before getting a full time teaching post. I was offered Instructor status Scale A. I had to struggle for a further year to get Scale 1. I had threatened to take my case to the Commission for Race Equality" (1988, p. 59).

The number of times the authority's reluctance to offer them a permanent job was mentioned in these narratives are striking. Meena gave a lucid account:

"I enrolled for B. Ed with a lot of hope and aspirations. I thought that I had a degree and 5 years experience. ... Once I finished my training I would be able to find a nice job. ... But you would not believe how many applications I had to write before I even got an interview! I can still remember how excited I was when my first interview letter arrived. I read it and read it and then took the letter to my friend to make sure that that was an interview letter. ... I didn't get that job though. ... I started working as a teacher in this authority fifteen months after I finished my training and that was also to cover a maternity leave!"

Meena used almost the same vocabulary as the other teachers to describe her frustration and anger for not being able to find a permanent job after her training. She did her training reluctantly, feeling it to be a pointless exercise. The way she described her excitement after receiving her first interview letter, 'took the letter to my friend', one can almost 'feel her pulse!'

Second-generation teachers

Many educational personnel naively argue that only older black teachers with overseas qualifications face any sort of discrimination, if at all. The

second-generation teachers, having gone through the British system of education, would have a good grasp of English and the British institutions and not face much difficulty. As Ghuman finds:

"it became clear from the interviews that the second-generation teachers do not face the same problems as encountered by the older generation. Though the majority has preferred to work in multicultural schools, they found no difficulty, whatsoever, in getting their first appointment. Whether they will continue to have a smooth passage is a matter of some conjecture, but they certainly have made a very good start" (1995, p. 36).

I am not sure what could be the reason for this difference. But I must point out that Ghuman's study included both men and women teachers which might explain the difference between his research findings and mine. But out of my ten second generation interviewees, six faced difficulties in gaining their very first appointment (exactly the same number as first generation teachers). Shazia, Anju and Surinder specifically mentioned that during their training years they were quite outspoken, expressing their viewpoints about the racial inequalities in UK. They felt that their strong, often negative viewpoints might have damaged their chances of a favourable reference for their first appointment. They could not offer any tangible proof but the following excerpts will portray their perceptions. Shazia narrated:

"I am born and brought up here. I went through the schooling in London and went to college in Leicester and finished college in 1978. I applied for numerous teaching jobs in [...] as my brother was here and I wanted to stay in the provinces and not in London. After two terms, I had a temporary placement for a term in one of the local schools from April to July of that year. Again I was unemployed for another term, then I got an interview. The irony is that during the interview I was asked why I have not still 'passed' my probationary year! Before I could even answer, the other white teacher who was also interviewing me with the headmaster, asked 'which Asian language can you offer?' I tried to point out that I was not qualified to teach any language, I am a science teacher, but he did not even let me finish my sentence! Anyway I did not get that job. ... Then suddenly one day someone from the Council house phoned me and asked 'would you like to do some supply teaching?' I was so despondent, I agreed but still I did not get any job. Next term I got a teaching job to cover a maternity leave. Following September I finally managed to get a permanent job."

Shazia gave me the impression that she was called for the interview as a token gesture, a science teacher but was asked 'which Asian language can you offer?'

Anju was almost dumbfounded when she had difficulty getting a job. Educated at a convent and having a very sheltered and secured upbringing, she found it very difficult to accept the reality. At times, her sense of unreality became so strong that 'I would go and sit in convent's garden, just to remind myself that there was still a world where I belong'.

"When my college friends applied to two or three different authorities, I thought they were silly. ... I just applied to [...] and was convinced that I would be accepted there. When I didn't get a job, I was shocked to find out that the authority didn't even consider my application! ...

I started applying everywhere ... I still remember rows of my rejection letters on my bedroom wall, me lying down and staring at them, feeling sick with fright. ... In the eyes of the outside world, I became a recluse. ... It took me nearly fifteen months to get a permanent job."

Ghuman (1995) also reported:

"To get a job in this country was one of the hardest thing. I applied 100 times. There were posters 'come and teach in...'. When I went to see them, sorry we haven't got a job. These were the excuses" (a Special needs teacher, p. 16).

Surinder was looking forward enormously to being a teacher at the school where she did her teaching practice, but to her utter dismay she did not get the job.

"During my final teaching practice, I got on very well with the head of the department at the school. He suggested that I approached the head. The head told me that there would be a job in the humanities department and he saw no reason why I should not get it. I applied duly and was fairly complacent. ...

With hindsight, I can now see how naive I was. ...

When I didn't get that job, I was accused of leaving my job hunting till too late! ... It took me two terms to find a job."

My other interviewees had similar stories to tell. For example, Nazish reflected:

"I came to U.K. from India as a teenager. ... After O level and A level I went to Matlock and did three years teaching certificate. ... I applied for a job in [...] and I got an interview. I remember after all these years that the person who interviewed me was very 'racist'. I could see that he was not going to give me the job anyway. 'Oh, Indian teachers can't teach, they have a very bad reputation, they can't control their classes. How are you going to cope?'... Instead of asking me other questions he continually criticised the coloured teachers and my poor

O and A level grades. The other thing I noticed that whereas there were three persons interviewing the other white students in my case he was the only person. ... I didn't get that job. After few more unsuccessful applications in some other authorities, I managed to get a job in [...], which meant that I had to travel a lot everyday".

Nazish was criticised for her poor examination grades. She felt that she was called for the interview just as a 'token gesture' as 'there were three persons interviewing the other white students in my case he was the only person'.

Similarly, Kuldeep described her experience:

"I realised that to survive I had to fight and I kept on applying. For a long time I did not have any luck. Then eventually I got an interview in ... to do some E2L job. A white woman (she never introduced herself) interviewed me. The interview was very short and abrupt. I was not asked anything about E2L teaching. It seemed like an informal interview but somehow I felt that I was not going to get that job. I was right. Then I heard from a friend that there was an outreach-worker job going at the specialist multicultural support service in [...] and I applied. I learnt later on that there were sixteen people who applied. Only four of us were called for the interview. I was given that job. But you must realise that I was the only one with the teaching qualification from Britain. I am also conversant in

Punjabi and Hindi. Then suddenly after about two years I was just told (without any consultation) to start work in a junior school.”

To survive, Kuldeep had to accept an outreach-worker job (which was mainly liaising with Asian parents, sorting problems etc., a low status job) for two years. Then she was just 'transferred to a junior school without any consultation.' She felt as if she was a 'pawn in an educational game'. The authority just used her.

The following episode from Yasmin explicitly stresses the structural constraint; how even after studying here for a number of years, she had difficulty in getting a 'work permit'. She was 'turned down by four or five LEAs', but was helped by a 'very politically minded deputy head'.

"When I started looking for jobs I noticed that none of the LEAs even the enlightened ones like [...] did actually employ me in the pool. I was not actually bothered, I suppose because I had really a good year doing my Dip. Ed. and I felt quite confident that I would get a job. Four or five LEAs turned me down and it was actually an individual school that employed me. We then ran into the official dump, which meant barrier all along the way. I was officially a Kenyan citizen and I still am and I needed a visa (work permit) to work and it was never a 'no, you can't have it, it was delay followed by delay and followed by delay'. I handed over my case to the school management in June and

even by the end of October I did not have the necessary work permit, because the Home Office was messing me about. It was not the head but a very politically minded deputy head who was fighting my case and kept the job open for me. He supplied every bit of paper that was asked by the Home Office and eventually I started working there in November."

Another important feature was that out of my twenty interviewees seven were working either in the specialist multicultural support service or as an advisor in the field of 'race' and education. These posts were Section 11 funded. Some other studies have also found that a disproportionate number of black and bilingual teachers were working in posts funded under Section 11. Newham Asian Teachers' Association (1985) reported that about one-third of the borough's Asian teachers were employed under Section 11 and that there was a tendency for these teachers 'to be marginalised and not seen as an integral part of the school' (cited in Osler, 1997, p. 166). Richardson (1996a) characterises Section 11 teachers as 'often located in rather powerless and marginal places' (pp. 46-51). I wanted to find out the possible explanation for my seven interviewees' joining Section 11. The following extracts from the interviews might reveal some of the reasons.

For Jasvinder the feeling of insecurity being in a mainstream school, the prospect of promotion and being able to work with ethnic minority children, played an important part in her decision:

"When I started teaching in the 1970s, there were not many black teachers in the city. I used to feel quite isolated. So I went into full-time ESL teaching. I felt that as an ESL teacher, you can not only make a positive contribution to the needs of black children, but you are much more readily accepted in your own community. Also promotion is comparatively easy whereas the situation in the mainstream sector could be quite threatening."

Meena was unable to find a permanent post for a long time. Her initial frustration at not getting a permanent job led her to apply for a Section 11 post.

"It seemed to me that every time I applied for a permanent job, I did not even get an interview. It got to the stage where I said to myself, well, why bother to apply? I just gave up! I became so unhappy. You would not believe how naïve I was. I did not know about LEA vacancy bulletin in the staff room or other opportunities within the LEA. Then a friend of mine told me about a vacancy at the MGSS. That is how I achieved a permanent position outside mainstream teaching."

Yasmin was on Scale 3 when she decided to take a few years off to look after her young children. She spoke about her experience of re-entry with disappointment and her decision to leave mainstream teaching to ascend the career ladder. She had to start at the bottom of the scale again. She was

aware of the possibility of being marginalised but still decided to accept the job mainly because of the promotion prospects it offered:

"I did not know whether I wanted to be marginalised into Section 11 or not but ... rebuilding a career would not have been so easy in the mainstream. ... I am sure that I would have found it difficult to climb up the ladder in the mainstream in the 1980s. ... I see so many black teachers who are struggling in the mainstream and had gone nowhere."

Surinder was very specific about her decision. She tried for eight years in the mainstream to gain some promotion:

"I was teaching nearly eight years without gaining any promotion. I realised that if I have to progress I have to start looking outside the mainstream, in Asian area (home-school link, community language, multicultural issues etc). I thought about it - and then applied for a scaled post at the specialist multicultural support service. I am sure if I would have stayed in the mainstream, I would not have received the higher grade that I am on now."

Sarandip had a very different reason. She was convinced that she joined Section 11 as she used to feel vulnerable and under siege in a big staff room with lots of English teachers. It was probably her survival strategy.

Also she was aware that the traditional route to promotion within school would be difficult, if not almost impossible:

"Being an Indian, teaching English, I used to feel quite isolated at times. ... I had to work that extra hard to gain any status. My head of the department 'indirectly' tried to steer me towards this stereotyped role, like asking me to go and help Asian children in other classes. Then I happened to meet some language support teachers who advised me to join Section 11 team. I joined but with hindsight I think it is quite a sin bin. ... As Section 11 teachers we are very marginalised and people think that our job is very easy. In schools people think that being in charge of a class is the hardest thing ... People do not think that language support teachers have that responsibility. ... But at least I was able to get an advisor's post which probably I would not have had, had I remain in the mainstream."

Ravinder was unable to find any permanent position. She was not only getting tired of doing short-term temporary contracts but also becoming anxious about her job security. In the end she felt that she had no other alternative:

"Then a friend of mine advised me to apply to Section 11 Language Support Service, if I wanted a permanent contract."

Amarjit had tried for a long time to gain promotion. She applied for a few deputy headship posts but was unsuccessful. She was quite frustrated and felt that a post in Section 11 team might be a springboard for her career advancement:

“At first I deliberately avoided any Section 11 post. I was confident that I would be able to get a deputy head post fairly shortly. But you know it is very important that you don’t become stagnated in a school for too long. I tried for a few years without any success. I wanted to achieve and I felt that Section 11 posts would offer better professional development opportunities.”

Being a Section 11 teacher may have its merits but if black teachers feel that this is the only role for them in teaching this can only be harmful for themselves and represents a loss of valuable skills to the teaching profession as a whole.

Summary

One theme running through my interviewees’ narrative was that they all had made the conscious decision to become a teacher after considerable thought and deliberation and not casually, as a result of chance or circumstances. They wanted to become a teacher, they had not just drifted into teaching. They chose teaching as a career. Another theme running

through each interview was each individual's professional development as a black teacher. The teachers in my study mentioned that all women do not share the same experiences as teachers as 'race' strongly impacted on black teachers' experience. They explained their black identity more or less exclusively in political terms, as part of the process of accepting the role of a teacher and dealing with the contradictions and conflicts as they responded to racism within schools, and racist attitudes amongst colleagues. Some of the younger teachers, who had been teaching for less than five years, placed more emphasis on establishing their credibility with colleagues and pupils and less emphasis on their personal identities. Some believed that education can change the lives of individuals and had a notion of becoming a 'role model' for black children. Others felt a special commitment to the education of **all** children who were disadvantaged in the system.

Despite having teaching qualifications from abroad, some of my first generation interviewees faced many barriers to their acceptance. But they wanted to become teachers so as to gain some degree of status; they felt teaching would be more rewarding. Nevertheless it became clear that having gained DES recognition, both first and second-generation teachers had faced difficulties in gaining their first teaching posts. But they all showed courage, dedication and commitment to teaching. I know that my interviewees were not the only ones to face such difficulties. The CRE Survey (1988) found that the approximate average number of unsuccessful applications made prior to obtaining the first, established U.K. post was 6.5

for ethnic minority teachers compared with only 3.8 for white teachers (p. 37). The finding of the Ealing Survey (1988) was that after gaining DES recognition 84.4% of white teachers had secured a teaching post by the end of the first school term, 'whereas only 56.3% of black teachers had found a teaching job. By the end of the first year 94% of white teachers had obtained a teaching post, compared with only 69% of black teachers' (p. 56). Hero (1992) also portrayed the same picture:

"Most of the bitterness expressed in the Asian community came from English-speaking and educationally qualified persons. ... A typical experience was that of an Indian teacher in London who made nearly 300 applications but did not obtain a single interview. Not surprisingly, therefore, many qualified experienced teachers became bus conductors. ... Of the 3500 Indian and Pakistani teachers who were issued B vouchers between 1965 and 1967 only a few hundred managed to find teaching posts" (p. 119).

Taylor and Hegarty observed:

"Even so, despite the absence of authoritative figures, it seems that relatively few obtained posts in the UK. For example, in a small scale study in 1967-8, out of 34 Indian and Pakistani male and female graduates who had previously been teachers or lecturers only three

were teaching in UK, two after taking unskilled work initially" (1985, p. 518).

In the Times Education Supplement, it was reported that despite having 'equal qualifications and experience, black teachers have to make twice as many applications as white teachers to get a position' (Wallace, 1988, p. 23). The findings of the National Commission on Education (see Darke, 1994) would seem to suggest that the situation has not improved for black teachers in the 1990s.

Only Ranjit and Ravinder (first generation teachers in my study) expressed the views that their inadequate command of English and their lack of experience of the British system of education and way of life might have had some effect. But they all (both first and second-generation teachers in my study) were convinced that colour and ethnicity were 'hidden' factors which played a crucial role. I will return to this point at a later stage.

Career Patterns, Promotion Prospects and Professional Development:

Perceptions of both first and second generation teachers

The majority of my interviewees had a great deal to talk about on the issues involved in their promotion, career advancement and professional development and there was a widespread discontent amongst them. Both the first-generation and the second-generation teachers felt that racial

prejudice and ethnocentrism were the two main factors affecting their promotion and professional advancement. With only one exception, the interviewees asserted that they had not experienced equality of opportunity in their careers. Only Bhavini, who was the deputy head of a school for children with severe learning difficulties, felt that she had been treated equally. She did not think that she had experienced any discrimination as an Asian woman. She ruminated:

"I think that being the only Asian teacher that I know of in special education had acted as a spur for me. I am born and educated in this country and during my school and college years I had become used to being the only Asian. At times I felt very isolated. ... I think that it is very important for us to have positive role models. If you can see that there are people who are ahead of you, then you are not frightened to have a go. I had no opportunity to see an Asian head in action in either mainstream or special education in this authority, so I went to [...] school in [...] Authority to visit the head who is an Asian woman.

...

I must confess, though, I am as surprised as anyone to be where I am."

Are black women teachers separated from their white male/ female colleagues by contrasting conceptions of their occupation and occupational tasks? Do we have dissimilar classroom practices, discipline procedures,

control over pupils, teaching methods to those of white teachers? Everyone I interviewed had asked me these questions. They all felt that black teachers as a group were exploited and oppressed by the British education system with its hierarchical divisions of sex, class and, most predominantly 'race'. It is recognised that black teachers are likely to have many things in common with their white colleagues and to share many professional experiences. I am concerned here with the ways in which racism seems to affect and influence the lives and careers of black teachers. This is not to neglect the ways in which class and gender intersect with 'race' or to deny the complexity of individuals' experiences which are clearly diverse and which will extend beyond racism. I will now illustrate, using my interviewees' accounts, the way in which racial discrimination and ethnocentrism do seem to affect the promotion prospects and professional development of Asian women teachers.

First generation teachers

Gita described how people coming from Britain's former colonies were made to feel inferior in white British society:

"Those who have come from abroad were not the ruling class. They have felt and still feel at times that they are inferior to the white community. It is well known that white people are superior, they were the rulers. It is still there. I was constantly undermined and criticised. I

remember playing sitar music in an assembly when the head told me 'it is not on - not in my school'. These early struggles had severely damaged my confidence and self-esteem. I was not given any support, on the contrary my culture was constantly challenged. I am sure that as I had a very positive self image and was confident of my strengths, this strong inner-self had helped carry me through some very difficult and agonising situations."

Her narrative moves the listener to recognise the continuity of discrimination in schools. There is no doubt that her strength of character had protected and nurtured her.

Likewise, Mumtaz had a sad story to tell:

"When I was working as a language aid, I couldn't use all my skills, the ones I wanted to offer. What they really wanted was for me to prepare cups of tea for the visitors and mix paint in the morning - all the odd jobs. I was never allowed to pass any opinion regarding any matters of teaching. I was never looked upon as a teacher. Even the kids used to not listen to me and treated me like an outsider. ... I think that is why I have lost my confidence. Even now I am hesitant to use my authority."

Obviously, not having the same degree of self-belief and robustness as some other teachers, Mumtaz had 'lost' her self-confidence. She became aware of the constraints but did not know in what direction it should be broken.

Jasvinder described how even after working as an acting leader, she was not given the job and the reason offered by the authority. Listening to her tale of subsequent confrontation, one can understand the complex relations of race and gender in education.

"Then I became the deputy leader of ESL Support team, General Adviser for In-Service Training as well as Equal Opportunities Training schemes and was involved with the mainstream sectors. When the leader went, I was asked to take over the responsibility as an acting leader which I did for a whole year. Before I was appointed, the bid from the authority for Section 11 funds was sent back from the Home Office and I had to do a lot of hard work to redraft the bid so that it would be accepted. It was and the majority of the people I was working with were very impressed with my capability. The post was then advertised and I duly applied. ... There were only three people on the interviewing panel and the interview was only for 40 minutes. They took a week to inform me about the outcome of the interview and much to my (and my other colleagues') surprise and annoyance, someone (a Sikh male) with less qualifications and experience than

mine, was appointed. I was advised by my well wishers to consult the Union and they agreed that I was unfairly treated. They challenged the LEA whose first line of defence was to state that the ethnic minority communities in that particular area were predominantly Sikh and so they needed someone with experience of that background. That argument was not quite right as there were a fair number of recently arrived Bangladeshi (I am a Bengali) communities whose needs were much more than the Sikh communities who were settled there for a generation or two. ... The LEA really could not substantiate their arguments and offered me some money as compensation. I also found out later on that this Sikh teacher was an active member in the teacher's centre social club!"

According to Lees (1987), racism can work through sexist categories. Jasvinder's 'racial' identity together with her gender was used to objectify her and ensure that she was rendered powerless. Likewise the following excerpt from Ranjit's narrative documents how even after doing all the hard work she was undermined. Her knowledge and expertise were used to a white teacher's advantage:

"Three years ago when the HMI visited our school, I was asked by the head to prepare my pupils for an assembly with Indian dance and music. I involved pupils not only from my own class but also from other classes and spent a lot of time practising and rehearsing. I

approached some of the Asian parents to help me making costumes etc. I translated all the songs in English, prepared an informative leaflet about that particular dance and even arranged for rehearsals on Saturday in my house. The day before the HMI's visit, the children performed in front of the whole school and it was a great success. But on the actual day, the head suddenly told me to remain back stage to supervise the children while another white woman teacher was given the responsibility of introducing the assembly. I felt so humiliated and dispirited. ...

How can I get a promoted post if I am not allowed to show my capability publicly?"

There is no doubt that too much is expected from black teachers and their strengths and contributions often go unnoticed and unrecognised. As the findings from Ealing's Dilemma show:

"The expertise, knowledge and skills of black teachers are appropriated to glorify the public relations attempts of prospective Heads, Inspectors, white M.S.S. teachers. White teachers placed in Southall became the 'INSTANT experts' and can include in their Curriculum Vitae that they have the experience of working with black pupils" (a black teacher's quote, Ealing's Dilemma, 1988, p. 66).

Similarly, Parveen described the tension between herself and her white superiors and how she was made to do all the hard work but not given the 'scale point'. It is not surprising that she is now resigned to accept the situation.

"When I was doing my Licensed Teacher Scheme, any mistakes that I used to make had always been 'glorified' - I will never be allowed to get away with them.... After my training, they promised me that I would get the IT-co-ordinator A allowance when the post will be advertised and asked me to help them during the first two terms. ... When I went back after the holiday, the advisor started ignoring me during meetings as if I did not exist. I went straight to the deputy head and asked him what was happening. He very cleverly told me to keep on attending the meetings and wait for the right opportunity. I persevered but then suddenly the A allowance was abolished. So you can see how clever they were in manipulating the situation. They more or less promised me the allowance so that I worked hard and when the department was well established they abolished the allowance. ... My head of the department had never backed me. May be clash of personalities. ... may be I am too old now. ... My senior white colleagues made it obvious that I should be grateful for the job I got. The white teachers get the promotion just like this (clicking her fingers)."

She continued and one cannot escape feeling the sadness in her tone of voice:

"But what pains me is that when the promotion is in question, we are not considered as good teachers. That is the fact I am facing for ten years. Even if you apply, they would not give it to you, so what is the point of applying? You apply and you do not get it and it is insulting. And again when you go and argue your case, you are creating more enemies, you are labelled as a troublemaker. ... And if you have to work with them, it is best that you do not put yourself in that situation. ... With the LMS and tight budget, you cannot afford to argue with them. You have to be very polite and always say 'yes', 'yes.' ... You are like dead bodies working for them. ... I have seen it happen to my other colleagues, if you argue with the management and they do not like you, they will find a way of redeploying you. So what is the point of applying for promotion? ... They are not promoting our people and that is why they are leaving the authority. I know quite a few teachers who have left the authority because they didn't get promotion."

Parveen felt that her weaknesses were highlighted not with the intention of correcting them but to confirm negative perceptions of black teachers' ability. The following comments from two other teachers are a typical description of the feelings of my other interviewees. For example, Hina recalled:

"I applied for so many Scale 2 posts. ... I used to do a lot of home-school liaison work, counselling Asian parents and children and so on. ... I thought that I should not have any problem getting a promoted post. ... I was the only Asian teacher in that school. ... But after years of struggle I am still unable to get any extra allowance and now I don't expect any either! I feel bitter about it."

Likewise, Ravinder tried to explain:

"I visit so many schools in the authority but have not found any Asian teacher in a senior position. I have done nearly ten years in all,... tried to apply so many times for promoted posts. ... I joined multicultural support service hoping to get a Scale 2 job shortly afterwards but I don't even remember how many posts I applied to ... I always get the same excuses ... our language is not as good as the British teachers, we lack social skills and so on. Now at this stage of my teaching career when I look back and ponder ... it has been a very hard struggle... I have no energy to apply for a promoted post any more. I know I wouldn't get any promotion".

Lynette Hubah (1984) has also expressed her concern about Asian teachers who were fluent in three or more languages and conversant with a number of dialects; these teachers had often applied for scale posts as ESL or EFL teachers but had been turned down in favour of a monolingual White, Anglo-

Saxon teacher often with little or no teaching experience. These Asian teachers were probably devoting hours and hours to the bi-lingual initiatives and receiving no credit for their vital support. They were taken for granted and seen as non-entity. Similarly, black teachers who took an active part in organising and planning educational policies found that white teachers copied their ideas and strategies and they took the credit.

In a similar vein, Neeta narrated how vulnerable she felt in her school and how the head put subtle pressure on her. She began to question her role as a teacher:

"I started teaching in a primary school. In that school the pupils were mainly from council houses and there was a lot of discipline problem. ... The situation was tough but the head told me that the children could not understand me and that was why there were difficulties. I was 'kindly' advised to either pull my weight or look for a job elsewhere. I started feeling that my presence was not welcomed. I knew that there was no point in applying for a promoted post within the school. ... I applied for so many Scale 2 posts. ... Promotion is difficult in primary sector but for us I think it is almost impossible. I didn't even get an interview! I am convinced now that we will remain on the bottom rungs of the teaching profession."

Only one first generation teacher, Jasvinder, from my cohort of interviewees was on a promoted post. Most of them worked hard to improve their qualifications and professional skills but still did not manage to secure a promoted post. Although most of them were ambitious to progress in their careers, they did not appear to have had the benefit of any careers advice, mentoring or support. A recent Australian study on promotion patterns observed the following characteristics of promoted teachers as compared to the less promoted teachers:

".. they had spent a shorter period of time in the various schools; they had worked in a greater number of schools; they were more likely to have undertaken further study; they had a higher career saliency outlook; they were most likely, in the case of secondary teachers, to have specialised in history, the humanities or languages in their degree qualifications; and they were more likely to be employed in the secondary rather than the primary school sector of the education system" (Maclean, 1992, p. 202).

Most of the first generation teachers in my study had their first-degree qualifications from India and Pakistan. As the DES did not recognise the qualification as being equivalent to a British qualification, this might have some effect on their promotion prospects. They had to gain further qualifications, so their entry to the profession was comparatively late, and age is an important consideration in promotion (Hilsum & Start, 1974). The

teachers themselves felt that they were used to provide role models for ethnic minority students, build links between the school and ethnic communities and to teach community languages. But they all felt that racism had played a major part in blocking their career advancement and by listening to their side of the 'stories', one cannot help feeling that that might be the reason.

Second generation teachers

It is important to remember that all of my second-generation interviewees qualified from UK Universities, Polytechnic and Institutes of Higher Education. Out of the ten interviewees, seven had managed to gain some promoted posts. The proportion was much higher than the first generation teachers but they all had to struggle very hard to achieve the promotion. I will now try to discuss their perceptions in relation to promotion and professional advancement.

The deeply moving and disturbing events which took place in this reserved and quietly spoken teacher's (Neelum, acting deputy head) professional life emphasise the struggles in teachers' careers. She was convinced that even though she was competent, she only got her appointment (acting deputy head) as she happened to be there at the right time. She tried to justify her perceptions:

"I was teaching in that school for two years and the headteacher was very pleased with my performance (his own comments!). I asked him for a scale point and he told me that when the next scale point would come I would get it. But when the next scale point came, he did not give it to me. He told me later on that he had to give it to someone else. I thought 'fair enough'. But as there was no prospect of getting a Scale 2 post there, when a Scale 2 post was advertised elsewhere I asked the head but he talked me out of it. He told me 'you are only working here for two years- wait for a few years - you are sure to get a promoted post here'. He did this to me twice. I was so naive I believed him and stayed there. But then there were two more Scale points awarded in that school, I still did not get it. I was very cross. When I challenged him he told me that he wanted to protect his scale point and as I got married and moved to [...] and was commuting from there he was not sure whether I would continue in my present school or not... What a load of rubbish!

I took maternity leave for three months and during that time another scale point was awarded and I lost out again. Then we had a change of head and the new head was very good. One day her fiancée, who used to come and pick her up after school, told me 'look, you are wasted here, there is a scale 2 post in such and such school, apply for it.' I felt so elated that, after all, he had recognised my worth. I applied for it but did not get the job. Being on maternity leave for three months I was not able to use the educational jargons they were

looking for. The person who got the job was less experienced than I but knew the latest educational terms whereas I did not. I was shocked. I was not prepared for it. ...

Within a few months there was a job in the infant section of my school and the adviser phoned me and said: 'why don't you swap for a year and work there to broaden your horizon - you cannot get a promotion until you broaden your horizon.' I had a day to decide - but I did not think that I could say no because after all they were doing me a favour!

I started there and after Christmas there was an A allowance advertised in that school and I applied. I was literally doing all the responsibilities the A allowance was advertised for - visiting parents, arranging assemblies and so on. I was awarded it without an interview. There was a lot of resentment from my other colleagues. Then suddenly in that school the deputy head left and I applied and got the acting deputy head's job. I am quite convinced that had it been opened to other schools I would not have stood any chance. It was fortunate I was just there. It was convenient for them because they knew what I could do. ... I am working much much harder than I need to ... it is a shame that I have to work so hard to prove my worth."

While Neelum was working as an 'acting' deputy head, she came to realise that white women colleagues were giving her a particularly difficult time

because she was a black woman. She was also convinced that she would not be able to get a permanent deputy head position. She had made so many unsuccessful applications! She knew that she lacked positive 'proof' to 'back' her belief yet she was aware that other white women teachers with less experience were being promoted over her.

Shazia made it very clear in her narration that 'racism' played an important role in her experience. She was articulate, confident and outspoken, yet she found the ignorance of many colleagues and advisers provocative and harmful. She was very angry, banging on the table from time to time as she was talking, her 'body language' signalling direct confrontation:

"When I applied for the permanent supply team (Scale 3), there were twelve of us who were shortlisted for the first interview out of hundred applicants. Then out of those twelve, six of us were selected for the second interview. I was not selected after the second interview. But then after a few weeks I saw one white teacher coming to our school as a supply teacher who was amongst the first twelve candidates but not the final six. She was not amongst the final six but was recruited for the supply team whereas I had been rejected. That really did hurt me because I realised that I must have been a better candidate to make the final six whereas she had not. It was really difficult when she came to our school. I knew that I had been a stronger candidate. I made a complaint and I followed it up. The interview for the supply

team was very easy and I was more or less told that I had got the job. But then when I did not get it I wanted to know why. The adviser then told me at the briefing session that they thought that perhaps my presence, my 'blackness' may not be so valued in certain all-white schools, that they may not be ready for me. Their attitude may be negative. It really demoralised me, 'what can I do?' If there is something lacking in me, I can do something about it, but I cannot change the colour of my skin. ... You seem to go through more interviews than white applicants and also the white applicants tend to have been called up for more interviews than yourself. Yet it is so maddening when you see the advisers or senior colleagues for consultation they always assure you 'oh, you should not have any difficulty. With your qualification and experience, we need people like you.' And yet you are not called for the interview or given the job. Why do they say those things? They must know that they do not mean that. I asked one of the multicultural advisers once 'why there are courses etc. done about the gender disadvantage but not anything about the 'race' disadvantage?' He more or less implied that the black teachers who are capable of making up to the management positions, they actually make it anyway, they do not need any extra help."

The next excerpt from Amarjit shows that she, too, had experienced the same dilemma. She was deeply self-critical and introspective and was reluctant to accept the adviser's comment as her weaknesses:

"I was on a Scale 2 in London in a large junior school. In that school I used to do the acting deputy head's jobs whenever the head was away or the deputy head had some other commitments. I used to take control of the school. So I expected to get a deputy head's job fairly shortly after moving here but somehow or other it didn't materialise. ...

I was teaching in a school here that was fairly similar to the school in London where I taught before. I developed and introduced many new initiatives. The deputy head's job came and I applied. I was very optimistic about that post as I knew that my experience and background would fit perfectly to that school. I did actually make up to the interview stage but was not given the job. I was very cross. They didn't appoint anybody. ... The post was re-advertised but there was no response. I was very unhappy with the situation in which I found myself. I had the experience as well as the specific expertise for the post - I used to 'stand by' when the previous deputy was on a course for two days a week. Having worked as an acting deputy head for two days a week for nearly two terms, I thought that I had better chance. The process of promotion is totally ad hoc and dependent on inspectors and heads. I had been turned down for the permanent

deputy head's job but found myself in the strange position of doing the job! Frustrated in my aspirations and constantly undermined by other staffs as I felt that I did not have the status to carry out my duties effectively, I thought I would resign. I began to wonder whether they were trying to demoralise me and get me to leave the school. I am sure that I was not far from the truth. ...

I was disillusioned and decided to question the adviser about it. I was told that I had not got enough management experience and I had not attended many in-service courses!"

Amarjit found herself frustrated in career terms but she quickly learned that open challenges to the situation were ineffective, and so she had tried to find a personal compromise. She had reluctantly made a series of sideways moves earlier on in her career in order to broaden her experiences:

"The advisor recommended that I pursue a career as an advisory teacher for community languages. I was so shocked to hear his very stereotypical vision of my ability. I was determined not to give in to that sort of pressure at first and continued applying. But in the end I have to have a career move to secure promotion. I feel now that as an advisory teacher, I am at least free, to some extent, to exploit my talent and skills to the full."

Some of the white teachers in the Ealing survey recognised the difficulties that the black teachers had to face:

"The whole issue of promotion - ... depends on a complicated system of which has sometimes been called 'the old boy network', sometimes a system of patronage. In most cases it is a complicated situation, where black teachers are underestimated by their white colleagues and not given access to decision making or school management, even at the lowest level. This may even be contrary to the stated aims of the school" (Ealing's Dilemma, 1988, p. 67).

Likewise, Sarandip was quite bitter about her experience. She also decided to challenge the institutional process in action and use her subjective experiences to influence the decision of the 'powers-to-be':

"I felt that I had to really address the issue. I knew that I was the fittest person for that job but she overlooked me when it came to the question of promotion. I was treated like that on more than one occasion and then I decided to challenge her. I also wrote a series of complaint letters to the education office informing them what was going on. I even asked to have a meeting with the education officer where I put my case and as a result I got my promotion."

Sarandip's experience was similar to that of the following teacher quoted in Ealing's Dilemma (1988):

"I had applied for several senior posts within the Borough. My immediate line manager was supportive, and showed me the reference he had written. When I went to Hadley House and saw the authority reference, it bore no resemblance to what my immediate line manager had written. I questioned the Senior Education Officer who told me sharply, that Authority references have a standard format and not to fuss. ...

I went for many interviews and was not successful. At the last interview I took a copy of my line manager's reference and gave it to the chair of the interviewing panel. I got the job" (p. 81).

Yasmin also felt that she was discriminated against but instead of questioning the authority, she consciously avoided confrontation.

"In terms of getting the higher posts that I had applied for- there were three occasions when I did not get the job. I was very disappointed as I had not met any other candidate during the interviews who had as much experience and qualifications like me. I tried to talk to my head of the department and he more or less told me to forget about the traditional route to promotion within schools."

Nazish's story will highlight how she was not given any chance to further her professional interest:

"I remember once I approached the head to go to an Inservice science course and another male colleague also asked the head to send me to that course. But the head turned round and told him 'no, no, I can't recommend her for that course, she has not got much experience.'...

I can give you more examples. I put my name down to go on science, mathematics and language courses so many times, but instead I was asked if I would like to go on courses on racism and equal opportunities! Now if I refuse to go the head will say that I was given the chance but I did not go. But ideally I want to go on different courses not the ones they suggest!"

Surinder's story offers illuminating insights, illustrating the multidimensional tensions that exist in schools. She did not have the benefit of any careers advice or support. But despite feeling that senior colleagues offered little support to her, she remained highly motivated and began to find opportunities for her own professional development:

"I was teaching History and took responsibilities within the department and across the school. Being the only Asian teacher, I had to do a lot of extra work like organising religious assemblies,

arranging multicultural evening, liaising with parents, translating newsletters and school reports and so on. The other teachers used to come to me for advice regarding Asian pupils as if I have 'given birth' to every Asian child! After four years I applied for a scaled post in the school. I was not even called for an interview. At that time there was the dubious practice of advertising posts internally without specifying the areas of responsibility. Although I had at least two major areas of responsibility, I did not get the scaled post. I realised later on that the appointee was awarded the scale point for the specific responsibilities I was doing. The irony of the situation was that the appointee was not capable of doing some of the responsibilities so I had to take on some of them as well as showing her the ropes! I made several applications over the years without getting any interview even. I decided to apply elsewhere and when I approached the head she told me in no uncertain terms that she would make sure that I did not get any job. There were at least three other teachers who came in after me but had been promoted but I was not!"

Surinder explained how senior white teachers recognised the value of black teachers yet did not consider her as suitable to hold a senior post. She explained her head's attitude in terms of racial stereotyping: an assumption that a young Asian woman would remain in a junior position. She felt unable to say whether this was due to direct discrimination because she lacked

positive 'proof', yet she was aware that other teachers were being promoted over her even when she had proved her capacity to do the job well. Likewise, a white teacher in Ealing's Dilemma Inquiry made the following comment:

"If you are racist you could make it impossible for black teachers to apply for the job - make the criteria difficult" (1988, p. 75).

Anju spoke about the probable effects of non-advancement upon her self-esteem. She wanted to take on additional responsibilities and extend her spheres of influence. For her, diminished promotion prospects appeared to relate closely to an expressed dread of professional stagnation:

"As Asian women we do not get any recognition for what we can do and sometimes I suffer from a terrible feeling of inadequacy. I do a lot of extra job and put a lot of extra effort into the job. I run extra reading classes during lunchtime and after school. I run the book club. Yet I feel pushed down but I do not know how to challenge it. ... I think that my career has been stagnated quite a lot because I am constantly speaking out for racial justice. I do not speak out to create trouble but I can't tolerate when I see some white teachers have negative views and low expectations of black children. I think I should be in a higher position than what I am now but every job I applied for, I never even got an interview. I feel it would be impossible for me to have a

promoted post within a school context. You know that there is this underhand practice of giving telephone reference. I have the feeling that my senior colleagues would not give me a good reference."

It would appear that Anju's concern about telephone reference has some validity as the following quote from the black teachers in Ealing demonstrates:

"Most headteachers are double faced - they give you a testimonial which seems objective and fair, but that is not so when it comes to a reference - they give telephone references" (Ealing's Dilemma, 1988, black teacher, p. 68).

Similarly Kuldeep voiced her anxieties and resentments about the obstacles she encountered in her professional life:

"I am unlikely to get promotion even when I feel I am highly competent. In my school I am always given the difficult classes, remedial classes and not O or A level classes. I am unable to use my talent and skills to the full. I do a lot of extra work like translating newsletter in Punjabi, making myself available during parents evening to talk to Asian parents and so on. But I do not think that senior teachers really appreciate me as much as they ought to. You know I approached my head about two years ago to find out if I could

be released one afternoon a week so that I could study part-time for a Master's degree. But he made it very clear that he was not going to sanction my release. "

Summary

The findings from other surveys also confirm the perceptions of my interviewees. The Independent Enquiry in Ealing (1988) found from the testimonies of Headteachers and from school visits that 'overseas qualifications' were considered to be a barrier for career advancement in the case of Asian and Caribbean teachers. According to some of the headteachers the under-representation of black teachers in Senior Management posts in Ealing schools are due to following reasons:

"Ethnic minority teachers are so few in numbers. ... Few black teachers apply. I don't know why they are on lower scales. ...

The worrying factor here (regarding Asian applicants) is that they've had a tremendous number of jobs. ...

Teachers are on the scales they are because that is where they should be. There are no black teachers coming in who deserve promotion. ... No Asian teacher worth his ability has ever been stopped from promotion. They are on lower scales because their powers of communication are not good, e.g. breadth of vocabulary. It

is their standard of English which will block their career path. The barriers to career advancements are their own weakness. ... Prejudice has not held them back: if they were promotable they would have been. Heads fear taking the risk of promoting them" (Ealing's Dilemma, 1988, pp. 72-74).

The large scale CRE survey also found:

"Our research shows that ethnic minority teachers are ... disproportionately on the lowest scales, even where their starting scales and length of teaching service are similar to their white colleagues. They are also likely to be ... in ... units concerned with the needs of ethnic minority pupils, sometimes away from mainstream education and normal ladder of promotion (p. 7). ... 76% of ethnic minority teachers were on Scale 1 or 2, compared with 54% of white teachers. At the other end, 7% of ethnic minority teachers were in deputy or head teacher posts, compared with 16% of white teachers" (Ranger, 1988, p. 40).

The Community Languages Team in Manchester made the following comments to the Macdonald Inquiry Panel (Burnage Inquiry):

"As Asian teachers, we would say that definitely we are not getting our due rights in this Authority. The number of Asian teachers in this

Authority is alarmingly low. We are suffering institutional racism in this Authority ... The issue is not lack of qualifications amongst South Asian teachers, but a systematic blockage of opportunity even to those who have recognised qualifications in subjects other than community languages" (Macdonald Inquiry, 1988, Chapter 23, p. 3).

Martin Mac an Ghail (1988) also observed:

"All the teachers spoke of the under-representation of blacks, the mechanisms operating against their promotion and their isolation in mainstream schooling (D.Gow, 1988; 'Blacks still hit by Racism in Schools', The Guardian, 16 March, p. 10). They were particularly critical of the pressure to become the multicultural teacher in their school" (p. 152).

Saleh Mamon (1990) also found that the re-organisation of ILEA schools in the eighties had a devastating effect on black teachers' careers. Eighty-eight per cent of the black teachers interviewed reported that their position had declined quite significantly (pp. 116-117).

All the above large-scale studies found that black teachers with greater experience and vastly superior qualifications were bypassed and overlooked when applying for promotion. This was even true when the jobs in question were in areas such as Mother Tongue teaching and Anti-racist work where

the contributions of black teachers had been instrumental in the development of such work. It became clear from my interview data that to gain promotion some of my interviewees changed their professional interests like joining the multicultural support service or going in to community language teaching, but were still unable to fulfil their ambition. The lack of promotion and limited opportunities to progress in their careers were strong reasons expressed by many of the interviewees for their feelings of frustration, low self esteem and disillusionment. The first generation teachers had to prove their teaching competence before they were accepted as teachers and felt that experience gained teaching in other countries and their work in schools as unqualified teachers counted for nothing as far as promotion and career advancement were concerned. Conversations with second- generation teachers also suggested a build-up of frustration at the lack of opportunities for professional development and career progression. But, on the whole, my sample of second-generation teachers had progressed their careers further than the first generation did, albeit in 'ethnic' areas. It seemed that despite having wide-ranging academic, social, managerial skills and strong personalities, these teachers as a group had to move into multicultural posts to gain any promotion.

Another important feature to emerge from the data was that these teachers' career path had not been carefully planned; yet at all stages it would appear to have been influenced by issues relating to 'race'. While this can be explained in part by personal choices and commitment, at certain times

other factors such as identity and the experience of working in a racially structured society, had helped shape and influence the available options. The comment made to Shazia by the adviser shows how some advisers still have reservations about the ability of black teachers to 'fit in'. Under such circumstances it is not difficult to envisage how black teachers can be overcome by a sense of uncertainty when based in all white schools. I tried to identify the factors which had shaped these teachers' careers. The ways in which these teachers perceived their careers may enable us to identify how individuals manage the particular structural barriers they are likely to encounter. Throughout their accounts, my interviewees made reference to how their skills and competence were not recognised. They were also concerned that appraisal procedures for promotions to senior management positions were highly subjective and therefore, susceptible to patronage, prejudice and discrimination. They felt that there was no set pattern or precise criteria for promotion. They also mentioned how they were stereotyped into particular roles linked to their perceived ethnicity. I had heard many a time how some of the black teachers had been placed in very difficult situations with little or no support and how they had been overlooked for promotion. Even though they had the ability to succeed, it was hard to reach the top! The majority of my interviewees felt that they had not been enabled to fulfil their full potential and that certain opportunities had been denied them. They appeared to have reached as far as they could go in their career terms. Those who were on B or C allowances commented that it would be difficult for them to move further up the system. Like myself, they

felt that they had not been advised or supported appropriately to move forward in their careers. None of them seemed to have a clear vision of their careers when they set out, although they were ambitious to progress and be 'successful' at what they were doing. Many had made several attempts to seek promotion within schools but did not succeed. Some of them mentioned that no one had advised them of appropriate steps to take or any experiences which would be of particular benefit. So they followed untraditional, possible 'high-risk' career routes, but many had no other alternatives. Very few deliberately sought such a path (Section 11 or a post directly connected to the goal of racial equality), others felt that there were few alternatives when their careers in schools were blocked or when their skills and talents were unrecognised.

The constraints which some of these teachers faced in gaining promotion within hierarchical systems which are gendered, classed and racialised highlight the tension that exists within the education system. Some of my interviewees recognised that as black women they not only had to fight oppression from white men and women but also from black men. They were conscious that their lives and experiences could not be separated from historical and material reality. It would seem that most of these teachers had encountered structural, institutional and/ or personal racism. These racisms were more subtle in form and therefore more difficult to identify. The majority of my interviewees felt the root cause of this inequality to be the racism of the population at large and the consequences of having the population at

large, in the shape of heads, heads of departments, inspectors and now governors, playing an increasing role in appointments and promotions. Feelings of frustration, disillusionment with the system and the slow pace of change were expressed by most of them. But they all had a strong sense of self-identity and determination which had enabled them to respond positively to the discrimination and personal hurts which they encountered. Their stories reflect determination, confidence and optimism despite the incredulity, disinterest and indifference shown by the senior teachers.

My interviewees were convinced that it was not inadequate or inappropriate qualifications which constituted the major obstacle for black people in recruitment and promotion - it was the structural position of black people in society. Husband (1982) has argued that black people are 'excluded' from participating equally with white people because even when they have the same qualifications, stereotypes of black inability operate against them. Such stereotypes also have the effect of limiting black people's chances of occupational mobility. To conclude this section, I will quote the comments made by Nazish, which will portray the feelings of many:

".. the animosity I have faced all these years is unbelievable.... All these incidents have made me so nervous and shaky that I do not even think of applying for a higher post. I tend to think that life is hard enough as it is being a classroom teacher, if I have to hold a senior position, how difficult and awful that will be. In a way you can say that

it is my own fault but I feel so intimidated and harassed by the whole system that I do not intend to apply. ... You have to fight your own battle and the energy you lose fighting the system and the inbred racism, you are too tired to try for any promotion. These people can take away your confidence."

Professional difficulties - experiences of racism and racial discrimination - from educational authorities, white colleagues, parents and pupils

Now I will examine the various kinds of subtle harassment which my interviewees encountered in the actual job situation in schools. They all spoke movingly of their experiences. A number experienced repeated instances of prejudiced behaviour which not only damaged their chances of achieving their ambitions but also shook their sense of self confidence to the core. The less direct forms of racism, which the black teachers faced from those in authority positions, were difficult to deal with. Again, as before I will quote from other studies to demonstrate some similarities in perceptions.

Experiences of Racism and racial discrimination- from educational authorities and white colleagues

All the teachers in the study, except one (the deputy head in a special school), thought that there were structural and institutional constraints as

well as a degree of intentional and unintentional racism in the education system and the schools. Some of them were anxious to stress that they had under-played the degree of racism they had encountered. Their accounts ranged from purely descriptive to reflective interpretations of their experiences.

First generation teachers

Jasvinder described the power and the politics of the LEA. Even though she knew that she 'had a good case' to appeal against the decision of the authority for not giving her a particular job, she could not struggle against the hierarchy. She made quite an extensive reflection on her experience and was convinced that both racism and sexism played their part:

"The LEA could not substantiate their arguments and offered me some money as a compensation. I was advised to take my case to an Industrial Tribunal and I am sure that I had a good case. But somehow I did not want to go through that lengthy procedure and lacked the courage to fight. When you are on your own and trying to prove a point against so many odds, you are really very vulnerable. I used to get threatening phone calls which I am sure were deliberately done to weaken me or to break my morale. Also I had to encounter hostility and resentment from the other teachers in the unit. The suspicion, resentment and isolation made me so weak

psychologically. The situation was really disheartening. I did not pursue the case and accepted the money and resigned."

Soma was unable to pinpoint any specific incident but focused on her day-to-day experiences within and outside school. She felt that generally people coming from Britain's former colonies were made to feel inferior in white British Society.

"How can you trust anything any more if you have been treated like this throughout. ... I know of European language teachers (she even volunteered to give me their names!) newly arriving in England and receiving DES numbers without having to do any extra training in England other than a probationary period. ... I am sure we have been discriminated against because we were qualified outside Europe. I have wasted so many years doing all these language assistant's and education assistant's jobs! I have only recently got a permanent job. Now if I try to apply for a promoted post I know the sort of excuses they will give me 'you have not got enough experience, you are too old'. So what is the point? The DES has really messed me about. "

Mumtaz mentioned how her roles and responsibilities were undermined as she was barred from direct participation in classroom management. She had a strong personality but still found it hard to challenge the assumption:

"What has been interesting in that school was the struggle for the teachers in that school to accept me in the sense where they would trust me with a class. ... It has actually taken me six months in that school before they thought that I could actually take a register without the kids running riots around me. Even now if my class is too noisy my colleagues are always too eager to find out what is happening! Suddenly the head would appear not to give me any support but to inspect if I am coping or not. You are always made to feel so inadequate. I sometimes think that if I had not had years of experience behind me, I would begin to doubt my own expertise. And if teachers feel that, kids sense that and they try to exploit the situation."

Gita was vociferous about the discriminatory practice she encountered. Her account probably sounds overdramatic but she felt that she had been treated very insensitively and one can appreciate from her narration how badly she felt. One of the most important factors was that the incident had increased her sense of insecurity:

"The deputy head asked me to prepare an assembly on Guru Nanak's Birthday- I was only given a day to prepare for the assembly. I did what I could do overnight - ... but at the end of it no body from the staff (the head was not present at the assembly anyway) actually said anything to me or thanked me. I didn't mind. But then the

following week another white teacher did an assembly on something else and the deputy head mentioned at the end of the assembly 'thanks very much Mrs [...], it was very good. We only told her yesterday and she prepared it so beautifully, it was so well presented. We enjoyed it, didn't we?' I straightaway went to him afterwards and pointed out that I did exactly the same the week before and nobody appreciated me or said anything to me. He only said 'sorry' but deep down you feel that there is some sort of resentment. I am the only Asian teacher there in the Junior section, you feel that you need someone to talk to sometimes or at least some encouragement and appreciation to carry on. ...

Next term I did another assembly and because I 'ticked off' the deputy head last time, this time nearly all the teachers came and said how they had enjoyed the assembly. But deep down I feel that they do not appreciate as much as they do their own people."

Likewise, Neeta pointed out how her hard work as well as the Asian children's contribution was unacknowledged. She felt convinced that the headmistress did not like the Asian children and was always finding excuses to humiliate them in front of the rest of the school:

"I organised an Indian dance and music evening with a group of children for our multicultural evening and they really did it beautifully. But the head did not even thank the children or me. I went and

complained about it and then she said 'sorry, I will tell them later on.' I told her 'it does not matter now, you should have thanked the children at least in front of their parents. I don't mind whether you have thanked me or not, but the children who danced and performed did deserve a "thank you"'. You know why she did not bother to appreciate my involvement publicly – because I am an Asian teacher and the pupils were also Asian! This sort of thing happens all the time."

Being unable to 'go along' with her superiors, Ranjit described how she felt undervalued at times. She bitterly commented how she was never been consulted during the planning of the curriculum and how she was actually prevented from making any contribution to staff discussions. Her strong sense of social justice led her to speak out against injustice; she felt, maybe that had disadvantaged her in career terms. Also her outspoken approach attracted the animosity of her colleagues. She was very unhappy in her situation:

"I am rebellious in nature from childhood and I used to challenge every little decision that I thought was not right. So my relationship with the head and the senior teachers was not really amicable - a love / hate relationship existed. They became quite antagonistic. If I had worked within their framework and their thinking and didn't challenge them so much that would have been all right- but they

could not deal with me. I found it difficult to work with colleagues with such attitudes. To humiliate me sometime the head tried to treat me like a classroom assistant, sending me to help other teachers. During staff meeting the head and the other senior teachers always tried to ignore my viewpoints and suggestions, even sometimes making comments like, 'what have we done wrong now?' I was made to feel as if I was there only to create trouble. The atmosphere was not right to develop anything, especially education. But instead of becoming weak I became a stronger and more determined person."

These incidents would seem to support Gillborn's contention that 'teachers who are not 'prejudiced' in any ... sense, nevertheless act in ways that have racist consequences' (1995, p. 172). As I did not interview any of the senior white teachers, I am unable to confirm whether they were apathetic or there was any other specific reason for their behaviours. I can, however, point out that the approach adopted by senior teachers gave black teachers the impression that they were unfairly treated.

Meena described in some detail how she felt terribly nervous when no one spoke to her in the staffroom. She became more acutely aware of obvious things like conversation in the staff room would turn to whisper as soon as she entered and so on. She was initially almost overwhelmed by the isolation and apparent rigid boundaries between other white teachers and herself. She did feel under some kind of threat and was very concerned.

During the course of our subsequent conversations, she admitted that she had begun to reach a new understanding of the staffroom politics and was developing strategies to cope with the situation:

"When I started I was surprised to find the level of racism that existed in the staffroom. Whites were in the majority and as soon as I walked into the staffroom I felt as if I had interrupted something. The other teachers never made any special effort to come and talk to me. The fact that I cannot get a higher post has nothing to do with my ability but to do with the structure of the society. Education is a transference of the dominant culture to those being educated. This dominant culture as far as black people are concerned is racist."

Ravinder also described her feelings of segregation in school staff room. She was at pains to inform me that very few schools were an exception:

"I know we are only part-time from MGSS but when you are sitting in the staff room, no one talks to you or makes you feel welcome. ... They behave as if they do not care whether you are there or not. Even the heads do exactly the same."

Neeta first spoke about her experience during her training years and then she continued about her experiences in the schools:

"I had an awful time during my training years. ... We were only two Asian students there and we felt almost unwanted. The other students used to group together but even if you wanted to join them, they would make you feel as if you didn't belong. ... Some of the lecturers were quite sympathetic while others were not so sensitive towards our needs. ...

I was the first teacher in that school to point out that some Asian parents needed a language interpreter to be able to communicate effectively with teachers or some important letters should be translated in mother tongues. But I was told that I was not in a position to comment on the school's policy. I was also challenging the racist attitudes of my white colleagues and I found myself confronting other senior teachers. As a result I was labelled as a 'trouble maker' by my senior colleagues and I am sure that they had blocked my promotion."

Ramindar Singh, Teresa Brown and Aamir Daar conducted a survey into teachers' experiences and found:

"racism in schools is one of the major reasons for the ethnic minority teachers' sense of frustration and bitterness... the existence of racism and racial discrimination in educational institutions and the teaching profession" (1988, p. 48).

In a similar vein, Parveen described the covert and overt attitudes of her white colleagues. She realised that these negative feelings had created a sort of insecurity and she became more deeply conscious of her position as a teacher:

"The other thing is that they don't tell you on the face but inside a lot more is going on. It is very hard to judge from what these white people say. On the face they are very sweet, I think that is their British way. When I challenged my deputy head and the faculty head, all they had to say 'sorry, we didn't mean to upset you'. But you know they don't mean that - they will do exactly what they want to. ... I feel very upset at times and that affects my teaching as well. ...

In my place if there had been a white teacher, she would have gone so high career-wise, possibly on C or D allowance but just look at me (clicks her fingers as she spoke). All I have got is a contract in my hand and I just have to go on with that otherwise there is nothing for me. ... I know so many Asian teachers with higher qualifications not getting any promotion. These people would leave the position vacant, rather than giving it to a black teacher. They just wait for 'their' candidate. This is racial discrimination."

Hina was conscious of her vulnerability as a black teacher. She was quite tearful during the interviews and admitted that her experiences were fairly traumatic. There was a fair amount of hurt and she felt quite intimidated at

times as she did not always understand her white colleagues' motives. Moreover, it became clear during our subsequent conversations that her main concern was interpersonal relationships with her colleagues. She needed some moral support, some reassurance that her difficulties were real:

"I feel as though I am constantly being watched to see whether or not I can cope.... If I spend too much time with Asian children or parents the other white teachers start making cryptic comments, but they don't even notice when I spend an equal amount of time with white children. ...

When I took some time off after my husband died, I was made to feel that I was committing a crime. They could not say anything officially as I had a doctor's note, but the way the head and the deputy used to answer the phone ... especially when I went back ... there were always sarcastic remarks about long-term absence and so on, which I found very disturbing. I used to feel so depressed. ... There was no question of any sympathy what- so-ever. I am sure my subsequent illness was a direct result of that."

Second generation teachers

Yasmin presented a coherent account of her experiences and her perceptions. She considered the aspects of racism from quite a few different

aspects and tried to clarify her reflections. She was anxious to establish the validity of her accounts and introduced me to the other teachers about whom she made some comments.

"Both the secondary schools I worked in, they never actually had 'racism' as an item on the agenda and they did not want to know. Even the second school where they were so positive of appointing black teachers, even they did not think that it was necessary. ... One black colleague there had a tough time with the kids and discipline and he was struggling very hard and lot of that were tied up to this fact that he had a strong accent and that was all that mattered. His skills as a maths teacher did not seem to pull. The school never seemed to tackle the problem efficiently - it was always a discipline problem never a 'race' issues. So although the school was good in appointing black teachers, when the crunch came if you needed any support to succeed, that was not there. ...

One of the senior teachers in another school told me that she liked the way I handled some 'racist' incidents and then said 'we have a new Asian Science teacher here and he is having some problems because the students do not take him seriously. I would like you to sit down with me and him and talk to us about how you handle certain situations so that he can learn.' But I turned it down because I did not feel that I wanted to tell another colleague how to manage their work and also I refused to see him as a 'problem'. Perhaps the school

needs to look at certain policies and decide how to deal with 'racist' incidents. ... But it is the sort of thing that white people have done to us where they set us up against each other. ... It is a sort of 'divide and rule' situation which I was not going to engage on. ...

Strangely enough I think I faced racism only when I started working at MGSS but not from colleagues at MGSS but from teachers in the schools that I went in. It was their attitudes which showed you immediately that you have to be better than the rest, for them to accept that you are all right. ... I would be allocated to schools as part of the peripatetic service and each year some friendly person from MGSS would say 'I know you are going to such and such school and I have heard from the grapevine that they want to know are you the usual failing Asian teacher?' I would say 'no' but they would say 'I thought that I would warn you'. It was a norm whichever school I was placed into. ...

The school had just had an experience of an Asian teacher who had not succeeded in her role. I say that carefully - I actually do not think that she had failed in her role. She was a newly qualified mature Asian woman who had not got through her probationary year and was put in a temporary one-year contract as a support teacher. I do not think that she had the tools for the job. She did not have the experience. She was set up to fail - she was going to fail unless she was a very strong character. She left and I was put in and immediately it was 'ah, are they following this one up by another one

who they can't place anywhere' and because I was tipped off, I went in all guns blazing and said 'right, now you know what has hit you'. ... There was a whole lot of criticism of the Asian woman teacher who had left before me and it was very very difficult for me to explain that she had never been trained for the job that she had been asked to do. And the head who was an enlightened head had actually appointed her because she decided that she had a lot of Asian families who were suffering racism in the area and she needed an Asian teacher as a role model. All the hopes and expectations were right but what she did not do was to match those expectations with the candidate she had got. ... I know now that three years on the same teacher is doing those jobs really well in another school, but ... at that time she did not get the back up that she needed. ... Not only she was supposed to be a role model, she was supposed to liaise with all the teachers and advise them on the needs of the Asian kids. She really did not have the experience to deal with them and no body had ever talked to her about them. I do feel bitter about it. ... She was set up to fail and she failed miserably."

Sometimes a black person is appointed as a notion of 'tokenism'. The appointment of an ineffective single black person amongst white staff can be more harmful as that can help to perpetuate the notion of 'failing black teacher'.

Like Neeta (first generation teacher), Sarandip first recounted her experience during her training years:

"I did a BA degree in English Literature and Drama from the University of London and then I did PGCE from Roehampton Institute. It was very hard at the beginning to be accepted as equal being an Asian studying English. It was an almost exclusively white class. So in a way there was that initial problem of being accepted, people were not just tuning in to me. They expected me to have a heavy accent or have problems with my English. There was always that initial doubt about my capabilities which I thought was unfair."

A study of the life histories of 18 black women students in the ITE at Fairways, a college in the South of England, found:

"the experience of being black students within a predominantly white college raised overwhelming concerns about racism which overrode their concerns over any other single issue and went beyond individual experience to unite the different categories of black women in specific ways" (Blair & Maylor, 1993, p. 59).

Similarly Sarandip had some rather unhappy memories of her college days. The attitudes of her lecturers and fellow students started creating doubts in her mind regarding whether or not her academic ability would be adequate.

Her extreme shyness prevented her from asking for more help and she had to work frantically hard. The cumulative effect of that was a damaging loss of professional and personal self-esteem. She continued:

"I felt pushed down but I did not know how to challenge it. ...as Asian women we do not get any recognition for what we can do and I am sure we do good work... but we are put in a pigeonhole. ... Also the language the other white teachers use about us and the way they try to put us down ... they have a way of talking down to us... just the tone of voice (she mimicked a couple of phrases)...that develops a terrible feelings of inadequacy in you. ...

Even though I am in a senior enough position, the heads and the senior teachers find it hard to take me seriously, they still try to adopt that patronising way. ... they try to undermine me using subtle strategies like questioning my decision and so on. But I try to go through the correct procedures in confronting these people. ...

A lot of heads in [...] are very happy to see me if I go in there in my traditional role of doing the bit on assessment. I am going in there as a specialist in a very narrow field. ... I am ok in a kind of little woman role, 'yes, she is alright when doing a language assessment on one child and tell us whether his/her Gujarati is up to a certain level or not,' ... but they are not quite as comfortable when I go in there wearing my team leader's hat negotiating their allocation or pointing

out their training needs to improve the achievement of all pupils in the school. ...

It is a sort of subtle racism. It is not actually blocking me for promotion, it is blocking me from doing my job effectively. ... You know the sorts of things that head teachers are always too busy to see you. I know all teachers face that but I am convinced that as a black woman teacher wanting to do it I face it even more."

Sarandip mentioned how during the early years of her teaching she used to avoid confrontation and undue visibility, 'spent the break and lunch time in my classroom'. She felt an outsider in the predominantly white cliquy environment of the staff room. Her self-esteem received a boost when she got the adviser's post and her confidence increased steadily. But she pointed out how she had experienced greater resistance from white teachers when she became the adviser. She even mentioned how she had overheard conversation in the staff room that she was only appointed because of positive discrimination in favour of black teachers. She stressed how her decisions or opinions were not necessarily challenged but not implemented fully or properly. She viewed her experiences as a product of 'subtle racism'. When asked to consider whether 'gender' was also involved or not, she started analysing her perceptions, quoting examples of white women advisers who did not have to face this sort of difficulty, pointing out that 'racism' magnified the problems in her case. She stressed that even white women teachers did not accept her authority position so readily.

During our conversations, Anju spoke of her experience of feeling isolated. Like Sarandip, she had often experienced conflict simply because of 'me trying to teach English to white children'. Afraid of working in an environment where she was rejected by white colleagues. This led her to avoid public situations in which she felt vulnerable. She mentioned how she had tried to involve herself more with the children in order to deal with potential isolation amongst colleagues. She had to be very careful because she knew that she had to survive:

"There are one or two people at the top who might help you when you go to them but it is the struggle of the everyday life that is difficult. You know these white teachers, they are always watching you. You feel so vulnerable at times. I try to spend a lot of time with kids, running extra reading sessions, book clubs and so on. "

Anju narrated the following incident, which shows how other teachers resented the promotion of another Asian teacher. She confided in me that the comment of her colleague made her so sceptical, she had decided not to apply for any promoted post in that school:

"When Mrs [...] (an Asian teacher) became the second in department a white teacher asked me 'did you hear that Mrs [...] has now become the second in department?' I replied that I had heard. She continued 'I am surprised, after all she is not one of us'. I was shocked and

dismayed. I know that I should have done something because her comment was blatantly racist but I did not have the courage."

Amarjit made some interesting comments. She was a very confident and experienced teacher and was quite vociferous. She had come face to face with some 'threatening' situations but dealt with them quite effectively:

"I remember when I had to go and attend my first meeting of advisors in [...]. I entered the room and met some people whom I had not met before and introduced myself as a current acting advisor. I think if anyone had a weak heart, they would have had a heart attack because the majority of them could not hide the fact that they were quite shocked to see me there in that role. They thought I came in there to bring some coffee or something and did not expect me to announce that I was actually going to have a meeting with them. ...

I remember another meeting when one of the advisors was so blatantly racist. Whatever I was saying, he kept on saying 'I don't understand' and the way he was talking to me. He said that at least five or six times within a space of about half an hour. I came out of the meeting and said that unless he accepted and listened to what I had to say and be serious about it, I would not continue. I was so angry. ... he followed me out and spoke to me but he did not apologise. When I asked what was the problem, what was it that he did not understand, he confessed that he did understand and there

was no problem at all. I would never forget his malicious and contemptuous looks. I wish that I had taken that matter further then because it was definitely an incident of 'racism' but being new in the post, I did not pursue."

When asked to consider whether 'race' and gender both had acted together in the above incident, Amarjit stressed that she faced more barriers than many white female advisors, like one of Osler's (1997) interviewees, 'of course black women's experiences were not white women's experiences' (p. 142). She also mentioned how sometime she had found herself at the centre of some confrontational situations without any help from her other white female colleagues. She had also recognised that it was pointless and too time-consuming to try and change other people's attitudes. Waving her hands, signalling despair, she discussed her strategies:

"People have certain perceptions of us and I don't feel that as an Asian woman I have to go round fighting that battle. I don't think that it is my battle, if people have wrong perceptions it is their problem. If it affects me personally and if it undermines my work and authority, then I have to challenge it. I have also have to make sure that right people are witnessing my challenges."

Neelum narrated how she could not enjoy her achievement. Indeed, she was very aware of the tension between herself, as acting deputy head and

her other colleagues. At times she did not feel free to voice her concerns to colleagues. Like Amarjit, she also felt isolated when she had to go and attend some meetings:

"When my appointment was announced all the Asian teachers from the MGSS sent me a card and some flowers but some of my colleagues at the school were openly making cryptic comments! It is easy for others to say - you are over-sensitive or touchy about it, but it was terrible. There existed a lot of jealousy and resentment amongst other staff. I remember when I went in for the interview - there were two of us and my white colleague was so sanguine that all her friends waited after school to congratulate her. But when they found out that I was given the job they were so shocked that they could not even congratulate me! Our interview was on a Wednesday but it was not till the following Tuesday that my other colleague, who did not get the job, could come and talk to me; that was also because she had to. Even now she is very cold and cutting and I know that she will never forgive me - there are times when it comes out so blatantly. ...

I think that not many white people like to work under black people. You have to combat that racism - you have to earn your respect. It is so painful at times - you are always on your guard. If you pass, if you earn your respect, you are all right but if you have not life is hell...white teachers do not have to face this sort of behaviour. I have

seen other colleagues supporting a weak member of white staff, but would they support a weak Asian teacher?...

After I got this acting deputy head's job, I had to go to a head teachers' meeting. We were thirty of us there and I was the only Asian and I felt dreadful - I was the odd one out and no body came and talked to me. You have to face the resentment - they do not make the effort to talk to you or make things easier for you.

Superficially I have been accepted but it really hits you when you become aware of the existence of racism at the core - it is very frightening. In my school there was an unhappy situation after my success for a long long time and I could not enjoy my success! Most of the staff later on congratulated me on their own but they could not do that in front of anyone else - which is a shame - it should not be like that. As if they could not let each other know that they were pleased at my success - they behaved as if it did not happen."

Black women experience the 'double edge' of oppression, they are not encouraged to be ambitious. Like Bryan et al (1985), who observed:

"In terms of the power relations operating within British society, black working-class women are located at the base of the social structure. They experience a triple subordination on the basis of their 'race', gender and class. ... For the young women in this study, racism was the primary determinant of their lifestyles outside the domestic

situation, though the interaction of gender and class with racism was acknowledged" (p. 14).

I know that teachers are not working class women but my study of the black middle class teachers demonstrates how 'race' and gender interact in complex ways to affect them as well.

Nazish reiterated the following accounts of her memories of racial incidents in her teaching jobs quite agitatedly. Her feelings of trauma still lingered on. We have had several conversations, the amount of frustration and tension in her really staggered me. Although her experiences are most extreme, they also demonstrate some of the difficulties that the other black women teachers experienced with white colleagues, parents and pupils.

"As far as help from my senior colleagues, I received none. One day I remembered making a casual comment to the deputy head 'I am so tired, this job just lets you down sometimes'. Instead of sympathising or enquiring why I said that she, very rudely and abruptly commented 'well, you ought to be sure. If you do not like this job, you can get out'. That was very hurtful, we all know how stressful teaching can be sometimes but she did not sympathise with me. Another day she told me 'you do not use any of your ideas, you do exactly what other teachers tell you to do'. I was just treated like a dirt! There was I, a qualified teacher and she had the guts to dictate to me like that! I was

so shocked it took me over two years to get over that incident. I used to cry almost every night. I used to dread going to school and even now I find it hard to forget that incident. I always think how harshly those people have dealt with me. I have no energy to apply for any senior position. I feel as if I am a pawn in an educational game and I have become a victim of the whole situation. ...

I was shoved into that school without any consultation as if to say 'this is what we have decided for you and you better accept it gracefully.' I felt dreadful. I was just told that I have to take an infant class. I was given a very small room with no materials or books or any assistance, there was not even any furniture. All I managed to get the day before the school opened were some tables and chairs. It was a very small room with no facilities and no help. I was thrown into that classroom and had to cope with that situation. I remember another incident. One day a white teacher told me that there would be a Christmas party at such an such a time, but she never mentioned that I had to lay the table. I heard her then mentioning to the head of infants how I was not ready for the party! I did not have a clue how to set up a class for a party being secondary trained! All she could do was to stand there and criticise me showing me up in front of the children undermining my authority. That particular teacher was a Section 11 staff but I have often heard her saying 'why do they do so much for these black children?'...

I am supposed to read the mother tongue story to the Asian children. The idea is that they remain in the same classroom and we read the story in one corner. But none of the other white teachers will allow me to sit inside their classrooms. I have to find a space, not always suitable, to take them and read the story. ...One day I picked up enough courage to go and sit inside the room with the children, but the teacher was so annoyed and cross! She kept on coming over and telling the children off in front of me for being noisy. But I knew that they were not noisy at all. They were just excited. I did not dare go inside that classroom again!"

The expression of hurt and pain on Nazish's face as she exposed her inner feelings, told its own story.

Shazia gave a critical and illuminative insight into the 'patronising' attitudes of her white colleagues:

"You got the feeling that they were so surprised to find the things that you could do and they almost thought you are brilliant when actually you are only average. It was racism but it was not a negative racism; it was almost a kind of patronising racism. ...I found it quite hard to adjust to this kind of treatment."

Likewise, Kuldeep made this interesting observation:

"It was the middle-class thing to do not to mention racism but just to avoid us, like they would not come and be friendly with me or be sitting next to me but secondary staff rooms are so cliquy anyway. I knew that I was in a position where they could not block me and so what I had was the nice middle-class liberal bit where they avoided me and I did not have any relationship with them."

Even though she made out as if she did not care, during the course of our subsequent conversations it transpired that she felt quite lonely and isolated at times. She laughed (ironically) when she remembered how the other teachers did not take the 'race' issues seriously:

"I remember raising racial awareness as an issue at two departmental meetings followed by a governors' meeting and it was very much like 'it is not a problem, we have not got many black kids here, so we have not got any problem'. This was in contrast to the LEAs policy. ... That was actually a very salutary experience in terms of not personal racism but lack of awareness of the issues surrounding racism by people in education even in an 'enlightened' school. ...

The school believed that they had no black kids, so no problems and the strangest thing was that no adviser was challenging that assumption".

Surinder talked about that 'subtle kind of thing' but adopted a different approach to deal with it:

"In most staff rooms you almost have to go in denying the fact that you are black and make it out that you are one of them and then gradually kind of infiltrate and then raise the issues that concern you and you have a far better chance of succeeding. ... I suppose that again is that subtle kind of thing... but I am determined now that they are not going to hurt me as an individual. ... Having said that, sometimes it does hurt, you do go away doubting your own competence!"

Surinder's determination to avoid being treated as a black person means that she is obliged to hide something of herself, her identity and experience. Again one can feel her feeling of self-doubt and lack of self-esteem.

Attitudes of pupils and parents

All my interviewees have documented in general terms their treatment by the pupils and parents in schools. One major area of concern was name-calling, derogatory remarks and verbal abuse, both orally and in the form of graffiti from children. It is often remarked that children do not see colour in their interactions with others, but my interviewees felt that skin colour was often the first thing that pupils identified. It might be argued that pupils'

expressions were uttered without 'commitment to racist beliefs' (Hatcher and Troyna, 1993, p. 116) and the negative remarks might be discipline issues rather than 'race' issues. But the teachers in the study diagnosed the problem as one of racial abuse and harassment from white pupils. They were convinced that the way the specific words were used, they were meant to be 'racist' insults. They felt that as black people are considered extraneous to white British society, such insults attack the most important element of one's identity. The Swann report points out that racist name-calling 'is a reference not only to the child (individual) but also by extension to their family and indeed more broadly to their ethnic community as a whole' (quoted by Kelly, 1990, p. 89). Some of them were also subjected to insults from parents. These personal remarks of a racist nature can have a long-lasting effect on one's personal, emotional and psychological state. My interviewees were quite confident about their 'racial' identity, but still they found the racial taunts they encountered rather demoralising; 'being ... black (in a white society – my addition) is seldom an easy experience' (Ward, 1990, p. 219).

Osler (1997) in her study of sixth-form students' attitudes to teaching as a career quoted the following remarks from her interviewees which correlate closely with the perceptions of my interviewees:

"The Asian teacher at my primary school was given quite a lot of stick by the parents ... it was just the parents who were white

who had the objections to her. They were basically racist objections (Nazir). ...

Asian and black teachers have particular difficulties that don't apply to white teachers, like disciplining the children, the white kids. They don't give them as much respect as they would a white teacher." (Godfrey) (p. 163)

Troyna and Hatcher (1992) described incidents of name-calling, racial abuse and bullying of minority ethnic children in their research in the Midlands. They concluded that the formation of racial prejudice begins at an early age through socialisation mostly in the family but supported by the mass media and peer groups.

First generation teachers

My first generation interviewees mentioned many instances of silly, unpleasant behaviour either from parents or from children. Some of the following comments will highlight the types of behaviour they had encountered from parents or from children. Some incidents were quite aggressive making the teachers feel uncomfortable.

What became clear from Neeta's narrative was how some parents had a negative image of black teacher:

"Some parents are a bit 'funny'. What I mean by 'funny' is that when they come to the classroom they do not talk to me. They talk to my white assistant instead. It is odd because one mother has got an Indian husband and her daughter is from that marriage but even then she does not talk to me."

Ranjit commented on the threatening behaviour she was subjected to. What shocked her most was the mother's reluctance to listen to what actually happened:

"One day while I was on playground duty, one Asian boy scratched another white boy's face. I did not notice anything neither did they come or complain to me. They were not from my class. During the afternoon lesson, suddenly the white boy's mother burst into my class with the boy and shouted in front of the kids 'look at this boy's face, look at it. You would have punished my son if he had done this to ... (mentioned the Asian boy's name) face. But you did not do anything. What were you doing out there? You are all the same.' She was implying that I did not do anything because the victim was a white boy, I had shown some sort of favouritism to the Asian boy. She was so aggressive. She had doubts about my professional integrity. ... I mentioned the incident to the deputy head, who just told me that in future I should direct parents like that to her. ... What the deputy head did not appreciate that I was not even given a chance to say anything

to the mother concerned. ... She just walked in, shouted at me and walked out."

Soma had a similar experience:

"One of my pupils used to forget her PE kits frequently. I told her to ask her mother to remind her to bring her PE kit. Next day the mother suddenly walked into the classroom and shouted 'I don't take order from teachers, let alone black ones like you.' With those words she stormed out of the room. I reported the incident to the head, who said that he would deal with it. The child was removed from my class but I did not receive any apology from the parent. It seemed incredible that a head would deal with an incident like that in such an insensitive way".

Jasvinder was very sensitive, spoke slowly, softly and generally a gentleperson. It took her nearly two years to get over the shock after the following incident:

"A small group of mothers were standing by the gate, chatting. As I walked by they all stopped talking and kept staring at me. Then suddenly I heard 'Seen the black bird', followed by subdued laughter. I froze for a moment but did not know how to react. So I just walked on. I mentioned the incident to the head who tried to make the impact

of the incident 'lighter' by just laughing and muttering something like ignoring the 'ignorant' people. I felt deeply offended. ... I used to avoid going in and out of school while the parents were outside."

Ranjit, Soma and Jasvinder found the behaviour of the senior teachers concerned more disheartening. They felt that instead of just ignoring the incidents, the senior teachers should have taken some positive steps. Whilst it is not possible to draw any general conclusions without further exploration of the conscious or unconscious forces at play, or without having any knowledge of the views of the senior teachers, these incidents illustrate the general sense of insecurity and vulnerability felt by my interviewees.

Hina was really shocked to see that the class teacher 'just accepted' the comment which in her view was 'racist'. But she realised that she was hardly in a position to tell her:

"During my first term of teaching at the school, one day I was taking a class on my own. The class teacher (Asian) was away and I told the class that the teacher would join us at the end of the lesson. When she came back she told the class that she had been to the doctor because she had a rash on her face. One of the students commented 'oh, you people, it is hard to tell when you have a rash because you have that sort of a colour.' It might have been just an innocent comment but the way that pupil said it, with a 'nasty' grin I felt that his

remark was underpinned or tinged by racism; and the way the other pupils laughed at his comment, I was angry. But the teacher just accepted it and did not challenge it. I felt very angry but I did not have any power."

According to Mumtaz the following incident was an example of 'blatant racism'. Again the class teacher did not take any action, so she had to deal with it herself:

"One day when I was supporting a class, one student was mimicking my accent and then two or three others started putting on funny Indian accent and thinking that I was going to accept it. I could not do a lot at the time. ... But during break time I decided to keep them behind and asked the class teacher (white) to be present there as well. I explained to them how I felt and told them that I expected an apology from them. ... First they tried to deny the whole thing... but at the end they admitted that they were in the wrong and they apologised."

Likewise, Gita faced the same sort of problems. The school definitely needed to tackle the problems but instead did nothing:

"The children at that school gave me a tough time. They were rude and difficult mainly because I think that they had very negative image

of black people. They always used to pass remarks about black people in the playground and whenever I raised the issues with my other colleagues I was advised to ignore them. The school adopted the policy of 'doing nothing' to check incidents of racist behaviour or name calling on the grounds that it is an attention seeking behaviour, and it is best not to pay too much attention to it."

These incidents raise the serious question about how much understanding of racist abuse and harassment is there among white teachers. It could be argued that the white teachers concerned practised some sort of colour-blind approach and treated these incidents as unimportant.

Second generation teachers

My second generation interviewees also described in detail many instances of 'racist' incidents they had encountered either from parents or pupils. Again they were quick to point out that there were many more instances which they preferred not to think about. Obviously they might have missed out some of the incidents of racism they had encountered.

Sarandip narrated an incident where she was not directly insulted but the mother definitely had some 'racist' notions about 'black' teachers. She felt that by ignoring the 'incident' the school had failed to tackle the issue effectively:

"What we have had is an interesting situation with parents where a white child who was not supposed to be my language targeted pupil used to come and join my group of language targeted pupils. I did not see any harm in him coming with the others as he was benefiting from some of the things we were doing. ... The class teacher was also happy until one day the class teacher called me to ask 'you have not had any trouble from X's mum, have you?' I said 'no', 'right then it was not you'. What had happened was that there was a black work experience trainee and the mother had stormed in the day before saying that her child was not going to be taught by this 'nigger' and they thought that she was referring to me. ... I was fairly new to that school so I did not insist that the school needed to tackle his mum. The child obviously had no problem in accepting me but his mum definitely had some problems."

Nazish had some unpleasant experiences. What hurt her most was that not only the mother accused her wrongly, the deputy head concerned did not treat the matter seriously either:

"One day while I was on playground duty, one Asian child pushed another white child who fell on the ground and apparently his coat was torn. I did not have a clue as they did not come to me or complain. They were not from my class either. In the afternoon the white child's mother just burst into my classroom, threw the coat at

me and started accusing me 'look at this coat, look at it. What were you doing out there? ... I will send you a bill. Will you be able to replace it? Why don't you people look after our kids properly?' and carried on and on. She would not even allow me to say a word in edgeways.... I was not treated fairly - I was treated as if I deliberately let the Asian boy get away with damaging a white boy's coat. The funny thing was that I reported the incident to the deputy head who did not do anything. They behaved as if it was nothing."

Shazia was quite specific about parents' attitudes. Again she was horrified that the deputy head concerned did not take the matter seriously. And being a supply teacher she did not have much power to do something about it either:

"On the parents' evening, I heard some of the parents talking to the deputy head heatedly about 'race', about the 'Pakis'. I felt very embarrassed as I was sitting just in front of them and talking to another white parent. ... I suspect that this particular white parent did not spend as much time with me because they also heard the conversation of the other parents."

Even Bhavini, who did not think that she faced any discrimination, made the following comment:

"I got on reasonably well with the mum (white) after the initial stint 'what are you doing here?'. But the dad (white) found it very difficult to talk to me in the position that I was in and he would always ask to speak to the head and I had to say to him 'he is not available, so can I help? I am deputising for him' and he did find it very difficult. Initially he would have just gone in thinking that the man is a head and the woman is not a head or a deputy and an Asian woman is definitely not. ... That is the only problem I have encountered."

Gender may well have been the root cause of this father's behaviour but Bhavini was convinced that the dad was more 'awkward' because she was an 'Asian deputy head'. Her story demonstrates how 'race' and gender interact in complex ways and how perceived ethnicity may influence interpersonal relationships between teachers, pupils and parents. The incident also highlights Bhavini's own uncertainty as to the underlying cause of her different experience.

Yasmin described a disturbing incident where a child led her on with a deliberate lie masquerading as a truth to land another child into trouble. What disturbed her most was not the actual incident but the way a 'racial' connotation was used:

"The secondary children are more likely to be openly racist and make racist remarks. ...I would not like to label a six-year-old child 'racist'

because a six-year-old is just imitating adults without knowing exactly what that meant. ... But you still get that subtle sort of 'you are not going to tell me what to do' look. ... I remember one incident. One white child was being told off by me and walked away mumbling and another child (girl) came in and said to me 'he called you smelly Paki' and I said 'oh, did he, so we better sort that out'. I called him back and said 'I did not quite hear what you were mumbling' and he said 'I called you stupid sod, didn't I?' Anyway that was the sort of language kids used in that school. I first told the boy that it was not a nice thing to say and then turned round and asked the girl 'are you quite sure that you heard right?' She said 'yeah, I heard it right'. I told her 'thank you for telling me, we will have to tackle that one if I hear it next time' and decided to leave it. But later on I found out that this girl was trying to land the boy in trouble because she had done this sort of things before. She knew exactly what to do to get him into trouble and in a sense the child who used that lie to get another pupil into trouble is more dangerous than the other one. So there is racism but it is not the racism that is direct and it is not the racism that you can prove."

Likewise, Amarjit gave an account of her experience. Again being there in an advisory capacity, she realised that her 'hands were tied' but the deputy head's inaction made her really angry:

"During a parents' evening, I heard a white sixth former (who was there to escort parents to right departments and so on) making comments (loudly) to other pupils about black people in general and was using offensive languages. I asked her name and told one of the deputy heads about it. I thought that he would be most concerned to find out that one of their pupils was behaving in such a way. But he did not treat the matter seriously as I found out later on that he had not spoken to that pupil about it. I thought that the pupil needed to be talked through the incident."

Kuldeep tried to rationalise her feelings. She mentioned how sometimes she had to deal with tension and hostility within her classroom, quoting instances where white pupils thought that she was favouring black pupils and vice versa:

"There is that fine line. ... You can get into that hold for expecting racism where people do not see it and very often what it is is actually 'paternalism' and not 'racism', although I suppose the end effect is the same. It is easier to deal with openly racist people than this paternalistic type who you can't quite get at because you don't know what to do.....

I don't think that the training colleges and the Universities prepare black teachers to deal with racist abuses - be it from parents, be it

from kids or be it from other colleagues.... Most of us have learnt to survive - because we have to survive. ...

Some of the pupils from one of my senior classes were writing racist remarks on the cover of their books, like 'Paki' and 'Blacky'. I sent them with their books to the deputy head. Instead of reprimanding them, all he did was to remove the cover of their books and they were allowed back in my class. ... So I realised that I had to deal with them myself and I tried to confront them. I was really shocked to hear their 'explanations'. They told me as far as they were concerned I was devoting more time with 'black' students, which to them seemed 'unfair' and the graffiti etc. was a sort of 'rebellion'. ... Whereas the black pupils felt that I dealt with those white students leniently. ... It was like a no-win situation. ... What I felt that they all needed some real discussions about 'race' to thrash out their feelings and talked to some of the senior teachers. But they did not do anything."

She felt really 'let down' and thought that the deputy head's action was nothing more than a 'cosmetic exercise' and by not tackling the issue effectively, the school was not helping either the white or the black pupils.

In a virtual echo of the previous teacher's observation of the deputy head's action, Anju made the following comments:

"One day while I was on playground duty, I overheard one child saying 'has she ducked her head in the loo?' I reported the incident

and wanted the deputy head to treat the matter seriously. But I was advised to ignore it/ pretend that I had not heard anything."

Similarly Nazish made the following comment:

"One day when I was on playground duty I overheard one white boy saying to a black kid 'have you just taken a trip to the chocolate factory?' I reported the incident but nothing was done and I was told to leave the kids to sort their own problems out."

In another study (Cottle, 1978), a female black teacher illustrates the difficulty of tackling racism in the classroom.

"But I've heard 9 year old children use words 'Nigger, darkie'... I hear the anger behind it too ... But what do I do with those children? Some I try to teach, some I find seem to be beyond learning about the irrationality of prejudice. It's too late for them and they're no more than ten or twelve" (p. 68).

Emphasising the advisory nature of her job, Surinder made a comparative analysis of the attitudes of primary and secondary pupils:

"What we have got are the attitudes that are being formed in the top end of the primary but the ability to articulate those attitudes does not

come till secondary. ... I am horrified at some of the comments kids come out with."

Again she felt that she was not in a position to tackle those issues, though she always had tried to voice her concerns to people in authority.

Summary

In the same way that racial identities are fluid and complicated, the experience of being black and female is not the same for all black women, even if they belong to the same ethnic group. In order to avoid any misinterpretation on my part, whenever it was suggested that discrimination had been experienced, the teachers were asked to clarify their meaning. I am aware of the complex intertwining of elements of racism with sexuality. Sexism and racism both have structural as well as ideological roots; as social divisions they both have a number of features in common although they are not comparable in every way and the disadvantages of both are not, it seems, necessarily cumulative. I am also aware that neither sexism nor racism are perpetuated or sustained solely by what occurs in education. One has to consider wider issues such as ethnicity, class as well as social, political and economic constraints. I know that even apparently blatant cases of direct racial discrimination may involve other elements and forms of discrimination. Impact of gender and 'race' within any research cannot easily be predicted but my aim was to examine how race and/or gender structured

these teachers' lives. As single variables, 'race', gender and class may have been insignificant, but the interaction of 'race', gender and class may have contributed to the difficulties these teachers experienced. As Troyna (1994) argues 'race', gender and class operate to position people differently in the structures of British society, but it is visible, or 'racial' difference by which black people are excluded from occupying certain positions. And given the experiences of some of the teachers in my study it would seem appropriate to suggest that they experienced structural, institutional and subjective discrimination mainly because of their skin colour. I also acknowledge that there could be different domains of meanings or interpretations of their experiences, but experiences they highlighted did not shed any further light on the issue of gender. I have attempted to focus on their interpretations of their experiences. It could be argued that gender was always present as a feature of these teachers' experiences, but its meaning was evident to only one or two. Except for one teacher, they were unable to identify the specificity of gender in any particular act of discrimination. Only Nazis, mentioned one specific incident of sexual harassment. The lack of gender examples cited by the teachers in this study does not mean that gender was not a significant factor or that it did not feature in their teaching experiences. It would seem that the teachers did not highlight gender to be an important factor because 'race' overshadowed all their other teaching experiences. And I was far more interested in finding out how they had interpreted their teaching experiences and how these experiences framed their world rather than giving my own interpretation of their experiences.

In the accounts of the women who had experienced racism in their teaching lives it was possible to see the lasting imprint that it had made on their lives. It has been suggested that teacher sensibilities and their construction of reality are based on their own everyday understandings of life (Avery and Walker, 1993; Cohen, 1989; Kailin, 1994; King, 1994; Taylor, 1993). Following on from this, it could be argued that the senior white teachers in some of the above mentioned incidents had a strong case for not addressing the black teachers' complaints, because they did not know how to deal effectively with racism, as it did not fall within the remit of their everyday experience and understanding of life. The white teachers' inexperience of racism might also have led them to believe that it was better to ignore the situations. As the opinions of the white teachers were not sought it is impossible to say conclusively if they understood the effects of racism on the black teachers, or to provide any concrete reasons for their inaction. But it is safe to assume from these teachers' stories that the effects of racism on black peoples' lives are not always understood or acknowledged. Their stories also reflected how racial stereotyping and racist myths often went unchallenged. My interviewees' views are to a certain extent shared and verified by East and Pitt (1989) who argue that schools reflect the reality of racist oppression in British society. Maylor also argues 'My own study confirmed that racism plays a major role in the teaching practice experience of black student teachers' (1995, p. 252).

There is no doubt that the discourses and practices of racism vary, change between contexts and over time and discrimination/ racism is a difficult thing to measure. But it would seem appropriate to suggest that in the lives of the women interviewed for this study, racism, whether experienced directly or indirectly, was an unmistakable feature. Although my interviewees' experiences occurred as individualised instances, the pattern of those discriminatory practices indicates that 'race' underpins all aspects of black teachers' professional lives. Such discriminatory practices formed a pattern, regardless of the school they taught or whether they were first or second generation teachers. The perspective and experience of my interviewees were that as a black teacher, one was automatically put under the microscope: mistakes were quickly pointed out and their significance distorted. They also felt that the effects of direct and indirect racism from senior teachers and advisers were especially menacing, as material injury was likely to be added to the insult. Performances were likely to be affected. The process of institutional racism made many of them feel 'invisible' in the classroom and marginal in the society; as Etter-Lewis (1991) maintains "Race' is not a hidden quality that surfaces only in connection with external events, it is an essential component of existence imposed by a prejudiced society upon the daily lives of black (people)' (p. 44). It seems safe to assume from the interview evidence that no matter how hard black teachers work, skin colour can remain a permanent barrier. The pressure on black people to work twice as hard in order to 'prove' themselves is by no means unusual (Essed, 1991; McKellar, 1989). The constant need to 'work twice as

hard' to prove one's ability in teaching illustrates that those black teachers had to be very strong indeed to survive.

The subject of racism was not a taboo subject for my interviewees and featured in every interview, with only one exception. Sometimes it was treated as one of the inevitable features of life and referred to almost in a casual way. On other occasions individuals would express their hurt or anger at particular occurrences or situations. Some teachers felt racist abuse in whatever form had a huge impact on their lives. It is, however, usually the overt, wounding type or 'experienced' racism that affects the day to day living of its 'victims' most. It became clear that the majority of my interviewees had endured a denial of their human dignities when they were humiliated by overt racist insults from students, parents, and in some cases, colleagues. They would have preferred to raise awareness by discussing the racist incidents rather than had the subject side-stepped or swept under the carpet. Some of my interviewees felt that the reason for white teachers' inaction was due to their incompetence and lack of knowledge. However, it would be safe to assume that one reason for their inability to deal with the pupils' and parents' racism and/or sexism was due to their own racist and sexist beliefs. As a result, my interviewees were often left to cope with the stresses as they felt that they had little support from senior teachers.

The schools' denial of responsibility for children's acts of racism has a number of effects on black teachers. First, they feel isolated because of the

lack of support from the school. Secondly, they are rendered vulnerable because of their lack of status. Some of them were concerned that when they reported white children's racist behaviours, the senior teachers viewed that as their inability to maintain control in the classroom. And that perception might have affected their promotion prospects. My interviewees also mentioned that senior teachers did not recognise the emotional restraint which they had inevitably exercised when faced with racism, let alone value that skill as a professional skill. In that respect it was unlikely that such skills were rewarded when scale promotions were being made.

Evans (1988) states that 'the presence of black faces does not change the essential nature of an institution, nor does it alter its ethos' (p. 185). There is no doubt that black teachers can provide positive role models to black children but sometimes a person's ethnicity can be 'used' in ways which may at first appear positive but are actually negative. Some of my interviewees were 'disheartened' by the fact that the senior teachers treated them as 'professional ethnics' (Blair, 1994; Blair and Maylor, 1993) and regarded them as an 'asset' in relation to black children and 'ethnic' related curriculum areas only. The all round contribution that they felt they could make to their respective teaching roles was 'persistently ignored' and they became de-skilled. Some of them also felt that they were not only viewed as 'expert' on 'ethnic' issues, there was clear pressure on them to 'prove' that they were able to perform 'mainstream' tasks equally well. Clearly, if skin colour and ethnicity are used to determine the type of activities black teachers are able

to participate in, existing negative views about black inability will be reinforced and the development of black teacher competence could be inhibited. The other insidious type of racism was when they were excluded from matters of professional consultation and from staff meetings etc. Their contributions were often undervalued or ignored and their opinions not sought even on issues relating to the needs of black pupils. Such actions resulted in creating a sense of trauma. Some were not fighting it just in case it affected their career and promotion prospects. Some mentioned how they felt isolated in schools. The majority of my interviewees felt that even though some senior white teachers talked of equal opportunity, in reality it did not exist; it was rhetoric. Disempowered and isolated, even their potential as positive role models was diminished and it made working conditions for these teachers fairly intolerable at times. The findings from other studies (Banger and MacDermott, 1989; Bhattacharya, 1990; Bradford and Ilkley Community College, 1991; NUT, 1990) also confirmed my interviewees' perceptions: black teachers' skills generally unacknowledged and undervalued, their careers stunted, their contributions marginalized and they were generally burdened with the responsibility for the multicultural curriculum.

Most of my interviewees believed that their progress had been affected by racial prejudice present in the school structures. Colour counted more than skills in opportunities for promotion. The other studies had also observed the same trend. In 1984, HMIs in their report had observed:

"Teachers from ethnic minority groups expressed feelings of vulnerability as members of predominantly white staffs. This was seen partly as a matter of numbers, partly of status, as positions of responsibility are often held by white teachers whatever the ethnic composition of the school" (p. 8).

In 1985, the Swann Report not only underlined the black teachers' plight but pointed with surprising directness to cause and remedy:

"it is clear that ethnic minority teachers have been and are still subject to racism both in gaining employment and in advancing their careers. On our own visits to schools we have been concerned at the number of fully qualified ethnic minority teachers whom we have met who are 'stagnating' in the system, in posts far below both their capabilities and their experience. ... We urge both the CRE and all those involved within LEAs and schools in making appointments to devote far greater efforts to identifying and overcoming racism within the teaching profession" (p. 103).

The following comments from Ealing's Dilemma (1988) will highlight some of the underlying issues I have discussed in this section:

"a black female teacher was racially harassed by the Deputy Head. The teacher concerned registered her complaint with the offices of

the Chief Education Officer. No attempt was made to discipline the Deputy Head. She was told to find another school as the Deputy Head was a known member of the National Front! (p. 89). ...

Generally speaking institutionalised racism is the main cause for under-representation of black teachers. ...

I'm sure racism is a barrier for black teachers... If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem - that would be my final comment" (pp. 75-6).

Sethi (1990), in detailing a catalogue of racist experiences suffered by black teachers in the school where he worked, states that in the late 1970s the negative experiences endured by black and white teachers were treated differently. For example,

"If students are foul mouthed and abusive to a white member of staff the problem is recognised immediately as a matter for the usual disciplinary procedures, but the management tended to ignore or minimise the importance of similar abuse, delivered with racist embellishments, if a black teacher were to be on the receiving end" (Sethi, 1990, p. 48).

Sethi (1990) bemoans the fact that the concerns of black teachers are still not taken seriously by head teachers: 'Even today there's an elitism about whose concerns merit disciplinary attention' (op.cit; see also Evans, 1988).

It seems twenty years on little had changed as Ghuman (1995) concluded:

"All the first-generation Asian teachers were convinced that structural racism in schools, and racial prejudice from their white colleagues, have adversely affected their professional development and promotions. ...

The opinions of second-generation Asian teachers were more diverse and varied. There were some interviewees who held similar views to that of the first-generation teachers" (pp. 117-8).

An added frustration for teachers in my study was the inability to 'prove' covert racism and the apathy displayed by schools with regard to dealing with racist issues. Very few schools' discipline policies addressed the issue at all, or at least that was the perception of the majority of my interviewees. The skin colour cannot be hidden and for many black teachers in my study their negative experiences were beyond their control but were directly related to skin colour. Sometime they were 'relatively harmless' – as in the case of children commenting on South Asian teachers' skin colour and other times they were more harmful, like children shouting verbal abuse. It could be argued that as racism is an everyday occurrence (Essed, 1991) for black people, it is something that can be mentally 'prepared for'. However, though it might be expected, racism cannot be 'prepared for' and black teachers should not be expected to 'prepare' themselves for dealing with racist abuse. It became clear from the interview evidence that racist abuse in whatever

form did have a devastating effect on black women teachers' self-confidence. One senior white colleague told me that there were some complaint procedures within the authority but very few teachers knew about them when I asked. They also mentioned that even if they knew they would be reluctant to complain and the reasons for that were given explicitly by Amarjit:

"Unfortunately not many complaints will be reaching the office! That does not mean that the incidents are not happening. We are all aware that many of us feel vulnerable when we need to complain about anything like that. It is still a public procedure and in many a times the victim is made to feel guilty and the onus lies on the victim to prove his/her case. First, it could be quite expensive. Secondly, if you win you might still be trapped in the very institution that treated you in a racist way. That makes it further difficult for a complaint to succeed and then there is that aftermath - the underwritten feelings that people have. I can sympathise with people if they do not want to go through that procedure."

Coping Strategies

There is no doubt that schools and teachers are being affected more and more by the demands and contingencies of an increasingly complex and fast-paced post-modern world. Moreover, since the 1988 Education Reform

Act a broad mainstream drive to raise standards in education and training by introducing market competition between schools, developing a tightly regulated National Curriculum with an associated testing programme, reducing the influence of Local Education Authorities coupled with severe fiscal restraint, have imposed considerable strains on teachers' working lives. All teachers now are faced with the task of trying to implement reforms which could reduce much teaching to survival. As Hargreaves argues:

"Throughout the 1970s and 1980s writers like Westbury, Woods and myself showed how a lot of teaching consisted of coping strategies that teachers had evolved over the years to deal with situational constraints, accountability demands, testing requirements, shortages of resources and conflicting expectations. Studies of teaching showed how teachers had to struggle hard to define and defend worthwhile selves in the face of all these demands - to preserve and express the people that they were, and to protect and promote the moral purposes which gave meaning to their work " (1994, p. 30).

But the black women teachers have to 'cope' with the added constraints of 'race' and gender. As the majority of my interviewees talked extensively of the extent of 'racial harassment' in their working lives, I have concentrated mainly on the range of strategies they adopted to survive these pressures and constraints. I felt that my interviewees echoed the same sentiments as expressed by Bryan et al. (1985) in their study:

"the very fact that black women are still fighting, despite the obstacles and sacrifices involved, to gain a valid education bears witness in the crucial importance education continues to play in our lives. Our struggles, after years of second-class schooling, confirm that we have not given up and no amount of racism and discrimination can deter us, now that we have come so far. This refusal to give in and accept the confines of our race, class and sex has been the single most important factor of our survival in Britain" (p. 88).

Almost all the interviewees have 'fought fiercely' for their survival amid manifold racial and in some cases, gender oppression. Their particular consciousness at the intersection of 'race' and gender became a site to resist oppression in their professions. They all spoke enthusiastically about their coping strategies which exhibited their personal creativity amidst external constraints. Support from their families, partners, communities and other black teachers were mentioned frequently. The shared experiences of racism created a special bond between them and other teachers in a similar situation. The isolation which black teachers may experience within their institutions has led many to seek support through networking. Some of them mentioned how the Black Teachers Centre Group in [...] had provided more support. They felt that they could go and confide in other teachers there and that intimacy was vital for their survival. Black teachers' support group not only give individual teachers personal and professional support but it can also act as a pressure group to influence and monitor those LEA policies

and practices which affect the lives of black pupils and teachers. Although many had clearly experienced overt as well as covert racial, and in some cases sexual, discrimination in their careers, and had to cope with very painful and hurtful experiences, they were determined to challenge the oppression, move forward and continue to teach.

First generation teachers

Gita described how she had created a secure environment at home to relieve some of her pressures:

"I do not know whether I would have survived all these traumas had it not been for the wonderful support of my husband and family. ... You know my sister-in-law is also a teacher and we decided to buy our houses next to each other. ... We have even knocked the wall between the two houses so that we can just come and go. ... At school only a few members are sympathetic to our needs but at least I have someone at home."

Likewise Neeta tried to overcome her difficulties by 'ignoring the incidents and by de-sensitising herself'. But during the course of our subsequent conversations, she admitted that trying to 'ignore' was a painful process. She also pointed out that being a member of the centre group for black teacher was a wonderful experience:

"This sort of thing happens all the time. But probably because I do not allow these things to get to me and try to ignore and de-sensitise myself. ... This centre group that you all have started is very good, it is really therapeutic. ... I usually look forward to going there."

Mumtaz echoed the same phrase:

"I benefited from being a member of the Black teachers' group. ... I don't feel so isolated now. ... I know I can go and talk to other black colleagues who are able to understand our pressures. ... I know they can't do anything, but at least I can 'let my hair down' there without feeling bad."

As a black teacher, Ranjit held herself particularly responsible to teach black children and that consciousness 'kept her going'. Her initial interest in working with black children had helped her to develop particular skills and specialities from the earliest stages of her career. She felt that she could help develop the inner resources of black pupils in order to minimise the impact that negative experiences might otherwise have on them.

"At the time I started teaching, I had a very hard time. There were not many black teachers in the city and I used to feel very isolated. But there were a group of Asian children whose language need was so vital. ... I felt that with the knowledge that I have, I must help them.

If I don't continue who will teach them? ... That feeling of doing 'some good' has really helped me to survive."

Like Casey's black women teachers for whom

"being a black teacher means 'raising the race'; accepting personal responsibility for the well being of one's people, and especially, for the education of all black children" (1993, p. 152).

The majority of my interviewees benefited from the support of family, friends, other teachers, advisers and communities. Specific examples of that were given by a number of teachers:

"There were times when I encountered hostility and discrimination but fortunately I had some wonderful support from unexpected sources - teachers from other schools, our community and sometimes parents. ... In [...] some of us decided that we would get together regularly to support each other. We used to keep on talking and talking, sometimes getting angry, sometimes feeling despondent, but it was good. ... I have survived, haven't I?" (Jasvinder)

"During the years when they were not giving me my QTS or I was not getting any job, often I felt like giving up and trying something else.

But somehow I persevered.... May be my family's support and encouragement or may be my own resilience." (Soma)

"I was well aware of the nature and workings of institutionalised racism so I became involved in a whole range of community initiatives from which I gained a lot of strength to survive." (Parveen)

"I always try to remember what it means to belong to a family and the community and somehow that keeps me going." (Hina)

"The multicultural adviser helped me to deepen my understanding and strength. ...She taught me how to tackle racism without getting hurt and other strategies. ... I don't know whether I would have survived without the support of my family, though." (Ravinder)

Second generation teachers

Before I started my fieldwork, I had some 'naive' assumption that second generation teachers, more 'westernised' in both appearance and use of language, would face fewer difficulties. But soon I was surprised to find the sense of isolation and alienation amongst them. The teachers in senior management faced more stress and isolation. Being the first or only black woman in a senior post increased the burden of responsibility on the individual. Like my first generation teachers, they also derived a

considerable amount of strength and confidence from their families, friends, communities and other black teachers.

Yasmin reiterated the support of other teachers and especially she thought that other white people were more comfortable with her as she was married to a white person:

"Most of us have learnt to survive - because we have to survive. It sounds like a battleground, I know that this is not always true, there are a lot of good things about, but just pick up things at work and try them again. Certainly in my second school there were three of us and we used to talk to each other at great length. It was a tremendous help. ...

As a black woman quite often doors open for me because I am not in a black relationship, but in a (white) mixed relationship. A lot of white people find it easier to accept me because they think that I must be a bit more white than others."

Yasmin was accepted as knowing the 'white cultural repertoire', like Casey's black women teachers, because they knew

"that my daughter was black. ... I was addressed as a person who understood at least some of the black cultural repertoire, someone who knew some of the passwords" (1993, p. 109).

Sarandip had her mother, grandmother and other successful Asian females as role models, not to mention the support of her husband, friends and other Asian teachers:

"I am thankful to my mother for making me retain my Punjabi language and culture as much as I could. ... In a way I was lucky because I had a cluster of support from friends and some Asian colleagues. ... My husband has helped me as well. ...

Both my mother and grandmother had a very successful career and I try to look up to them now. I did think that I lost my way at times and I became very caught up with this 'racism' trap but now I know that I can fight it and survive.... There were a few incidents when I felt that I had been discriminated or belittled but I tried not to dwell on them. ... I literally tried to forget them. It is my survival technique although I was usually left with a feeling which told me that people had been unfair to me, I felt the injustice and the rejection. ... So when I go to a school I try to find out who are going to be my allies and take it from there."

In a similar vein Nazish found strength from other influential Asian people:

"And you know, life was sheer hell at times. I used to go home every night and cry. ... I overcame that by involving myself more socially with my community. ... I met some Asian people in positions of power

and responsibility and I said to myself 'I can do this too - these white people are not going to stop me.'

Neelum had to look beyond the support from her colleagues and involved the parents. It was parents from black communities, rather than her colleagues in school, who gave her the recognition and support she needed to be effective in her work. She felt that black parents offered her support in her day-to-day work by their appreciation of her presence on the teaching staff of the school. She was able to establish good relationships with them where her cultural background, her linguistic skills and her understandings of their needs were all assets which could be demonstrated. She remembered her involvement in the parents' group with affection:

"I was determined that my colleagues' animosity was not going to keep me down. I was going to forge on ahead and keep fighting. When I got the acting deputy head's job, I used to arrange regular meetings with the parents so that I get the support from the communities. And you know, some of the Asian parents were so wonderful - they gave me the strength to survive."

Both Shazia and Bhavini found the support of their parents and family vital.

"My parents have been a major influence in my life. ... They have helped, supported and shielded me all these years. ... Now my

children give me the impetus." (Shazia)

"In my educational background, I have never come across an Asian teacher but in my family background, I am surrounded by teachers. ... I have supportive parents. They were willing for me to go ahead and I suppose that obviously has given me the strength. ... I think that family background has a large part to play and how supportive your family and those who are closest to you are. ...

I think that the black teachers' group which started a few years ago was again very useful as a support group for us. ... I don't like to see myself as a role model but if that is something that some people need to move up, then 'yes' that is a positive one, a way forward for the city.... I think there should be some funding for ways of encouraging teachers to support each other. ... When I started going out to meetings and so on, I met other Asian teachers, I did make a point of introducing myself, which provided me with a sense of solidarity and strength." (Bhavini, deputy-head)

Surinder recalled how she had started the Black Teachers Group in order to make links with other teachers:

"After about eight to ten years of teaching, I suddenly had this impetus and drive to start this female black teachers' group so that we can all meet and share our experiences. You can say that I did

that not only for other Asian teachers but also for individualistic gain. Talking to other teachers had helped me to cope with my stress and problems."

Surinder's professional goal and personal beliefs were well integrated; it was a central part of her role to speak out on behalf of black children, communities and teachers with whom she was working. Networking with other black teachers provided her with support which had been particularly important in her personal and professional development. She also recognised the wider political benefits of such networking in seeking to promote the interests of black teachers and children more generally.

Other ethnic minorities in senior position had given Amarjit the energy to continue:

"I remember attending two national advisors meetings where there was one Iranian in one meeting and one black in the other. It sounds funny but it was quite reassuring to find another non-white person there and somehow I felt confident that if they can do it, I can too. ... It is quite difficult in schools where you are surrounded by people who are not sure about your capabilities and always give you that impression that they are judging you, ... another black face give you that feeling that you are part of a group and not on your own."

Anju reflected on the changing nature of the teaching with which she was faced:

"Teaching can be wonderfully rewarding at times.... I think that the way the things are now, the media and the rest of it, we get a very bad publicity. ... But to survive you have to state your conviction and stick to it and make sure that you don't let pressure or little hideous comments get to you, ... drip, drip, drip, that water torture - make sure that people don't get round you that way."

Summary

All my interviewees described incidents which in one way or another indicated certain kinds of hardships which their career imposed upon them. Some had to struggle with their lack of power. They did not feel free to voice their concerns to senior colleagues but they all made conscious efforts to survive in an unjust and racist environment. Some adopted a relatively 'tolerant' approach to negative experiences and devised some sort of 'defence mechanism' to deal with them. Some avoided other teachers who were critical of them. Some realised that it was easier to conform to the customs and norms of the institution and decided to act carefully. Many received a high degree of support from their family, community and even from some of their pupils' parents. Some of them mentioned how the black teachers' group had provided informal support for them. Burton and Weiner

(1993) identify some of the benefits of networking, which include support and solidarity, overcoming pressure and isolation, and the sharing of expertise and advice. Given the experiences of some of the teachers in this study it would seem appropriate to suggest that many used their negative experiences as learning events. Each negative experience was reinterpreted and reversed in an attempt to produce positive results. Clearly, these teachers regarded their negative teaching experiences as providing them with opportunities for developing and increasing their professional competence. However, they mentioned that the skills they developed in combating racism were not rewarded when they applied for promotions. They were often intimidated, humiliated but always tried to look at the problem objectively and highlighted the ones that could be dealt with and acted accordingly. They were committed, dedicated and had enormous self-confidence. They were continually seeking within their professional lives to find creative short-term methods of managing racism and long term responses to it. As role models and sources of inspiration and motivation they hoped to instil in black children confidence in their own ability and aim to foster resistance to societal inequalities. Rather than despairing about their situation they were determined to keep fighting and adopted various strategies to come to terms with the situation and step forward.

It is possible to assert that black women teachers occupy a unique position in teaching. Their teaching is influenced by their multiple social roles. As black women they bring an understanding to the teaching process of what it

means to be black and female. Teacher educator, McKellar considers it fitting that it be 'part of the role of the black teacher to think of the wider concerns of education; the positions of groups in society; the differential rates of achievement of pupils; the way schools induct pupils into different roles in society' (1989, p. 82). She further argues that black teachers should be concerned with more than 'the form and content of the education process in one's classroom' (Ibid, p. 82). She also believes that as 'black women teachers are most likely to be able to understand the issues involved in throwing off oppression', this additional teaching role 'becomes part of their lot' (Ibid, p. 83). I can conclude that teachers in my study had a deep insight into how society treats both black people and women. They were aware of the many factors which disadvantaged black pupils and how their presence in the classroom could provide strategies to counter these oppression. My interviewees emphasised their particular commitment to black pupils or to the black community more generally. They also pointed out that black women teachers need to ensure that **all** children achieve their full potential so that black women teachers play a 'critical role in the life of each child' (Johnston, 1993, p. 72).

My interviews with Asian women teachers in this study led me to conclude that experience in Section 11 or alternatively funded multicultural or anti-racist initiatives in the 1980s gave some of these teachers the chance to enhance their professional opportunities. But many professional development opportunities open to the teachers in the study during the

1980s no longer exist. Some of my younger interviewees mentioned that due to recent changes in education there were very few advisory or inspectorial posts. They felt that there was a need for a supportive mentor for qualified teachers. A number of younger teachers were considering the possibility of moving to other parts of the country to achieve promotion. They were also hoping to work in a more positive environment where racism would not be part of their everyday school experience.

It is important to state that my interviewees had a variety of experiences but they were aware that those experiences differed in some significant ways to the experiences of white teachers. But in actual fact, for many of the women their negative experiences made them more determined to develop their professional competence. It is also evident that the teachers' negative experiences overshadowed their positive ones but most of them stressed that they did have positive experiences as well. They did not see teaching as a lifetime of struggle against racist attitude and practice. Many regarded teaching as a career which brought them joy and fulfilment through educating others. As role models some of them felt that they could help develop the inner resources of black pupils and instil in black children confidence in their own ability. They felt that if they could maintain positive attitudes and high standards of teaching, some of the processes of societal inequalities could be avoided. Despite a day-to-day pragmatic approach to their work, many of my interviewees had maintained their commitment, determination and optimism. Whilst acknowledging the danger of being

seen only as 'the black representative', some of them mentioned how they would support and encourage young black colleagues. Some of them were actively involved in the black teachers' group, mentoring other younger black teachers to achieve their full potential. They were aware of the political nature of education but were committed to create a more positive future for black teachers and black children.

Conclusion and Way Forward

Introduction

Education has experienced major policy changes over the last decade. This is the consequence of central government policy, either specifically directed towards the reform of education or towards other parts of public sector which have nevertheless impacted on education. The introduction of the Education Reform Act (1988), the National Curriculum, the imposition of new service contracts, teacher appraisal, the local management of schools, to name the few, are designed to shift the education system towards a more market-based approach. And according to Maud Blair 'individual school responses to the demands of the market have the effect of discriminating against black groups in particular contexts' (1994, p. 277).

There can be little doubt that few of the new policies have been framed or developed with gender or 'race' equality in mind and, indeed, there is little explicit reference to gender or 'race' equality in policy documentation. From the 1970s onwards 'equality of opportunity' (both 'race' and gender) was included in the rhetoric of schooling. Towards the mid-1980s LEAs with a commitment to increasing equal opportunity began to formulate policies which addressed gender, race and ethnicity, class and disability. But the outcome of the late 1980s reforms instigated by central government is that there is a lack of government commitment to equal opportunities issues in

teaching. As a result, 'race', gender and class have been 'swept from the policy agenda' (Gillborn, 1995, p. 17; Troyna, 1992). My research has shown that there is very little evidence in schools of genuine interest in equality issues and the discrimination practised against black teachers has remained impervious to change. More recently, the Stephen Lawrence inquiry report stated 'institutional racism exists within ... institutions countrywide' (The Times, 25 February, 1999, p. 14); Sir Herman Ouseley, the chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, 'claimed that the entire educational system was guilty of 'institutional racism'' (Daily Mail, 24 February, 1999, p. 10). On February 24, 1999, the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, made the statement that Sir William Macpherson's (Lawrence inquiry) searing report 'opened our eyes to what it's like to be black or Asian in Britain today' (The Guardian, February, 25, 1999, p. 27). Though I am not claiming that my study is as searching and thorough as Macpherson report, what I had aimed was to listen to black women teachers' stories. I had allowed them to explain how their 'racial' and gender identities impacted on their development as teachers and how in a 'racist' society Asian women teachers were coping with their subordinate positions. In this journey I have come to the realisation that my own career experiences - both the pleasant and the unpleasant- are not unique but mirror those of other Asian women teachers as well. Inevitably, of course, the particular complex combination of personal and professional experiences is unique, but there are parallels and similarities with other Asian women teachers' experiences. My research methods concentrated on perceptions held by teachers. The perceptions

might be limited and subjective but they provided a valuable insight into their experiences as teachers. This may in turn offer other black teachers and pupils a different lens through which to see teaching. It might also give an indication of how we might increase the black teacher population.

A criticism often made of some ethnographies is that they are snapshots of interactional processes frozen in time. We know little of the schools' histories and backgrounds, let alone the areas they serve, the schools' policies, their ethos and culture, or the flow of thoughts and events in which the interactions are situated. Consequently, it is difficult to appraise fully the material that is presented. I am aware of the fact that the stories the teachers had told of their experiences are fragments of memories but nevertheless, they offer a clue to the kinds of struggles these teachers experienced within the education system. Their silent attempts to adopt and adapt had left a scar on their sense of self, psychologically and emotionally. And what I have tried to present is their interpretations of their experiences. My interviewees mentioned how the feelings of inferiority were experienced in relation to a universal norm. There is no doubt that superiority and inferiority are social identities, which are not simply gender-related but also class and race-related. Yet there is no recognition of this in the available literature.

Stories as narrated by the teachers

What can the collection, interpretation and publication of Asian women teachers' narratives – at present largely absent from the published literature – tell us about Asian women teachers' experiences that existing literature can not? Whilst reviewing the documented experiences of minority ethnic teachers I found that individual experiences are covered over by overarching theories which make up the official versions of history. In looking at the type of experiences these teachers recounted, I found myself asking, 'how do these experiences fit with the other documented experiences?' These experiences have gone undocumented. Our experiences are either marginalised or excluded. Also our views about our experiences have never been thought of as important, or even of interest. In looking for a theory in which to ground my own research on Asian women teachers experiences, I have found that theoretical approaches which bring class, race and gender together within educational theory continue to be unsatisfactory for demonstrating how one aspect of identity impacts on another. Individuals' experiences are both complex and diverse and go beyond racism and/or sexism. To address this theoretical silencing of minority ethnic teachers' experiences, I have had to adopt an autobiographical and biographical approach as a means of discovery. At the heart of my research approach is C. Wright Mills' (1959) belief in the linking of history and biography to enable ordinary people to begin to make sense of their experiences and overcome feelings of entrapment, powerlessness

and meaninglessness. Its value is that it can demonstrate the experience of racism from a black, female perspective and highlight its implication for social, intellectual and emotional development. I embarked upon this research because I wanted to find out whether other Asian women teachers had endured the same emotional traumas, with similar development of their professional, personal and cultural identities, as I had during my teaching career. I wanted to know whether they had the same experiences and the same relationships with senior white colleagues, parents and pupils as myself. I thought that I might be able to find something of myself and of my experience in the text of these teachers' stories (Plummer, 1995, p. 21). And, in my opinion, what better way was there to collect the various aspects of these teachers' personal and professional lives than to take a narrative, life history approach? I had used heuristic inquiry methods from a black feminist perspective and adopted a symbolic interactionist stance by 'focusing on the importance of the meanings' that emerged as teachers defined 'situations through interpersonal interactions' (Patton, 1990, p. 86). My experiences as an Asian woman teacher had enabled me to live the other 'teachers' experiences with them' (Woods, 1996, p. 106). I tried to explore how these teachers perceived and interpreted their experiences and responded to racism and/or sexism within their work. My method allowed some degree of 'interpretative involvement in ongoing social situations' on my part as a researcher (Bulmer, 1977, cited in *New Community*, Vol.19, No.3, April, 1993, p. 388). I have tried to draw knowledge from the experiential existence of 'race', as it is lived everyday, to access deeper understanding and to

make connections in areas of experiences that are rarely revealed and therefore previously unexplored. It has also allowed me to be the narrator and a subject of narration whilst minimising the contradiction in my taking up an academic position from which to talk about minority ethnic teachers' experiences – my own and others – which are rarely acknowledged let alone talked about. Most importantly it has enabled me to minimise further exploitation of Asian women teachers, either by writing for them, or by making my research inaccessible. The collection, interpretation and publication of our narratives tell us things about our experiences that existing 'race' and gender analysis has not accessed. I was aware of the forces of structure and society and realised that there existed (still exist!) injustices and inequalities. But what I had tried to do was to "go beyond individualistic analyses of personal 'prejudice' to examine how racism operates as a complex and multifaceted aspect of school life: one that links the wider structures of power in society with the minutia of classroom experience and control" (Gillborn, 1995, p. 46). Indeed, exploring the life histories of these teachers had helped me to better understand the historical, social, political and cultural contexts of not only my own personal and professional life but also theirs as well. The information collected provides an important resource through which it is possible to see how this specific group of women internalised particular social expectations and aspirations within a specific context. In this way it adds to the experiences of other Asian women teachers made public. And I hope other teachers can

look at these stories and maybe find themselves, or aspects of their experiences, in them too.

Since the majority of New Commonwealth settlers have come here over the past 40 years or so the manifestations of racism may have subtly shifted, but its power remains as forceful as ever. Nearly fifteen years ago, the findings of ALTARF in 1984 detailed the extent and pervasiveness of racial discrimination in the teaching profession. Even in 1990s England the working conditions of black teachers remain the same. "it is clear that black people do not enjoy equal opportunity with their white peers" (Osler, 1997, p. 54). One only has to look at the historical positioning of minority ethnic teachers within the state education to see how this is an 'inherited' aspect of their lives. Note the absence of minority ethnic teachers in the senior positions.

My interviewees were by no means a homogeneous group; they had different backgrounds and were motivated by different values and imperatives. And yet, despite these differences, it was interesting to observe how the majority of them felt that, as members of a minority group in Britain, they were discriminated against. That discrimination manifested itself in recruitment, promotion, training, and conditions of work and general treatment. The teachers described how they felt that their physical appearances and visible differences from their white colleagues inculcated in them the feeling of isolation and helplessness. Like me, the majority of my

interviewees felt that they had experienced 'passive' racism due to a lack of support and understanding from educational authorities and white colleagues. They found that some white teachers displayed a lack of sensitivity and awareness when dealing with black teachers and black pupils; but they were reluctant to challenge their white colleagues even when the situation warranted it. Other researchers have demonstrated how teachers tend to view such conflicts as moral dilemmas (Campbell, 1992).

Some of my first generation teachers experienced difficulties having their qualifications recognised by the DES. They all had experience of discriminatory treatment or attitudes which they had to overcome before their first appointment. At the stage of first appointment many had developed attitudes or approaches, such as, determination, preparedness and hard work, which offered them some protection against the actual barriers and personal hurts they encountered through discrimination. Although the black teachers were expected to serve as intermediary between the school and minority 'problem' students and work as advocates for immigrant students, they were not rewarded for that work. Some of them were perceived as 'professional ethnic' and had to deal with race-related problems even when they had no training in such work. They felt they had encountered considerable difficulties when seeking promotion because black teachers were too often seen by their managers as classroom teachers who could act as role models, but not necessarily people who might be capable of taking

on leadership positions. Others found they were stereotyped into particular roles linked to their perceived ethnicity, such as ESL or E2L teachers.

Some of my interviewees found their way into teaching as Section 11 teachers or language support teachers. Whilst Section 11 provided opportunities for some black teachers to gain promotion as advisory teachers or to improve their salary positions through the incentives offered, there were no career structures and few real promotion prospects related to these posts. Their skills in other areas of 'mainstream' curriculum tended to be overlooked. They had experienced many obstacles to their career advancement and had to go through more interviews than white applicants to gain any promotion due to the more subtle workings of institutional racism. Like me, they also had experienced racial harassment from white pupils and their parents as well. It is perhaps important to emphasise that those black teachers who had achieved senior positions continued to encounter racism in their professional lives, often in the form of direct and indirect opposition from colleagues who were unable to accept black people in senior or leadership positions.

In many schools where my interviewees taught, 'racism' was not considered to be a relevant issue and a few of the schools' discipline policies addressed the issue at all. On the contrary when the black teachers complained about it, the schools concerned chose to 'ignore' the issues, dismissing the effect of this discrimination as the oversensitivity of the black teachers and went

about business as usual. This attitude of non-interference, instead of creating a sense of persecution and downheartedness, made many of them more determined to develop professional competence and to succeed at all cost.

The life histories of these teachers highlight the expressions of racism that they were exposed to and speak out of a double consciousness:

"It is a peculiar sensation - this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (DuBois, 1965, pp. 214-5, cited in Casey, 1993, p. 111).

Judging from their narratives, these teachers did not want to devote much of their energy to large, long-established, institutional organisations, even apparently alternative ones, but they chose to remain active in specific ways, within particular personal-social relationships. Like Casey's teachers, my interviewees, including myself, did not

"see themselves, as individuals striving for academic achievement; within the institutions of education, they are interpolated as, and choose to present themselves as, representatives of and for their people" (Casey, 1993, p. 124).

And the discursive contribution of these teachers cannot be

"dismissed as merely individual or simply subjective, for these women theorise in active and reciprocal relationships, as members of an interpretive community, and as part of a living tradition" (Casey, 1993, p. 165).

My findings show that these teachers strategically employed every means at their disposal to survive in an unjust world. Sometimes racist structures or behaviours were directly challenged, sometimes they were 'managed' or worked around, and occasionally they were ignored. They found that their cultural background and the involvement of their families, friends and communities were not only personally satisfying but also supporting and contributing to their work as teachers. Belonging to the black teachers' centre group had helped some of them to maintain their professional identity as well. They expressed solidarity with other black teachers "regardless of individual levels of political consciousness", as they were "conscious of the importance of skin colour in white constructions and assumptions of 'race'" (Blair & Maylor, 1993, p. 60). So despite the apparent all-pervading character of racism, the teachers in this study generally proved themselves to be 'survivors' within their work and careers. As a whole their spirit and commitment to teaching was not dampened by the difficulties they encountered in their teaching careers. Judging from their dedication and

commitment to the task of teaching, it seems safe to agree with Maylor who asserts:

“The main conclusion therefore which can be drawn from this study is that racism in teaching and education requires urgent attention, but does not necessarily prevent black women from ... remaining in teaching” (1995, p. 388).

Current concern

At a macro level social institutions control and regulate the practice of ‘race’ and gender and at a micro level this takes place in everyday interactions. This study has highlighted how many of the problems black teachers faced in schools were related to the structure and policies of the school as well as the attitudes and behaviours of staff and parents. My conversations with the teachers during 1989-94 have highlighted the following issues:

- The educational policies failed to meet the expectations of the black communities;
- The black community has not had a powerful say in the education system;
- Very few schools still have black school governors, headteachers, deputy-heads or heads of department;

- The present educational system does not offer enough facilities for black teachers to acquire posts of responsibilities;
- There is an extreme paucity of professional support from the educational authorities and white colleagues to tackle the racial and/or sexual day to day issues in schools;
- The black teachers are not encouraged to enhance their professional qualifications through in-service training.

The educational policies since 1988 have affected ethnic relations in schools in less than positive ways. Under the terms of the ERA (1988), the only orders in education are the 'entitlement of all children' to a 'broad and balanced curriculum'. Policy-makers have not explicitly addressed the issues of 'race' and/or sex equality and there does not exist any national policy that is directly concerned with countering racism and/or sexism in schools either for pupils or teachers. As Hatcher (1991) observes, politicians of all parties may be concerned to 'raise standards' in schools, but none even whispers about reducing inequalities. The absence of such policies to deal with race-related incidents at schools had resulted and will result in a great deal of stress for black teachers.

The 1988 Reform Act significantly increased governor powers, particularly by the introduction of Local Management of Schools (LMS) or budget delegation. LMS effectively placed the Head and the governing body in control of staff recruitment, staff promotions, allocation of resources and the

school curriculum. But the National Union of Teachers made the following observation in a policy document: "many black teachers ... will also be made more vulnerable under local management of schools" (NUT, 1990, cited in Osler, 1997, p. 53). An NFER study (Streatfield and Jefferies, 1989) of school governors carried out in the autumn of 1988, found that 'less than 3 per cent were black or Asian' (cited in D. Gill; B. Mayor & M. Blair, 1992, p. 216). Rosemary Deem and her colleagues (1992) have also found in their pilot study of school governors 'just... 8 per cent' are 'black or Asian' and concluded:

"It is also evident that black and Asian governors are both conspicuous by their absence in both primary and secondary schools, even those where a high percentage of pupils are from those ethnic groups; only one holds the office of chair" (cited in D. Gill; B. Mayor & M. Blair, 1992, pp. 216-217).

So my interviewees' perceptions of lack of black school governors were not unfounded. Recruitment is, however, only a first step towards guaranteeing a profession which allows each individual teacher to develop and which ensures genuine equality of opportunity. The desirability of more minority ethnic teachers is not in question: the problem is how to overcome the barriers to their recruitment, retention and promotion.

Recommendations

To implement 'race' equality in education, the future course of education 'should operate always from the perspectives of ethnic minority groups and be located in and led by their experience' (Klein, 1993, p. 89). Recently in Stephen Lawrence murder inquiry report, Sir William Macpherson recommended that "Local Education Authorities and school governors have the duty to create and implement strategies in their schools to prevent and address racism. Such strategies to include: that schools to record all racist incidents; that all recorded incidents are reported to the pupils' parents/guardians, school Governors and LEAs; that the number of racist incidents are published annually, on a school by school basis" (The Guardian, 25 February, 1999, p. 19).

It is important to state that both racism and sexism have structural as well as ideological roots which cannot simply be eradicated by tackling attitudes or overt behaviour, towards which legislation on race and sex discrimination have often been directed. Unless there is genuine social change, very little can be done to eradicate inequalities. Any calls for reform, my interviewees reminded me, must take into account a realistic understanding of the limits on schools' capacities to challenge broader social practices and values. To deal with structural inequality is a policy matter. It is an enormous struggle to try to bring about change in a huge bureaucracy and only a whole institutional focus can make any difference. Also in the present economic

and political climate realistically it is difficult to envisage how much time one can devote to tackling structural/ institutional inequalities in schools. It became evident from the interview data that examples of good practice were far from widespread. As social change seems unlikely in the near future, it looks that any developments in equal opportunities for all, will rely, as always, on individual teachers and schools and on ad hoc campaigns. While personal racist/sexist behaviours cannot necessarily be changed by directive, they can be constrained by implementing some of the following strategies so that the kinds of remarks and behaviour reported by my interviewees become an unacceptable part of the working situation. So these recommendations focus on improving black teachers' day to day experience in the classroom and the continuing professional development of teachers.

- Everyone should be encouraged to understand their rights and responsibilities under the 1976 Race Relations Act and 1975 Sex Discrimination Act which seek to protect individuals against discrimination;
- There must be established guidelines as to what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable practices at schools. The guidelines must take into account the black teachers' perceptions of racial/sexual discrimination at schools;

- The providers of education should become more accountable to the black people they serve by the promotion of consultative and feedback systems;
- Educational authorities should implement strategies to eradicate institutional racism and sexism, e.g. by the use of monitoring systems and intervening where necessary. In other words, 'race' and gender equality issues should be incorporated into management training programmes;
- Governing bodies of educational institutions should include among their representatives more black men and women;
- Positive steps to be taken to train and appoint more black staff for senior positions;
- Educationalists must become more vociferous in their opposition and condemnation of racism and/or sexism in education and society and establish measures to challenge and defeat them;
- The establishment of a black teachers centre group can be a significant step forward as it will allow black teachers to express their views openly and share strategies for developing positive, assertive self-identities; they can also benefit from networking with each other.

I am aware of the fact that some of these initiatives do exist at both local and national level. But they are of varying effectiveness, since much depends on whether and how they are implemented. The challenge remains of finding a range of appropriate and effective ways of tackling racism and/or sexism in all its various and changing forms. Given the place of the schools within the

broader context of societal inequality and government's neglect of equality issues, it becomes clear that the task the schools face in attempting to change black teachers' experiences is not an easy one. Daily interactions in school require close monitoring- between pupils and teachers, between black teachers and white teachers, and black teachers and parents. Since role models are significant, we need more black teachers in high-status positions in schools, in posts that command respect. But the rhetoric of equal opportunities is still far from becoming a reality in too many black teachers' lives. Unless everyone involved is prepared to enter into discussions and debates with regard to racism and/or sexism and is prepared to examine and assess it, black teachers will continue to be subjected to social injustices on a daily basis. Continued data collection and dissemination would seem to be essential. No doubt large-scale surveys will produce quantified, generalizable findings, but they will need to be complemented by more personal details provided by in-depth life history studies. Making a space for individuals to tell their stories or, as some people term it, 'giving voice' will be invaluable. Even though each teacher's story, experience and development are unique, there are commonalities. The teachers I talked with were experiencing similar professional realities and wanted their 'stories' to be made more public so that they can be brought to the attention of a wider audience. But more stories need to be told and heard before **all** teachers can enjoy equal opportunities in an ethnically diverse society. These life histories reveal the black teachers' disgust of working with students who wrote 'paki' or 'blacky' on their books, or tolerate

parents who hurled racist and/or sexist abuses at them, or white colleagues who did not give proper respect to them. Such incidents, however, had not been mentioned in most educational research. My work has confirmed the importance of continuing to conduct feminist life history research in education because this methodology is particularly suited for showing how uneven 'racial' and gendered relations permeate educational establishments and discourse. An increased understanding of the lives of black women teachers may teach us ways by which we can make significant progress toward eliminating racism, sexism and other forms of oppression in order to create a more equitable school atmosphere.

There is no doubt that the inequalities of 'race', class and gender operate in a complex and non-synchronous manner and so far researchers have only scratched the surface of this complex phenomenon. While I feel that my research has generated some new evidence on 'race' and Asian female teachers' experiences, a contribution to the debate is what is hoped for. One important area for future exploration is how these experiences can be used to improve the working conditions of other minority ethnic teachers. For instance, to get our experiences taken seriously enough to impact on current social and educational policy. More focused attention may mean the problems can start to be seriously addressed. I also hope that the present, exploratory research should make some contribution towards generating a more specific conceptual framework for future large-scale in-depth research that may yield information of greater validity and reliability for the population

of black teachers in British schools. The time is now ripe for further theoretical and empirical investigation.

Postscript

I have mentioned before how my research was based on questions which had arisen from sociological reflections on my own teaching experiences. In effect, my research began on the day I went for my interview at teachers' training college in 1971. The interviewer's comment 'you trying to teach English to our children will be like carrying coal to Newcastle' left an extremely intense impact on me. I obviously did not realise the long lasting intensity of the feeling then. Now after teaching for nearly twenty-six years, the following incident that happened to me recently (June, 1997) demonstrates the continuation of the same pervasive attitudes.

I have been teaching at my present school since 1986. I am still on Main Professional grade but I have taught all years from year 7 to post 16. There was a minor problem involving two year 10 white girls in one of my classes. The girls concerned were not concentrating properly on the subject matter of the lesson and subsequently complaining that they did not understand the lesson due to my 'poor English'. I was quite sure that they had consciously decided not to understand the lesson because of their racial prejudice towards me being a black teacher. They were not disruptive as such but they were surreptitiously reacting to me in a negative manner. I felt that they were trying to undermine my authority as a teacher, like asking the other pupils quite loudly, 'did you understand what the hell she was going on about?' and similar comments like that. So I decided to have a meeting with

them together with their form teacher (white male) to discuss their attitude. That was in January 1997. The girls admitted that it was their fault as they did not really try hard to listen and understand. It was agreed that they should make a conscious effort to pay more attention in the lesson, and also, if necessary, they would come for extra help during break or lunchtime. After the meeting they stopped making any loud 'cryptic' comments but unfortunately, their attitude really did not change.

Consequently, in the end of the year examination (May, 1997), they underachieved. Before their parents could find out about their underachievement, they probably 'persuaded' their parents to complain to the deputy head that their poor performance was due to my 'assumed' poor teaching. I obviously did not know that they had complained.

Rather than discussing the complaint with me, one day (June, 1997) when I arrived to take my lesson, to my utter amazement I found the deputy head sitting at the back of my classroom. He stayed to observe the whole lesson taking notes which I have yet to see! I was at first a bit startled as I had no intimation that I would be observed. Any way I ignored his presence and continued teaching in my usual way. That particular year 10 class was in the middle of doing a mathematics investigation for their GCSE. So it was not a class teaching situation but my role was just going round and answering their queries or solving their individual problems. At the end of the lesson the deputy head commented (rather quite patronising, I felt,) how he had

enjoyed the lesson and how pleased he was to see that the class was working well and I had a good 'rapport' with the students. Then during the course of our conversation he just asked me casually how I had got on with the parents of those two particular year 10 girls. I informed him that I had not met their parents as we had not had year 10 parents' evening yet. But he did not elaborate why he asked me that question neither did I think any more about it.

Next day, while I was taking another year 10 class, my head of the department suddenly walked into my classroom and enquired whether the two girls in question were present or not. I told her that those two girls belonged to my other group. She just mentioned that she would like to come and observe my lesson when I would be taking the other group and left. As a result of her statement I felt quite disturbed and upset. As she did not say anything afterwards, I decided to talk to her further. I was shocked to hear what she had to say. That was the first time I was told that the parents of those two girls came and complained that the girls could not understand me as I did not speak clearly. My head of the department also told me that the deputy head had informed her that he felt that there might be a racial connotation to the complaints, as the parents commented 'we are not racists, but...'. Despite his realisation that there was a racial element in the complaint he did not bother to discuss the matter with me in person. I was so angry! I felt that he was reactive rather than proactive in his attitude towards this racial incident! I did not mind being observed but the way he carried out

the observation was most discourteous to say the least. I also found out from the other members of staff that the girls' parents had a further appointment with the deputy head after his lesson observation. My head of the department did not observe my lesson even though I was expecting her to come and observe my lesson. But neither the deputy head nor my head of the department said anything to me about the whole affair.

I felt that my professional integrity, my authority and right to exercise my discretionary judgement and competence had been breached. It was a tremendous shock to realise that even after all these years of teaching and achieving excellent public examination results, I was treated in such an insensitive and shabby manner. I could feel from the 'typical' look and 'subdued' muttering of the two girls concerned to their peers that they were 'mocking' me. I really felt very uncomfortable. During this period I was the only one who did not know what was going on. When I realised that the deputy head or my head of the department was not going to discuss this matter any further with me, I decided to consult my union representative.

The union representative was very concerned and questioned the deputy head, who then, came to talk to me. He tried to blame my head of the department, saying that he had asked her to inform me that I would be observed. But when I tried to talk to my head of the department, she was quite vague and informed me that she was not sure of the exact date and time when my lesson would be observed! I realised that both of them were

trying to 'wriggle out' of the situation. Realising that they had made a great blunder they both tried to patronise me. But they decided to succumb to parental pressure and both the girls were removed from my class! I could perceive that my feelings, concerns and complaints were largely ignored and felt dispirited. I was more hurt to realise that both the deputy head and the head of the department were very insensitive in dealing with the situation. I realised that open challenges to the situation were ineffective and hence reluctantly decided to let it rest. But instead of remaining silent as I spoke out, I became more vulnerable. From the various comments made by my other colleagues, I got the distinct impression that I was perceived as a 'trouble maker'. The attitude and behaviour of the deputy head concerned are very cold and cutting even now! Unfortunately this particular deputy head is also our faculty link person, so it is impossible to avoid meeting him. So to survive I had to try and find a personal compromise.

The above-mentioned incident confirms my already stated points of view that there is direct and indirect racial prejudice portrayed to black teachers even in 1990s.

Appendix One

The full transcript of one of the interviews - Nazish

This gentle, hardworking and conscientious teacher (second generation) gave an agonising and disturbing account of her own experiences.

I came to UK from India in 1962. I was put in the third year in a secondary school, even though I was a lot older than my classmates. I felt that I was very badly placed as there was no provision for E2L teaching. I considered myself fortunate in the sense that I was very good in mathematics and our high standard in Algebra and other topics had helped me to obtain distinctions in mathematics. The headteacher then transferred me to fourth year next term and I was encouraged to take the external examination. Even though I did not look older than other children in my class I felt bad. When my results were good the head wanted me to stay on and did my O level. There might be other reasons behind his insistence as there were not many coloured children in that school at that time and he might have wanted to show other people how good he was to immigrants. But I always thought that he was a nice, kind and considerate person. Had it been some other 'racist' headteacher I do not think that I would have been able to continue, especially as my form tutor wanted me to leave and look for a job. In fact one other teacher told me openly 'you are already eighteen, why don't you get married and start a family like other Asian women?' I did not have enough

English or the cheeky manner to answer him back at that time and I do not think that I can even do it now. I am basically a very shy person and I do not think fit to answer people back. But it did hurt me tremendously underneath. Anyway my head encouraged me to study and I stayed on and did O levels. My grades in two subjects were not very good and I was very upset. But again my head told me 'look... you have done very well considering you have only arrived in this country a few years back. It is your language that have let you down, but you have potential'. So I decided to retake those subjects and the following year I did very well. I am sure because of my headteacher's encouragement and backing, I could stay on and continued to study. We were the first batch of students doing A level from that school. After A level, I went to Matlock and did three years teaching certificate. As far as the human relationship goes, my fellow students and lecturers treated me differently but with respect. I am sure that they felt sorry for me as I was the only one Asian student there. But I was very lonely and I felt isolated. Culturally and linguistically I suffered tremendously. How I longed to see a black face! Because my command of English was poor it was very hard for me to write essays. Whereas other students would go out and enjoy themselves, I had to shut myself in my room and slog on slavishly at a slow speed. I was placed in a secondary school during teaching practice and I did not come across any racist remarks by the teachers there. At least I was not aware of any such remarks but again as you know my English was not strong enough to pick up any hint. But the children were bad, they took the mickey out of my accent and made silly remarks which made me feel very

nervous and shaky. And the teachers did not help at all. I tried to talk to the class teacher who made it out as if that was a discipline problem, me not being able to cope. My supervisor also did not want to know. Every time I wanted to talk to him about that he always used to avoid the topic. So I had a very hard time.

I applied for job in [...] and I got an interview. I remember after all these years that the person who interviewed me was very racist. I could see that he was not going to give me the job anyway. 'Oh, Indian teachers can't teach, they have a very bad reputation, they can't control their classes. How are you going to cope?' Of course I did not have any answer, I did not agree with him but I could not give him any satisfactory answer. So I kept quiet, I did not get the job. He told me that I did not get good A level grades, but what did that matter? I managed to finish my course and did reasonably well. Instead of asking me other questions he continually criticised the coloured teachers and my O and A level grades. The other thing I noticed that whereas there were three persons interviewing the other students in my case he was the only person. I realised then that there must be something wrong. My second interview was in [...] and I got the job. I was put in a small secondary school. The head there was a real tyrant; she never talked to me, smiled at me or made any pleasant remark. One science teacher there was so racist it is unbelievable. He was constantly criticising Indian teachers. One day he even asked me 'Have you read The Apes by Desmond Morris?' At that time I had not read the book. So he told me that 'you know, in that book he had

proved that coloured people are less intelligent people'. I wished I could have hit myself for not being able to answer him back. You know they were permanently undermining my authority, my professional ability to teach, my intelligence and so on. In fact I think I was one of the better teachers - discipline wise and work wise. But still they had to find fault with me. Before the report day the deputy head would come to me and say 'Miss [...], can I look at your report?' I felt that insulting as if they had to check my reports before they were sent out to parents. I noticed that they did not do that to other white teachers. And in other small ways they really discriminated against me. When I broke the news that I was leaving there was not even a card or farewell greeting to me. I was not after any presents or anything, you know, but it really hurts your ego. I was there for two years and looking back I could say that there were only two teachers who were nice to me, others were very stuck up white people, with very posh accent and who thought a world of themselves. The other sad thing was that the school population was about thirty to forty percent coloured but they did nothing for those children. They would always pull them down, criticising them; everything about them was negative. They would criticise about their food, their dress, and the way they spoke and so on. They would praise if there was any odd bright child but otherwise every single thing about Indian was bad. I could not answer them back; I was a probationer as well as I was never very sharp to answer back. But I am sure the children suffered and in a way I suffered too. I did not know what to do. I knew I should fight back but I realised that to fight back you need the moral support of other teachers. When you are on your

own in a school your work is twice as hard as the other white teachers. You are in minority, you daren't raise your voice, and you are a junior in work, experience wise.

After my marriage, I moved to [...] and I got a job in the pool. The deputy director was very sympathetic but the others were just as hopeless. They did not talk to me, did not want to know me. I was there just doing the job, I felt very much depressed. I did not have the support of the other teachers about any work problem or otherwise. After about three months there I was sent to a junior school.

I did not face many problems from the teachers at that school but the children gave me a tough time. They were rude and difficult mainly because I think that they had a very negative image of black people. They always used to pass remarks about black people in the playground and whenever I raised the issues with my other colleagues, I was told to ignore them. From that point I do not think that they were helping either me or the black children in that school.

Then I took a long break from teaching raising my family. Before I decided to start teaching again I worked voluntarily for almost a year in a junior school. During that time I kept on applying for a job in [...] but I did not even get an interview. I did not know what the reasons were. Then I was so desperate that I wrote a long letter to the multicultural adviser, providing him all the

details of my background, my experience and also pointing out how desperate I was to find a job. But the irony is that despite the fact that they are always moaning about the shortage of qualified coloured teacher, I was not even called for an interview. My letter was not acknowledged either. I was a qualified Physics teacher. In a way you can say that it was my own fault as I was not applying for a specific job; but I wanted to teach in a junior school as I thought that my knowledge of three other Asian languages would be more useful in a primary school than in a secondary school. There was a temporary (purely science) post in the middle school where I was helping voluntarily for a year. I was interviewed and I thought I stood a good chance but when the crunch comes you know, they would choose a white person. So I did not get the job. I was too naive. When I think how that headmaster always used to praise me during my free helping time and expressed how he wished to have appointed more teachers from the minority group! Even he did not appoint me; he only offered me a temporary post - one afternoon a week. I was perfectly qualified for that science post but the job was given to a white teacher. I became so despondent that I accepted a job at the local tax office. There I faced a lot of overt racism - very open. My supervisor used to tell me always 'come on, get on with your job, not only you are a clerical assistant, you are a black clerical assistant'. You know that really did hurt me. I saw all sixteen/seventeen years old white youngsters coming from school and were on promotion lists whereas I was nearly middle-aged with a lot of experience and a teaching qualification but there was no mention of my promotion. On the other hand I was facing racism from everyone.

I realised that to survive I had to fight and I kept on applying. For a long time I did not have any luck. Then eventually I got an interview in [...] to do some E2L job. One black teacher and a white woman inspector interviewed me. The interview was conducted on a very low key from beginning to end. I was not asked anything about curriculum or methods or any such thing, only one or two personal questions and general chit chat. At the same time I heard from an acquaintance that there was a welfare job going at the Multicultural Group Support Service and I applied. I learnt later on that there were twenty people who had applied and out of those twenty only five were selected for interview. I was the only one with the teaching qualification from Britain as well as with the linguistic ability to teach/ understand Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu. I was given that job.

Then I had a very nasty experience. One of my male colleagues there started making very suggestive remarks, asking me to go out with him whilst we were on duty and so on. I was not interested and he was a married man too, but I did not know how to deal with him. He was there for a long time and a lot of parents and other people knew him quite well. His advances became quite aggressive and he would not accept 'no' for an answer. The final straw came when he tried to ... abuse me in the car park after the staff Christmas evening pretending as if he was drunk. (It took her quite a long time to utter these few sentences. As she was talking she kept on covering her face, shaking her head, tears rolling down her cheeks. We stopped our interview at that point on that day. The rest of the incident she described

during our subsequent interviews). I ran inside, sobbing and shaking. I was very frightened and I talked to one of my other white female colleagues there, who turned out to be a gossipmonger and spread the news around. No body believed me and I became the laughing stock. There were always sarcastic comments, silly remarks and nudging and hinting from my other colleagues. The man himself became quite hostile and started sending nasty letters about me to the schools where I used to visit. So instead of getting any sympathy I had to face the backlash of that. The Multicultural Support Service was so worried to save their image, they told me 'you have three ultimate choices- you can leave, or we can ask you to leave or you can stay in this job but you will find it very hard to cope as your own community will make your life hell for you once this is known, and you will end up having a nervous breakdown or we can offer you a teaching job as we need a teacher and you are a qualified teacher'. I was so furious that I told them 'in no way you can sack me, I am an honest sincere worker and I have done nothing wrong. If I do not have a satisfactory solution I am going to write to the press. I have only opened my mouth about something which I did not approve of and which I knew was wrong'. So first I fought on- I did not want to leave but they were adamant. They were showing favouritism to him. I consulted my union and the union rep spoke to the adviser and told him that I should not be treated in such a manner. A few other teachers at the centre also spoke on my behalf. But then they decided to change their tactics- they started reasoning with me, putting a sort of psychological pressure. I was called at the office one day and was told 'look [...] all these people who are

behind you now are going to leave you sooner or later, in the end you will have to carry the 'can' on your own. We can tell you that out there all those people are like hounds, they are going to hound you then and etc. etc.'

I was so puzzled and frightened and dismayed, I did not know what to do. I asked them 'what guarantee can you give me that they wouldn't hound me at the school?' But they assured me that they would put me in a very safe school. I obviously did not understand their motives behind this transfer- they just wanted to protect their image and give the impression that something was being done.

So I was just transferred to a junior school where I faced the same old problem - no help from the colleagues, they were too busy with themselves- in their own little groups! Regarding duties they would never make you a drink or even ask you how you were getting on. One incident I can recall. One day when I was on playground duty I overheard one white boy saying to a black kid 'have you just taken a trip to the chocolate factory?' I reported the incident but nothing was done about that and I was told to ignore / pretend that I had not heard anything. As far as help from my senior colleagues, I received none. One day I remembered making a casual comment to the deputy head 'I am so tired, this job just lets you down'. Instead of sympathising or enquiring why I said that she, very rudely and abruptly commented 'well, you ought to be sure, if you don't like this job, you can get out'. That was very hurtful. (She was quite tearful while describing

this incident). We all know how stressful teaching can be sometimes but she did not sympathise with me. Another day she said to me 'you do not use any of your ideas, you do exactly what other teachers tell you to do'. I was just treated like a dirt! There was I, a qualified teacher and she had the guts to dictate me like that! I was so hurt it took me over two years to get over that incident. And you know life was sheer hell at times. I used to go home every night and cry. I used to dread going to school and even now I find it hard to forget that incident. I always think how harshly those people have dealt with me; I have no energy to apply for any senior position. The way those cunning and shrewd people have treated me, I feel as if I am a pawn in some sort of a game and I became a victim of the whole situation. I was not given a class, I was just there as a float, and they would use me whichever way they thought fit. I would have liked to have a class of my own. I was treated as if I was an educational assistant and not a qualified teacher! I did not have any say, I was shoved into that school without any consultation as if to say 'this is what we have decided for you and you better accept it gracefully'. I felt dreadful.

Then the day before we broke up for the summer holiday I was just told 'how about you taking an infant class next year?' Again being a shy and peace-loving person as well as having the prospect of a class of my own, I did not protest. I was not given any help, any guidance or shown what to do. I was given a very small room with no materials or books or any assistance, there was not even any furniture. All I managed to get the day before the school

opened were some tables and chairs. It was a very small room with no facilities and no help. I was thrown into that classroom and had to cope with that situation. And after that if anybody would have criticised my methods of teaching (thank goodness, no one ever did), you can understand why. The system or people - how we are treated! Then they would turn round and criticise the black teachers for not being able to cope. Whose fault it is then? No one doubled up with me for assemblies or story telling or anything. I was on my own having to cope with everything and to cope better than anyone. No one would relieve me at breaktime or make me a drink or even would ask me if I need to go to the toilet or anything. If I were on playground duty and any birthday being celebrated, no one would save me a slice of cake. Again I am not hungry for a slice of cake, but think what it does to your morale when you are ignored like that! So I struggled for the first few months with the infant teaching. I was not trained as an infant teacher even though I picked up some ideas while working as a float but that was not enough having to cope with a class.

I remembered one incident. One day another teacher told me that there would be a Christmas party at such an such time, but she never even mentioned that I had to lay the table. I heard her then mentioning to the head of infants how I was not ready for the party! I did not have a clue how to set up a class for a party being secondary trained! All she could do was to stand there and criticise and showing me up in front of the children undermining my authority. This teacher herself was a Section 11 teacher but

I have often heard her saying 'why do they do so much for these black children?'

Another thing I have noticed that in schools white colleagues will support another white colleague, but who have we got? There is no one to support us morally or psychologically. Who do we go to if we have problems? I have always been very sensitive about many problems and felt very hurt, rejected and neglected, but I could not talk to anybody, there was no one to support me professionally. There is this lack of understanding - human understanding. But I overcame that by involving myself more socially with my community.

The following year I was asked if I would like to take a reception class because of my language abilities. I agreed. The head asked me to come along and meet the prospective parents. I went along but as there was not any Asian parents with language difficulties, she completely ignored me and never even introduced me to the parents or the children! I just stood there in the corner of the hall and she carried on explaining. I felt really tearful. She introduced the other white teacher who would be teaching alongside me as a team teacher, but my presence was completely forgotten. I wanted to walk out of that school then and then. I wished I had the courage or I could afford to walk out of a situation like that. I felt so belittled and insulted. When the head realised that I was so upset she just said 'Oh, come along Mrs [...] come and talk to the children'. It was only to talk to the children, she made

me feel so unimportant, not as equal even though most of my education is from this country. She thought at first that there would be some Asian parents with language difficulties, and I could talk to them; that was why she was so nice to me before and asked me to meet the parents. As soon as she did not need me, I became a dirt.

I remember once I approached the head to go for an inservice science course and another male colleague also asked the head to send me for that course. But the head turned round and told him 'no, no, I can not recommend her for that course, she has not got much experience'. Now how the hell you can have the experience if you are not allowed to? (As she spoke she banged on the table). There are many incidents like these which really make you feel that you are no body there. You are working in such a hostile atmosphere most of the time that it really means you have to be extra strong to survive. It is just a pure survival. You are lucky if there is someone who is genuinely interested in people from other cultures. You are mostly on your own.

Then I was messed about for nearly two years - every now and then I was told that I was going to that school or that school and so on. Then eventually they decided to take me out from that school. So even though I have not been discriminated specifically by the head, the whole system is against us. Because we are Section 11 teachers they think that they have a right to

send us anywhere without due consideration or proper consultation. We are just piggy in the middle.

The school I am at now the head is very nice and sympathetic but the other teachers are all very selfish. They do not want to know another black person. I can give you an example of how the parents treat us. One day while I was on playground duty, apparently one Asian child pushed another white child who fell on the ground and his coat was torn. I did not have a clue because they did not come to me or complain. They were not from my class either. After playtime when we were all in our classrooms, suddenly the white boy's mother burst into my class and shouted in front of the kids 'look at this coat, look at it. What were you doing out there? ... I will send you a bill. You have to replace it and carried on and on'. She would not even allow me to say a word in edgeways. She was implying that I did not do my duty properly. I was not treated fairly - I was treated as if I was a little child who had to be told off in front of everyone. The funny thing was that I reported the incident to the deputy head who did not do anything. They behaved as if it was nothing.

Let me tell you another incident. I am supposed to read the mother tongue story to the Asian children. The idea is that they remain in the same classroom and we read the story in one corner. But none of the teachers will allow me to sit inside their classrooms. I have to find a space, not always suitable, to take them and read their story. They all have rooms with

carpeted area where we can sit and read our stories. One day I picked up enough courage to go and sit inside the room with the children, but the teacher was so annoyed and cross! She kept coming over and telling the children off in front of me for being noisy. But I knew that they were not noisy at all, they were just excited! I did not dare go inside that room again to read the story. I know why they are like that - it is only because the children are Asian and I am reading mother tongue stories to them. They do not want to tolerate that. They pretend to be in favour of multicultural teaching but when it comes to the crunch they resent it. They talk all right to the parents but when they have to deal with someone on equal footing they are different. They do not want to help or understand. If ever I have to try and persuade them to do something for these children, the animosity I have to face is unbelievable. They do not really talk like a friend anyway, even when they say 'halo' you can feel they are so artificial. They take the mickey out of Indian names, they ridicule our extended family system and so on. There are lots of lots of other things. Racism is so deep in their minds that most often they are not even aware of it.

All these incidents have made me so nervous and shaky that I do not even think of applying for a higher post. I tend to think that life is hard enough as it is being a classroom teacher, if I have to hold a senior position, how difficult and awful that will be. In a way you can say that it is my own fault but I feel so intimidated and harassed by the whole system that I do not intend to apply. They would not let you go on the inservice courses that you want to

go. I can give you another example. I put my name down to go on science, mathematics and language courses so many times, but instead I was asked if I would like to go on courses on racism and equal opportunities! Now if I refuse to go the head will say that I was given the chance but I did not go. But ideally I wanted to go on different courses not the ones they suggested! So you see, you are on your own, you have to fight your own battle and the energy you lose fighting the system and the inbred racism, you are too tired to try for any promotion. They can take away your confidence. There are a lot of racist people around and I find it so intimidating to fight them. I have tried to talk to the supervisor and the head of the multicultural service, but I did not have real support from them. It was very superficial. I sometimes think that the multicultural co-ordinator who should be looking at the welfare of the ethnic minorities, if they can behave like these, what chance have I got from other people?

But do you know how I have survived all these traumas? I overcame that by involving myself more socially with my community. I decided to go to all the social and religious functions organised by our community. I made it a point to go and introduce myself to the people there. I met some Asian people in positions of power and responsibility and I said to myself 'I can do this too - these white people are not going to stop me.' I feel less angry and hurt now. I try to view life more objectively now and engage myself with the problem of racism and challenge it. I know as an individual my power is very limited but at least I can keep trying.

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